

David Myatt - Πάθει Μάθος



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ἔστι δ' ὅπη νῦν
ἔστι: τελεῖται δ' ἐς τὸ πεπρωμένον:
οὔθ' ὑποκαίων οὔθ' ὑπολείβων
οὔτε δακρύων ἀπύρων ἱερῶν
ὀργὰς ἀτενεῖς παραθέλξει
(Aesch. Ag. 67-71)

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- In loving memory of Fran, who through her life and death profoundly changed me
 - In loving memory of Sue, who died too young

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Exegesis And Pathei-Mathos

In my recent (2023) essay *A Sacramental Link?* I mentioned that my interpretation of the Gospel of John inclined me suggest that Johannine Christianity was "the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from past moralistic interpretations." [1]

My interpenetration of that text is however just one of thousands over centuries with many of those other interpretations, of that and the other Gospels and the Scriptures in general, causing schisms, conflicts, and accusations of heresy as in the case of the Alexandrian priest Arius (born c.250, died 336 AD) who voiced an interpretation of the difference between the denotatum $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ and the denotatum $\acute{o}\ \theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ in, for instance the Gospel of John, leading to that interpretation being denounced as heretical.

Which returns us to the problems of exegesis and denotata, and the axioms of my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos which are:

- (i) that it is empathy and pathei-mathos which can wordlessly reveal the ontological reality both of our own physis and of how we, as sentient beings, relate to other living beings and to Being itself;
- (ii) that it is denotata - and thus the abstractions deriving therefrom - which, in respect of human beings, can and often do obscure our physis and our relation to other living beings and to Being;
- (iii) that denotata and abstractions imply a dialectic of contradictory opposites and thus for we human beings a separation-of-otherness; and
- (iv) that this dialectic of opposites is, has been, and can be a cause of suffering for both ourselves, as sentient beings, and - as a causal human presenced effect - for the other life with which we share our planet.

What is important about empathy and pathei-mathos is that they are directly personal perceiversations and experiences, and therefore have what I termed a 'personal horizon' meaning that they

"cannot be extrapolated from such a personal knowing into some-thing supra-personal be this some-thing denotata, including an $\acute{\iota}\delta\acute{\epsilon}\xi/\acute{\epsilon}\acute{\iota}\delta\omicron\varsigma$, or an axiom ($\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi\eta$) or a source ($\acute{\alpha}\lambda\tau\iota\omicron\varsigma$) for some 'revelation' or ideology or similar manifestations constructed by and dependent on appellation." [2]

The knowing so revealed is only and always our personal fallible answer or answers, and which knowing is invariably a wordless empathic knowing that cannot be adequately expressed by words and terms (by denotata) without in some manner distorting it because words and terms depend on exegesis, which exegesis can and often does vary from century to century.

In practical terms this knowing implies a certain humility since empathy and pathei-mathos inform us that we are fallible beings, arising as this personal knowledge does from the intimations of the numinous that empathy and pathei-mathos almost invariably provide: of our connexion to other beings, human and otherwise; of our minute place in the Cosmos as one mortal, short-lived, being on one planet orbiting one star in one Galaxy in a Cosmos of billions of Galaxies; and of the suffering of so many human beings, century after century, often caused by wars and conflicts often based on some certitude of belief in some cause, or on some passion, or on some interpretation of some religion, or some ideology or notion or 'destiny' with such wars and conflicts generationally replaced by others based on other certitudes of belief or on the same old passions.

A forgetting of this humility, will-fully or otherwise, has however frequently occurred and still occurs with the individual seeking to make their pathei-mathos the basis for some -ism or -ology or more often some interpretation of some existing -ism or -ology. However, a remembering of such humility can often lead to the life of the reclusive mystic or to a life of compassionately seeking to alleviate in some non-confrontational and practical way at least some of the suffering of other life, human and otherwise.

As I noted in *Soli Deo Gloria*,

"all the diverse manifestations of the Numen, all the diverse answers, of the various numinous Ways and religions, have or may have their place, and all perhaps may serve the same ultimate purpose - that of bringing us closer to the ineffable beauty, the ineffable goodness, of life; that of transforming us, reminding us; that of giving us as individuals the chance to cease to cause suffering, to presence the good, to be part of the Numen itself. For what distinguishes a valuable, a good, a numinous Way or religion, is firstly this commitment, however expressed, to the cessation of suffering through means which do not cause more suffering; secondly, having some practical means whereby individuals can transform themselves for the better, and thirdly, possessing some way of presenting, manifesting, presencing what is sacred, what is numinous, thus reconnecting the individual to the source of their being, to their humanity.

In my fallible view, any Way or religion which manifests, which expresses, which guides individuals toward, the numinous humility we human beings need is good, and should not be stridently condemned. For such personal humility - that which prevents us from committing hubris, whatever the *raison d'être*, the theology, the philosophy - is a presencing of the numinous. Indeed, one might write and say that it is a personal humility - whatever the source - that expresses our true developed (that is, rational and empathic) human nature and which nature such Ways or religions or mythological allegories remind us of. Hence the formulae, the expression, *Soli Deo Gloria* being one Western cultural manifestation of a necessary truth, manifesting as it does one particular numinous allegory among many such historical and cultural and mythological

allegories. Just as, for example, the sight of King Louis IX walking barefoot to Sainte Chapelle was a symbol of the humility which the Christian faith, correctly understood, sought to cultivate in individuals. " [3]

A Personal View

While I appreciate how various Ways of living and codified religions can presence and often have presented the numinous and thus have been and are for many a conduit toward a personal humility and compassion, my personal perceivration has been for over a decade and remains my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos, which is just some recollections of my experiences and contemplations regarding the loss of loved ones, of working and living on farms in England, and of solitary walks along a sea-shore and in the hills and deciduous woods of rural English Shires.

Given the 'personal horizon' of these recollections and contemplations they cannot not, without removing from them their essence of a personal wordless experiencing of the numinous, form the basis for anything supra-personal be it a philosophy or a Way to guide others, just as the recollections and contemplations of others ancient and modern, and the authors themselves, should not be or become or be seen as a guide or even as a meritorious example.

As it says in Ayat 63 of Surah 25 of the Quran:

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ
الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا

"The 'Ibaad of Ar-Rahmaan are those who walk on earth in humility and, when the arrogant speak to them, they reply Salaam." [4]

As the poetess Sappho wrote:

ἔγω δὲ φίλημ' ἄβροσύναν [...] τοῦτο καί μοι
τὸ λάμπρον ἔρωσ ἀελίῳ καὶ τὸ κάλον λέλογχε [5]

I love delicate softness:
For me, love has brought the brightness
And the beauty of the Sun

As it says in the Beatitudes:

Μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.
μακάριοι οἱ πενθοῦντες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ παρακληθήσονται.
μακάριοι οἱ πραεῖς, ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσιν τὴν γῆν.
μακάριοι οἱ πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες τὴν δικαιοσύνην, ὅτι αὐτοὶ χορτασθήσονται.
μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται.
μακάριοι οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν θεὸν ὄψονται.
μακάριοι οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί, ὅτι αὐτοὶ υἱοὶ θεοῦ κληθήσονται.
μακάριοι οἱ δεδιωγμένοι ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

Fortunate, those humble with spiritus, for theirs is the Kingdom of Empyrean.
Fortunate, those who grieve, for they shall have solace.
Fortunate, the gentle, for they shall acquire the Earth.
Fortunate, those who hunger and thirst for fairness, for they shall be replete.
Fortunate, the compassionate, for they shall receive compassion.
Fortunate, the refined of heart, for they shall perceive Theos.
Fortunate, the peaceable, for they shall be called children of Theos.
Fortunate, those harassed due to their fairness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Empyrean. [6]

Which interpretations of mine illustrate the problems of exegesis, and why my preference, now and for over a decade, is and has been for the wordless perceivations of empathy and of a personal pathei-mathos.

David Myatt
October 24th, 2023

[1] The essay is included in www.davidmyatt.info/dwm-compilation-religion.pdf

[2] *Numinosity, Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition*, 2022. www.davidmyatt.info/dwm-denotata-empathy-v1b.pdf

[3] *Soli Deo Gloria*, 2011. Included in www.davidmyatt.info/dwm-compilation-religion.pdf

[4] Ar-Rahmaan is one of the names of Allah, signifying The Most Merciful. The 'Ibaad of Ar-Rahmaan are the Believers who follow the Word of Allah in the Quran and as manifest in the example of the Prophet Muhammad.

[5] P. Oxyrhynchus. XV (1922) nr. 1787 fr. 1 et 2

[6] The Gospel According To Matthew 5: 3-10. My translation and commentary of The Beatitudes is included in www.davidmyatt.info/dwm-compilation-religion.pdf

Since I have used unusual words - for example, the spiritus instead of the conventional 'the spirit', and Empyrean instead of 'heaven' - I append here extracts from my commentary.

μακάριος. A difficult word to translate since "blessed" has acquired particular (sometimes moralistic) meanings as a result of nearly two thousand years of exegesis, while "happy" is rather prosaic. The context - as in ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν - suggests "fortunate" [...]

πτωχός. Usually translated as "poor" which however has too many exegetical and modern connotations, and does not express the metaphorical sense here which implies being "humble" in respect of τὸ πνεῦμα.

τῷ πνεύματι [...] τῶν οὐρανῶν. In respect of τὸ πνεῦμα as the spiritus (rather than as the Spirit) and οὐρανός as Empyrean (rather than Heaven), qv. my commentary on John 1:32 from which this an extract:

οὐρανός here is always translated as 'heaven' although the term 'heaven' - used in the context of the Gospels - now has rather different connotations than the Greek οὐρανός, with the word 'heaven' now often implying something explained by almost two thousand years of exegesis and as depicted, for example, in medieval and Renaissance Christian art. However, those hearing or reading this particular Greek gospel for the first time in the formative years of Christianity would most probably have assumed the usual Greek usage of "the heavens" in the sense of the "the star-filled firmament above" or in the sense of "the sky" or as the abode of theos and/or of the gods, ἐν οὐρανῷ θεοί [...]

It therefore seems apposite to suggest a more neutral word than 'heaven' as a translation of οὐρανός and one which might not only be understood in various 'classical' ways by an audience of Greek speakers (such as the ways described above) but also be open to a new, and Christian, interpretation consistent with the milieu that existed when the Gospel of John was written and first heard. That is, before the exegesis of later centuries and long before post-Roman Christian iconography. Hence my suggestion of the post-classical Latin term Empyrean, which can bear the interpretation of the abode of theos and/or of the gods, of "the sky", of the "the star-filled firmament above"; and a Christian one suggested by Genesis 2.8 - παράδεισον ἐν Ἐδεμ (the Paradise of Eden) - and also by shamayim.

The Numinous And Denotata

The intuition, the personal experiencing, of the numinous is in my fallible opinion of fundamental importance in understanding our physis (φύσις) as human beings and our relation to Being, the source of beings, sentient or otherwise.

As I noted in my 2018 essay *From Mythoi To Empathy* [1], the term numinous derives from the classical Latin *numen* and denotes "a reverence for the divine; a divinity; divine power" with the word numen assimilated into English in the 15th century, with the English use of 'numinous' dating from the middle of the 17th century and used to signify "of or relating to a numen; revealing or indicating the presence of a divinity; divine, spiritual."

It thus has a wider meaning than that ascribed to it by Rudolf Otto in his *Das Heilige*. For him, it was manifest in the written words - 'the revelation' - of the Old and New Testaments of Christianity (qv. *Das Heilige*, chapters X, XI) as well as in Christian exegesis manifest in the preaching of individuals such as Martin Luther (*Das Heilige*, chapter XII) and in religious terms it involved 'worship' (*Das Heilige*, chapter XIII ff) and in philosophical terms was described by Kant's *a priori* (*Das Heilige*, chapter XVII). Yet Otto also wrote that it was *sui generis*, a personal emotion or feeling.

The wider meaning of the numinous results from our faculty of empathy which provides or can provide an individual intuition - a wordless-knowing or awareness - of the numinous, and as a personal human faculty empathy has a personal horizon and thus cannot be extrapolated from such a personal knowing into some-thing supra-personal be this some-thing denotata, including an ἰδέα/εἶδος, [2] or an axiom (ἀρχή) or a source (αἴτιος) for some 'revelation' or ideology or similar manifestations constructed by and dependent on appellation. In the case of a 'revelation' the source is often named as God or a god/the god (θεός, ὁ θεός) who or which are often described by a myth or mythoi.

For such extrapolation by the very nature of - the causality inherent in - denotata results in eris, a discord of opposites: for every denotatum has or develops an opposite and thus can cleave physis, as Heraclitus poetically and somewhat enigmatically expressed:

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος αἰὲν ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν εἰκόσσι, πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγέεμαι κατὰ φύσιν διαιρέων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅκως ἔχει· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὖδοντες ἐπιλανθάνονται. [3]

Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done. [4]

εἰδέναι δὲ χρή τὸν πόλεμον ἐόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα <χρεών> [5]

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord δίκη, and that beings are naturally born by discord. [6]

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80 [62] Orig. c. Cels. VI 42 p. 111, 11 εἰδέναι δὲ χρή τὸν πόλεμον ἐόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα [χρεών?].

Thus δίκη is the natural balance of conflicting opposites and thus an ancestral way of reconciliation or of resolving conflict, often misunderstood as a 'unity of opposites' with a dialectic of opposites with its inherent causality thus mistakenly considered a means to understanding, development and a believed in concept of necessary change.

The notion of discord so being born by denotata sundering physis is also and perhaps better expressed by Anaximander who like Heraclitus has been much misunderstood:

ἐξ ὧν δὲ ἡ γένεσις ἐστὶ τοῖς οὖσι, καὶ τὴν φθορὰν εἰς ταῦτα γίνεσθαι κατὰ τὸ χρεών· διδόναι γὰρ αὐτὰ δίκην καὶ τίσιν ἀλλήλοις τῆς ἀδικίας κατὰ τὴν τοῦ χρόνου τάξιν [7]

Where beings have their origin there also they cease to exist: offering payment to balance, one to another, their unbalance for such is the arrangement of what is passing. [8]

Which expresses the causality inherent in the beings - existents, ἰδέα/εἶδος - that denotata brings-into-being. They are

unbalanced, and since they are causal entities will sooner or later pass away even though in their living through the thoughts and actions of mortals they usually manifest and bring-into-being discord: hence why Heraclitus wrote εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἔόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν.

This is in contrast to the individual wordless-knowing that empathy brings-into-being, and explains the fundamental flaw of Plato's ἔλεγχος which led for example to him having Protagoras saying that the poet Simonides does not speak 'correctly', οὐκ ὀρθῶς λέγει [9] even though poetry could possibly be - as an intimation of the numinous - an attempt to wordfully presence what causal abstractions conceal, with the attempt by Socrates to dispute such an assertion by Protagoras seeming to fail. [10]

Which is perhaps why Aristotle (Metaphysics, 982β) quoted a saying attributed to Simonides: θεὸς ἂν μόνος τοῦτ' ἔχοι γέρας which follows ἄνδρ' ἀγαθὸν μὲν ἀλαθέως γενέσθαι,

It is hard to be a purely noble person [...] a god alone has that privilege [11]

With the context of Aristotle's quotation his statement,

ὅτι μὲν οὖν ἡ σοφία περὶ τινὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ αἰτίας ἐστὶν ἐπιστήμη, δῆλον. Metaphysics, 982α

It is evident that sapientia is a knowing of axioms and of sources [12]

and because

ἀλλ' οὔτε τὸ θεῖον φθονερὸν ἐνδέχεται εἶναι, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὴν παροιμίαν πολλὰ ψεύδονται ἄοιδοί, οὔτε τῆς τοιαύτης ἄλλην χρὴ νομίζειν τιμιωτέραν. ἡ γὰρ θειοτάτη καὶ τιμιωτάτη: τοιαύτη δὲ διχῶς ἂν εἴη μόνη: ἦν τε γὰρ μάλιστα ἂν ὁ θεὸς ἔχοι, θεία τῶν ἐπιστημῶν ἐστί, κἂν εἴ τις τῶν θείων εἴη. Metaphysics, 983α

it is not possible for the divine to be envious; indeed, as the maxim goes: songsters make many a false claim; nor should any other [epistēmê] be considered the more honourable, for it is divine because honourable in just two ways: if epistēmê is of the divinity or of the divine. [13]

Which returns us to whether some poetry such as the lyric attributed to Simonides as preserved by Plato can, for we mortals, be an intimation of the numinous, as some music - such as the counterpoint of JS Bach - is believed by many musicians and others to be.

If we presume to substitute 'the numinous' for 'the divine' and for 'the divinity' (the theos) then an epistēmê is τίμιος - honourable, precious, worthy, prized - if it is of, if it presences, the numinous; and it is interesting to note that, well over a thousand years after Aristotle, τίμιος in the Greek Orthodox tradition implies 'holy' as in Τίμιος Σταυρός, the Holy Cross.

In addition, as Aristotle - citing an ancient maxim - writes: παροιμίαν πολλὰ ψεύδονται ἄοιδοί, 'songsters make many a false claim', and that because of both the nature of denotata and our physis as human beings.

Empathy, The Hermetic Tradition, And Our Human Physis

The reality of empathy in relation to the numinous is two-fold - jumelle, as is our physis as human beings according to the Corpus Hermeticism - because although a means to appreciate, to discover, to feel, to know, the numinous without the need for mythoi, denotata and the associated exegesis, dialectic and discord, it is unappreciated, underdeveloped.

° Empathy is unappreciated, because of our physis: as is explained using Greek mythoi and in terms of the mystic hermetic tradition, in the Pœmandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum:

"distinct among all other beings on Earth, mortals are jumelle; deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal. Yet, although deathless and possessing full authority, the human is still subject to wyrd. Hence, although over the harmonious structure, when within become the slave. Male-and-female since of a male-and-female father, and wakeful since of a wakeful one [...] This is a mysterium esoteric even to this day." [14]

This is further explained, again using Greek mythoi and in terms of the hermetic tradition, in tractate XI, which returns us to Aristotelian honour and takes us to where σοφία - qv. the quotation from Metaphysics, 982α above - is personified and explained as manifesting the noble, the beautiful, good fortune (εὐδαιμονία), arête, and Aion:

"The foundation of all being is theos; of their quidditas, Aion; of their substance, Kosmos. The craft of theos: Aion; the work of Aion: Kosmos, which is not just a coming-into-being but always is, from Aion. Thus it cannot be destroyed since Aion is not destroyable nor will Kosmos cease to be since Aion surrounds it.

But the Sophia of theos is what?

The noble, the beautiful, good fortune, arête, and Aion. From Aion to Kosmos: exemption from death, and continuance of substance.

For that geniture depends on Aion just as Aion does on theos. Geniture and Kronos - in the heavens and on

Earth - are jumelle; in the heavens, unchanging and undecaying; yet on Earth, changeable and decayable.

Theos is the psyche of Aion; Aion that of Kosmos; the heavens that of the Earth. Theos is presented in perceivization, with perceivization presented in psyche, and psyche in substance, with all of this through Aion, with the whole body, in which are all the bodies, replete with psyche with psyche replete with perceivization and with theos. Above in the heavens the identity is unchanged while on Earth there is changement coming-into-being

Aion maintains this, through necessitas or through foreseeing or through physis, or through whatever other assumption we assume, for all this is the activity of theos. For the activity of theos is an unsurpassable crafting that no one can liken to anything mortal or divine [...]

Observe also the septenary cosmos ordered in arrangement by Aion with its separate aeonic orbits. Everything replete with phaos but with no Fire anywhere. For fellowship, and the melding of opposites and the dissimilar, produced phaos shining forth in the activity of theos, progenitor of all that is honourable, archon and hegemon of the septenary cosmos." [15]

The essence of which, beyond mythoi, is (i) that our physis is both "male-and-female since of a male-and-female father" and (ii) that the numinous can be apprehended, presented, by and through "the noble, the beautiful, good fortune, arête and Aion," with Aion understood as the eikon (εἰκὼν) of the Kosmos [16] and - qv. Tractate XI, 2-4 - the cause of changement coming-into-being on Earth and thus of what is changeable and decayable and thus dies.

Which changement coming-into-being, and its change and eventual decay applies, in the perspective of Aeons - of millennia - to denotata and what existents, such as ideologies and organized hierarchical religions, denotata has brought-into-being.

° Empathy is underdeveloped because it seems that for millennia we mortals - or more specifically, perhaps a majority of the males of our species - have neglected the reality of our physis being jumelle: both male-and-female, both masculous and muliebral, with such muliebral physis the geneture of empathy. [18] As described in terms of Greek mythoi and the hermetic tradition in the Pœmandres Tractate in relation to the seven spheres:

"Those seven came into being in this way. Earth was muliebral, Water was lustful, and Fire maturing. From Æther, the pneuma, and with Physis bringing forth human-shaped bodies. Of Life and phaos, the human came to be of psyche and perceivization; from Life - psyche; from phaos - perceivization; and with everything in the observable cosmic order cyclic until its completion.

Now listen to the rest of the explanation you asked to hear. When the cycle was fulfilled, the connexions between all things were, by the deliberations of theos, unfastened. Living beings - all male-and-female then - were, including humans, rent asunder thus bringing into being portions that were masculous with the others muliebral. Directly, then, theos spoke a numinous logos: propagate by propagation and spawn by spawning, all you creations and artissements, and let the perceiver have the knowledge of being deathless and of Eros as responsible for death.

Having so spoken, foreknowing - through wyrd and that harmonious structure - produced the coagulations and founded the generations with all beings spawning according to their kind. And they of self-knowledge attained a particular benefit while they who, misled by Eros, love the body, roamed around in the dark, to thus, perceptively, be afflicted by death." [19]

The masculous is evident in patriarchy, in patriarchal religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam; in denotata, in dialectical confrontation including Plato's ἔλεγχος, as well as evident in the desire, the masculous need, for competition and for armed and personal conflict. The muliebral is evident in personal virtues such as honour, benignitas, empathy, and wordless personal methodologies such as the epistêmê that is mystical contemplation.

The neglect of empathy is understandable since the masculous - as manifest for example in patriarchy, patriarchal religions, and denotata, codified as denotata has been in the ἰδέα and ideal of Empires and nation-States - has dominated mortal life for millennia to the detriment of the muliebral.

The Uncertitude Of Knowing

Empathy, with its personal horizon, is or can be the geneture of our Uncertitude Of Knowing as human beings, while the masculous is the geneture of that certitude of individual knowing that infuses codified denotata such as ideologies and organized hierarchical religions.

Thus, in terms of numinosity, empathy presents or can present to us in the immediacy of the personal moment an individual intimation or wordless knowing of the numinous, which intimation or knowing places our mortal life, and all we connect with it or is connected to it, into a supra-personal perspective which is a-causal and of Being itself, the source of beings and all being; of which Being we as a mortal are one finite deathful emanation. Which perspective brings with it or can bring with it the wordless knowing of the unwisdom of words.

Thus, while some mythoi Greek or otherwise, some mystical traditions ancient or otherwise, some poetry and some metaphysical speculations Greek or otherwise, can or may provide some insights into our physis, their wordfull expression or expressions are subject or have been subjected to exegesis, just as written expressions of religious-type revelations always are; with such exegesis more often than not the geniture of a certitude or certitudes of knowing.

Which returns us to the personal wordless knowing of empathy and its discoverable embedded uncertainty of knowing, with personal virtues such as honour and benignitas one means - an ancient epistêmê - to try to live according to such a wordless knowing, with personal honour a melding, a hermetic ἐναντιοδρομία, of masculine and muliebral thus returning us to the physis that was cleaved asunder and which in others is still being cleaved asunder.

According to an ancient saying attributed to Heraclitus which may contain a fallible intimation of this and possibly was one of first written intimations of it:

πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα (Diogenes Laërtius, ix. 7)

All by geniture is appropriately apportioned with beings bound together again by enantiodromia.

David Myatt
17.iii.22
v.3

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[1] <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2018/01/04/from-mythoi-to-empathy>

[2] The terms ἰδέα/εἶδος refer to Plato's postulation of what has been termed 'forms' - of a type of metaphysical existent such as an 'idea' - with ἰδέα used for both singular and plural instances, and εἶδος (singular) often used by Plato instead, as for instance at Phaedo 103ε, ὥστε μὴ μόνον αὐτὸ τὸ εἶδος ἀξιοῦσθαι τοῦ αὐτοῦ ὀνόματος εἰς τὸν αἰὲν χρόνον.

In regard to the use of εἶδος and the postulation, cf. Aristotle, Metaphysics, 1078β, 14-15, συνέβη δ' ἡ περὶ τῶν εἰδῶν δόξα τοῖς εἰποῦσι διὰ τὸ πεισθῆναι περὶ τῆς ἀληθείας τοῖς Ἡρακλειτείοις λόγοις ὡς πάντων τῶν αἰσθητῶν αἰὲν ῥεόντων, ὥστ' εἴπερ ἐπιστήμη τινὸς ἔσται καὶ φρόνησις, ἑτέρας δεῖν τινὰς φύσεις εἶναι παρὰ τὰς αἰσθητὰς μενούσας: οὐ γὰρ εἶναι τῶν ῥεόντων ἐπιστήμην.

[3] Fragment 1, Diels-Krantz.

[4] A short commentary on my translation is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/heraclitus-fragment-1/>

[5] Fragment B80.

[6] I have transliterated πόλεμος, and left δίκη as δίκη because both πόλεμος and δίκη should be regarded, like ψυχή (psyche/Psyche) as terms or as principles in their own right (hence the capitalization), and thus imply, suggest, and require, interpretation and explanation. To render them blandly by English terms such as 'war' and 'justice' - which have their own now particular meaning(s) - is in my view erroneous and somewhat lackadaisical, since δίκη for instance could be, depending on context: the custom(s) of a folk, judgement (or Judgement personified), the natural and the necessary balance, the correct/customary/ancestral way, and so on.

[7] Diels-Kranz, 12A9, B1

[8] In respect of χρόνος, it is not here a modern abstract measurable 'time' but 'the passing' of living or events as evident in the Agamemnon:

ποίου χρόνου δὲ καὶ πεπόρθηται πόλις 278

Then - how long has it been since the citadel was ravaged?

τίς δὲ πλὴν θεῶν ἅπαντ' ἀπήμων τὸν δι' αἰῶνος χρόνον 554-5

Who - except for the gods - passes their entire life without any injury at all?

In respect of ἀδικία, here it simply implies unbalance in contrast to the balance that is δίκη. The translation 'disorder' - like 'order' for δίκη - is too redolent of some modern or ancient morality designed to manifest 'order' in contrast to its dialectical opposite 'disorder'.

[9] Protagoras, 3396

[10] Relevant quotations from Simonides are at 339β, 339ξ and the poem by Simonides that Plato preserved is, in the version by J. Aars, *Das Gedicht des Simonides in Platons Protagoras*, 1888,

Ἄνδρ' ἀγαθὸν μὲν ἀλαθέως γενέσθαι χαλεπὸν,
χερσὶν τε καὶ ποσὶ καὶ νόῳ τετράγωνον, ἄνευ ψόγου τετυγμένον.
<...>
οὐδέ μοι ἐμμελέως τὸ Πιττάκειον νέμεται,
καίτοι σοφοῦ παρὰ φωτὸς εἰρημένον· χαλεπὸν φάτ' ἐσθλὸν ἔμμεναι.
θεὸς ἂν μόνος τοῦτ' ἔχοι γέρας· ἄνδρα δ' οὐκ ἔστι μὴ οὐ κακὸν ἔμμεναι,
ὃν ἀμήχανος συμφορὰ κατέλη.
πράξας μὲν εὖ πᾶς ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός,
κακὸς δ' εἰ κακῶς <τις>,
καὶ τὸ πλεῖστον ἄριστοι, τοὺς κε θεοὶ φιλῶσιν.
τοῦνεκεν οὐ ποτ' ἐγὼ τὸ μὴ γενέσθαι δυνατὸν
διζήμενος κενεᾶν ἐς ἄπρακτον ἐλπίδα μοῖραν αἰῶνος βαλέω,
πανάμωμον ἄνθρωπον, εὐρυεδοῦς ὅσοι καρπὸν αἰνύμεθα χθονός·
ἐπὶ δ' ὕμιν εὐρῶν ἀπαγγελέω.
πάντας δ' ἐπαίνημι καὶ φιλέω,
ἐκὼν ὅστις ἔρδη
μηδὲν αἰσχρόν· ἀνάγκη δ' οὐδὲ θεοὶ μάχονται.
<...>
<οὐκ εἰμ' ἐγὼ φιλόμωμος> ἔξαρχεῖ γ' ἐμοί,
ὃς ἂν ἦ κακὸς μηδ' ἄγαν ἀπάλαμνος, εἰδώς γ' ὀνησίπολιν δίκαν,
ὕγι᾽ ἀνὴρ, οὐδὲ μὴ μιν ἐγὼ
μωμήσομαι· τῶν γὰρ ἡλιθίων
ἀπείρων γενέθλα·
πάντα τοι καλά, τοῖσί τ' αἰσχρὰ μὴ μέμικται.

The more recent arrangement and reconstruction cited as PMG 242 is somewhat different:

ἄνδρ' ἀγαθὸν μὲν ἀλαθέως γενέσθαι
χαλεπὸν χερσὶν τε καὶ ποσὶ καὶ νόῳ
τετράγωνον, ἄνευ ψόγου τετυγμένον·
<..>
οὐδέ μοι ἐμμελέως τὸ Πιττάκειον
νέμεται, καίτοι σοφοῦ παρὰ φωτὸς εἰ-
ρημένον· χαλεπὸν φάτ' ἐσθλὸν ἔμμεναι.
θεὸς ἂν μόνος τοῦτ' ἔχοι γέρας, ἄνδρα δ' οὐκ

ἔστι μὴ οὐ κακὸν ἔμμεναι,
ὃν ἂν ἀμήχανος συμφορὰ κατέλη·
πράξας μὲν γὰρ εὖ πᾶς ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός,
κακὸς δ' εἰ κακῶς [
[ἐπὶ πλεῖστον δὲ καὶ ἄριστοί εἰσιν
[οὓς ἂν οἱ θεοὶ φιλῶσιν.]

τοῦνεκεν οὐ ποτ' ἐγὼ τὸ μὴ γενέσθαι
δυνατὸν διζήμενος κενεᾶν ἐς ἄ-
πρακτον ἐλπίδα μοῖραν αἰῶνος βαλέω,
πανάμωμον ἄνθρωπον, εὐρυεδοῦς ὅσοι

καρπὸν αἰνύμεθα χθονός·
ἐπὶ θ' ὕμιν εὐρῶν ἀπαγγελέω.
πάντας δ' ἐπαίνημι καὶ φιλέω,
ἐκὼν ὅστις ἔρδη
μηδὲν αἰσχρόν· ἀνάγκαι
δ' οὐδὲ θεοὶ μάχονται.
<...>
[οὐκ εἰμὶ φιλόσογος, ἐπεὶ ἔμοιγ' ἔξαρχεῖ
ὃς ἂν μὴ κακὸς ἦ] μηδ' ἄγαν ἀπάλαμνος, εἰ-
δώς γ' ὀνησίπολιν δίκαν,
ὕγι᾽ ἀνὴρ· οὐ τμὴν† ἐγὼ
μωμήσομαι· τῶν γὰρ ἡλιθίων
ἀπείρων γενέθλα.
πάντα τοι καλά, τοῖσιν
τ' αἰσχρὰ μὴ μέμικται

DL Page, *Poetae Melici Graeci*, Cambridge University Press, 1962

Such a reconstruction introduces the question of exegesis of not only texts but of such elements as grammar and how the personal revealing that is the wordless-knowing of empathy compares to the supra-personal wordful revealing that

can be or has been deduced from written texts, spoken words or methods such as Plato's ἔλεγχος.

[11] Socrates, in Protagoras, does not associate ἀληθής with ἀγαθός but with χαλεπός, which again introduces the question as to whether ἔλεγχος is a guide to the revealing that is ἀλήθεια and thus to understanding our φύσις as human beings.

[12] In respect of αἵτιος, here the term 'sources' is apt since 'cause' can impose a particular interpretation on the text, as in the causality of 'cause and effect'.

In respect of σοφία, the Latin sapientia is apposite, as in my translation of Tractates I and XIII of the Corpus Hermeticum [*Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*. 2017 ISBN 978-1976452369] because in some contexts the English word 'wisdom' does not fully reflect the meaning (and the various shades) of σοφία, especially in a metaphysical context given what the English term 'wisdom' now, in common usage and otherwise, often denotes. As in Tractates I and XIII sapientia requires contextual - a philosophical - interpretation.

[13] Regarding my translation:

i) ἐπιστήμη: epistēmê - implying skill or experience, especially in a profession or type of work or in using a methodology - rather than 'science' or 'knowledge', since 'science' has too many modern connotations while 'knowledge' is somewhat vague. In respect of experience in general, qv. Sophocles, Oedipus Tyrannus, 1115: τῇ δ' ἐπιστήμῃ σύ μου προύχοις τάχ' ἄν που, "about this, your experience has the advantage over mine".

ii) αἰοιδός: songsters, not poets, qv. Hesiod, Theogony, 95 where it is associated with the Muses and Apollo:

ἐκ γάρ τοι Μουσέων καὶ ἐκηβόλου Ἀπόλλωνος
95 ἄνδρες αἰοδοὶ ἔασιν ἐπὶ χθόνα καὶ κιθαρισταί,

iii) [epistēmê] is implied from the previous ἄνδρα δ' οὐκ ἄξιον μὴ οὐ ζητεῖν τὴν καθ' αὐτὸν ἐπιστήμην.

iv) Honourable is an accepted translation of τίμιος, with the English word honour dating from around 1200 and derived from the Latin honorem (refined, grace, beauty) via the Old French (and thence Anglo-Norman) onor/onur. An early use of the term occurs in a poem in Middle English by John Gower dating from c. 1393 which references the Greek warrior Achilles:

And riht in such a maner wise
Sche bad thei scholde hire don servise,
So that Achilles underfongeth
As to a yong ladi belongeth
Honour, servise and reverence.

Confessio Amantis. Liber Quintus vv. 2997-3001 (The Works of John Gower. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1901, edited by G.C Macaulay)

[14] Tractate I, 15-16. From my commentary on that tractate:

jumelle. For διπλοῦς. The much underused and descriptive English word jumelle - from the Latin gemellus - describes some-thing made in, or composed of, two parts, and is therefore most suitable here [...]

deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal. Θνητὸς μὲν διὰ τὸ σῶμα, ἀθάνατος δὲ διὰ τὸν οὐσιώδη ἄνθρωπον. Here, in respect of my choice of English words, I must admit to being influenced by Chapman's lovely poetic translation of the Hymn to Venus from the Homeric Hymns:

That with a deathless goddess lay a deathful man

In respect of οὐσιώδης, I prefer, given the context, 'inner' - suggestive of 'real' - rather than the conventional 'essential'; although 'vital' is an alternative translation here, suggested by what Eusebius wrote (c.326 CE) about φῶς [phaos] pre-existing even before the cosmic order, with φῶς used by Eusebius to mean Light in the Christian sense:

τό τε φῶς τὸ προκόσμιον καὶ τὴν πρὸ αἰώνων νοερὰν καὶ οὐσιώδη σοφίαν τὸν τε ζῶντα [Historia Ecclesiastica, Book 1, chapter 2]

The Light of the proto-cosmos, the comprehension and vital wisdom existing before the Aeons

wyrd. For ἡ εἰμαρμένη. A much better choice, here, than either 'fate' or 'destiny' given how overused both those words now are and how their interpretation is also now so varied. An overview of how the concept may have been understood in the late Hellenic period (around the time the Hermetica was probably written) is given in the 2nd century CE discourse *De Fato*, attributed to Plutarch, which begins by stating that εἰμαρμένη has been described in two ways, as ἐνέργεια (vigorous activity) and as οὐσία (essence) -

πρῶτον τοίνυν ἴσθι, ὅτι εἰμαρμένη διχῶς καὶ λέγεται καὶ νοεῖται: ἡ μὲν γάρ ἐστιν ἐνέργεια ἡ δ' οὐσία

[...]

a mysterium esoteric. For κεκρυμμένον μυστήριον. The term *mysterium* - a truth or insight or knowledge about some-thing, which is considered religious and/or metaphysical ('hermetic') and which is unknown/unrevealed to or as yet undiscovered by others, and hence 'mysterious' to them - expresses the meaning of the Greek here (as the word *mystery* by itself does not). Likewise in respect of *esoteric* - kept concealed or which is concealed/hidden to most or which is revealed to an individual by someone who already 'knows' what the *mysterium* in question is.

Hence why I write *a mysterium* here rather than *the mysterium*, and why "*a mysterium, esoteric even to this day*", is better than the rather bland "*the mystery kept hidden until this very day*"

[15] Tractate XI, 3-7

[16] In respect of *eikon*, as I wrote in my commentary on Tractate I (Pœmandres), 32:

The meaning and significance of [εἰκὼν] are often overlooked and often lost in translation. I have transliterated εἰκὼν as here it does not only mean what the English words 'image' or 'likeness' suggest or imply, but rather it is similar to what Maximus of Constantinople in his *Mystagogia* [Patrologiae Graeca, 91, c.0658] explains. Which is of we humans, and the cosmos, and Nature, and psyche, as *eikons*, although according to Maximus it is the Christian church itself (as manifest and embodied in Jesus of Nazareth and the Apostles and their successors and in scripture) which, being the *eikon* of God, enables we humans to recognize this, recognize God, be in communion with God, return to God, and thus find and fulfil the meaning of our being, our existence.

According to the hermetic weltanschauung, as outlined by Pœmandres here, all *physis* - the being, nature, character, of beings - their essence beyond the form/appearance their being is or assumes or is perceived as - re-presents (manifests, is an *eikon* of) *theos*. That is, the *physis* of beings can be considered not only as an emanation of *theos* but as re-presenting his Being, his essence. To recognize this, to recognize *theos*, to be in communion with *theos*, to return to *theos*, and thus become immortal, there is the way up (*anados*) through the seven spheres."

[17] The masculous and the muliebral are outlined in my 2019 essay *Physis And Being: An Introduction To The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/collected-works-2/physis-and-being/>.

[18] The unusual English word *geniture* expresses the essence of γένεσις: that which or those whom have or derive their being (and their subsequent development) from or because of something else or because of someone else. It also avoids comparisons with the Biblical use of the English 'genesis'.

[19] Tractate I, 18-19.

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Physis And Being

An Introduction To The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos

The philosophy of pathei-mathos is based on four axioms: (i) that it is empathy and pathei-mathos which can wordlessly reveal the ontological reality both of our own physis [1] and of how we, as sentient beings, relate to other living beings and to Being itself; (ii) that it is denotatum [2] - and thus the abstractions deriving therefrom [3] - which, in respect of human beings, can and often do obscure our physis and our relation to other living beings and to Being; (iii) that denotatum and abstractions imply a dialectic of contradictory opposites and thus for we human beings a separation-of-otherness; and (iv) that this dialectic of opposites is, has been, and can be a cause of suffering for both ourselves, as sentient beings, and - as a causal human presenced effect - for the other life with which we share the planet named in English as Earth.

For, as mentioned in a previous essay,

"empathy and pathei-mathos incline us to suggest that ipseity is an illusion of perspective: that there is, fundamentally, no division between 'us' - as some individual sentient, mortal being - and what has hitherto been understood and named as the Unity, The One, God, The Eternal. That 'we' are not 'observers' but rather Being existing as Being exists and is presenced in the Cosmos. That thus all our striving, individually and collectively when based on some ideal or on some form - some abstraction and what is derived therefrom, such as ideology and dogma - always is or becomes sad/tragic, and which recurrence of sadness/tragedy, generation following generation, is perhaps even inevitable unless and until we live according to the wordless knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal." [4]

In essence, empathy and pathei-mathos lead us away from the abstractions we have constructed and manufactured and which abstractions we often tend to impose, or project, upon other human beings, upon ourselves, often in the belief that such abstractions can aid our understanding of others and of ourselves, with a feature of all abstractions being inclusion and exclusion; that is, certain individuals are considered as belonging to or as defined by a particular category while others are not.

Over millennia we have manufactured certain abstractions and their assumed opposites and classified many of them according to particular moral standards so that a particular abstraction is considered good and/or beneficial and/or as necessary and/or as healthy, while its assumed dialectical opposite is considered bad (or evil), or unnecessary, or unhealthy, and/or as unwarranted.

Thus in ancient Greece and Rome slavery was accepted by the majority, and considered by the ruling elite as natural and necessary, with human beings assigned to or included in the category 'slave' a commodity who could be traded with slaves regarded as necessary to the functioning of society. Over centuries, with the evolution of religions such as Christianity and with the development in Western societies of humanist weltanschauungen, the moral values of this particular abstraction, this particular category to which certain human beings assigned, changed such that for perhaps a majority slavery came to be regarded as morally repugnant. Similarly in respect of the abstraction designated in modern times by such terms as "the rôle of women in society" which rôle for millennia in the West was defined according to various masculous criteria - deriving from a ruling and an accepted patriarchy - but which rôle in the past century in Western societies has gradually been redefined.

Yet irrespective of such developments, such changes associated with certain abstractions, the abstractions themselves and the dialectic of moral opposites associated with them remain because, for perhaps a majority, abstractions and ipseity, as a criteria of judgment and/or as a human instinct, remain; as evident in the continuing violence against, the killing of, and the manipulation, of women by men, and in what has become described by terms such as "modern slavery" and "human trafficking".

In addition, we human beings have continued to manufacture abstractions and continue to assign individuals to them, a useful example being the abstraction denoted by the terms The State and The Nation-State [5] and which abstraction, with its government, its supra-personal authority, its laws, its economy, and its inclusion/exclusion (citizenship or lack of it) has come to dominate and influence the life of the majority of people in the West.

Ontologically, abstractions - ancient and modern - usurp our connexion to Being and to other living beings so that instead of using wordless empathy and pathei-mathos as a guide to Reality [6] we tend to define ourselves or are defined by others according to an abstraction or according to various abstractions. In the matter of the abstraction that is The State there is a tendency to define or to try to understand our relation to Reality by for example whether we belong, are a citizen of a particular State; by whether or not we have an acceptable standard of living because of the opportunities and employment and/or the assistance afforded by the economy and the policies of the State; by whether or not we agree or disagree with the policies of the government in power, and often by whether or not we have transgressed some State-made law or laws. Similarly, in the matter of belief in a revealed religion such as Christianity or Islam we tend to define or understand our relation to Reality by means of such an abstraction: that is, according to the revelation (or a particular interpretation of it) and its eschatology, and thus by how the promise of Heaven/Jannah may be personally obtained.

Empathy and pathei-mathos, however, wordlessly - sans denotatum, sans abstractions, sans a dialectic of contradictory opposites - uncover physis: our physis, that of other mortals, that of other living beings, and that of

Being/Reality itself. Which physis, howsoever presented - in ourselves, in other living beings, in Being - is fluxive, a balance between the being that it now is, that it was, and that it has the inherent (the acausal) quality to be. [7]

This uncovering, such a revealing, is of a knowing beyond ipseity and thus beyond the separation-of-otherness which denotatum, abstractions, and a dialectic of opposites manufacture and presence. A knowing of ourselves as an affective connexion [8] to other living beings and to Being itself, with Being revealed as fluxive (as a meson - μέσον [9] - with the potentiality to change, to develop) and thus which (i) is not - as in the theology of revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam - a God who is Eternal, Unchanging, Omnipotent [10], and (ii) is affected or can be affected (in terms of physis) by what we do or do not do.

This awareness, this knowing, of such an affective connexion - our past, our current, our potentiality, to adversely affect, to have adversely affected, to cause, to having caused, suffering or harm to other living beings - also inclines us or can incline us toward benignity and humility, and thus incline us to live in a non-suffering causing way, appreciate of our thousands of years old culture of pathei-mathos. [11]

In terms of understanding Being and the divine, it inclines us or can incline us, as sentient beings, to apprehend Being as not only presented in us but as capable of changing - unfolding, evolving - in a manner dependant on our physis and on how our physis is presented by us, and by others, in the future. Which seems to imply a new ontology and one distinct from past and current theologies with their anthropomorphic θεός (god) and θεοί (gods).

An ontology of physis: of mortals, of living beings, and of Being, as fluxive mesons. Of we mortals as a mortal microcosm of Being - the cosmic order, the κόσμος - itself [12] with the balance, the meson, that empathy and pathei-mathos incline us toward living presented in the ancient Greek phrase καλὸς κάγαθός,

"which means those who conduct themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner and who thus manifest - because of their innate physis or through pathei-mathos or through a certain type of education or learning - nobility of character." [13]

Which personal conduct, in the modern world, might suggest a Ciceronian-inspired but new type of *civitas*, and one

"not based on some abstractive law but on a spiritual and interior (and thus not political) understanding and appreciation of our own Ancestral Culture and that of others; on our 'civic' duty to personally presence καλὸς κάγαθός and thus to act and to live in a noble way. For the virtues of personal honour and manners, with their responsibilities, presence the fairness, the avoidance of hubris, the natural harmonious balance, the gender equality, the awareness and appreciation of the divine, that is the numinous." [14]

With καλὸς κάγαθός, such personal conduct, and such a new *civitas*, summarising how the philosophy of pathei-mathos might, in one way, be presented in a practical manner in the world.

David Myatt
2019

This essay is a revised and edited version of a reply sent to an academic
who enquired about the philosophy of pathei-mathos

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Further Reading:
The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos. ISBN 978-1484096642

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Notes

[1] I use the term physis - φύσις - ontologically, in the Aristotelian sense, to refer to the 'natural' and the fluxive being (nature) of a being, which nature is often manifest, in we mortals, in our character (persona) and in our deeds. Qv. my essay *Towards Understanding Physis* (2015) and my translation of and commentary on the Poemandres tractate in *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates* (2017).

[2] As noted elsewhere, I use the term denotatum - from the Latin denotare - not only as meaning "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted," but also as an Anglicized term implying, depending on context, singular or plural instances. As an Anglicized term there is generally no need to use the inflected plural *denotata*.

[3] In the context of the philosophy of pathei-mathos the term abstraction signifies a particular named and defined category or form (ἰδέα, εἶδος) and which category or form is a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing.

In respect of denotatum, in Kratylus 389d Plato has Socrates talk about 'true, ideal' naming (denotatum) - βλέποντα πρὸς αὐτὸ ἐκεῖνο ὃ ἔστιν ὄνομα, qv. my essay *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*, 2015.

[4] *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*.

[5] Contrary to modern convention I tend to write The State instead of "the state" because I consider The State/The Nation-State a particular abstraction; as an existent, an entity, which has been manufactured, by human beings, and which entity, like many such manufactured 'things', has been, in its design and function, changed and which can still be changed, and which has associated with it a presumption of a supra-personal (and often moral) authority.

In addition, written The State (or the State) it suggests some-thing which endures or which may endure beyond the limited lifespan of a mortal human being.

[6] 'Reality' in the philosophical sense of what (in terms of physis) is distinguished or distinguishable from what is apparent or external. In terms of ancient Hellenic and Western Renaissance mysticism the distinction is between the esoteric and the exoteric; between the physis of a being and some outer form (or appearance) including the outer form that is a useful tool or implement which can be used to craft or to manufacture some-thing such as other categories/abstractions. With the important ontological proviso that what is esoteric is not the 'essence' of something - as for example Plato's ἰδέα/εἶδος - but instead the physis of the being itself as explicated for instance by Aristotle in *Metaphysics*, Book 5, 1015α,

ἐκ δὴ τῶν εἰρημένων ἡ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἢ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὕλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικῇ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐνυπάρχουσα πῶς ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ

Given the foregoing, then principally - and to be exact - physis denotes the quidditas of beings having change inherent within them; for substantia has been denoted by physis because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changes predicated on it. For physis is inherent change either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.

That is, as I noted in my essay *Towards Understanding Physis*, it is a meson (μέσον) balanced between the being that-it-was and the being it has the potentiality to unfold to become.

In respect of "what is real" - τῶν ὄντων - cf. the *Poemandres tractate* of the *Corpus Hermeticum* and especially section 3,

φημὶ ἐγώ, Μαθεῖν θέλω τὰ ὄντα καὶ νοῆσαι τὴν τούτων φύσιν καὶ γινῶναι τὸν θεόν

I answered that I seek to learn what is real, to apprehend the physis of beings, and to have knowledge of theos [qv. *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, 2017]

[7] Qv. *Towards Understanding Physis*, 2015.

[8] I use term *affective* here, and in other writings, to mean "having the quality of affecting; tending to affect or influence."

[9] Qv. footnote [6]. In terms of ontology a meson is the balance, the median, existing between the being which-was and the being which-can-be.

[10] This understanding of Being as fluxive - as a change - was prefigured in the mythos of Ancient Greece with the supreme deity - the chief of the gods - capable of being overthrown and replaced, as Zeus overthrew Kronos and as Kronos himself overthrew his own father.

[11] As explained in my 2014 essay *Education And The Culture of Pathei-Mathos*, the term describes "the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals, world-wide, over thousands of years, as (i) described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts; as (ii) have inspired particular works of literature or poetry or drama; as (iii) expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and as (iv) manifest in more recent times by 'art-forms' such as films and documentaries."

This culture remembers the suffering and the beauty and the killing and the hubris and the love and the compassion that we mortals have presenced and caused over millennia, and which culture

"thus includes not only traditional accounts of, or accounts inspired by, personal pathei-mathos, old and modern - such as the *With The Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa* by Eugene Sledge, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, and the poetry of people as diverse as Sappho and Sylvia Plath - but also works or art-forms inspired by such pathei-mathos, whether personal or otherwise, and whether factually presented or fictionalized. Hence films such as *Monsieur Lazhar* and *Etz Limon* may poignantly express something about our φύσις as human beings and thus form part of the culture of pathei-mathos."

[12] κόσμον δὲ θείου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον, "a cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings." *Tractate IV:2*, *Corpus Hermeticum*.

Cf. Marsilii Ficini, *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda*, XXVI, published in 1489 CE,

Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana

potissimum dona.

How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned.

Which is a philosophical restatement of the phrase "quod est inferius est sicut quod est superius" (what is above is as what is below) from the Latin version, published in 1541 CE, of the medieval Hermetic text known as *Tabula Smaragdina*.

[13] The quotation is from my *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*, 2017.

[14] The quotation is from my *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua: Christianity, The Johannine Weltanschauung, And Presencing The Numinous*, 2017.

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**From Mythoi To Empathy
Toward A New Appreciation Of The Numinous**

Since the concept of the numinous is central to my weltanschauung - otherwise known as the 'philosophy of pathei-mathos' - it seems apposite to provide, as I did in respect of my use of the term physis, φύσις [1], a more detailed explanation of the concept, and my usage of it, than I have hitherto given, deriving as the term does from the classical Latin numen which denoted "a reverence for the divine; a divinity; divine power" with the word numen assimilated into English in the 15th century, with the English use of 'numinous' dating from the middle of the 17th century and used to signify "of or relating to a numen; revealing or indicating the presence of a divinity; divine, spiritual."

The term numinous was also used in a somewhat restrictive religious way [2] by Rudolf Otto over a century ago in his book *Das Heilige*.

In contrast to Otto et al, my understanding of the numinous is that it is primarily a perceivization, not a personal emotion or feeling, not a mysterium, and not an idea in the sense of Plato's εἶδος and thus is not similar to Kant's concept of *a priori*. As a perceivization, while it includes an apprehension of what is often referred to as 'the divine', 'the holy' - and sometimes thus is an apprehension of theos or theoi - it is not limited to such apprehensions, since as in the past it is often an intimation of, an intuition concerning,

"the natural balance of ψυχή; a balance which ὕβρις upsets. This natural balance – our being as human beings – is or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful." [3]

Where ψυχή is an intimation of, an intuition concerning Life *qua* being; of ourselves as a living existent considered as an emanation of ψυχή, howsoever ψυχή is described, as for example in mythoi - and thus in terms of theos, theoi, or 'Nature' - with ψυχή thus what 'animates' us and what gives us our φύσις as human beings. A physis classically perceived to be that of a mortal fallible being veering between σωφρονεῖν (thoughtful reasoning, and thus fairness) and ὕβρις. [4]

The particular apprehension of external reality that is the numinous is that provided by our natural faculty of empathy, ἐμπάθεια. When this particular faculty is developed and used then it is a specific and extended type of συμπάθεια. That is, it is a type of and a means to knowing and understanding another human being and/or other living beings. The type of 'knowing' - and thence the understanding - that empathy provides or can provide is different from, but supplementary and complimentary to, that knowing which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

Furthermore, since empathy is a natural and an individual human faculty, it

"is limited in range and application, just as our faculties of sight and hearing are limited in range and application. These limits extend to only what is direct, immediate, and involve personal interactions with other humans or with other living beings. There is therefore, for the philosophy of pathei-mathos, an 'empathic scale of things' and an acceptance of our limitations of personal knowing and personal understanding." [5]

That is, as I explained in my 2015 essay *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*, there is a 'local horizon of empathy'.

This local horizon and the fact that empathy is a human faculty mean that the apprehension is wordless and personal and cannot be extrapolated beyond, or abstracted out from, the individual without losing some or all of its numinosity since the process of denotatum - of abstraction - devolves around the meanings assigned to words, terms, and names, and which meanings can and do vary over causal time and may be (mis)interpreted by others often on the basis of some idea, or theory, or on some comparative exegesis.

It therefore follows that the numinous cannot be codified and that numinosity cannot be adequately, fully, presenced by anything doctrinal or which is organized beyond a small, a localized, and thus personal level; and that all such a supra-local organization can ever hope to do at best is provide a fallible intimation of the numinous, or perhaps some practical means to help others toward individually apprehending the numinous for themselves.

Which intimation, given the nature of empathy - with its συμπάθεια, with its wordless knowing of actually being for a moment or for moments 'the living other' - is of muliebral virtues such as compassion, manners, and a certain personal humility, and of how a shared, mutual, personal love can and does presence the numinous. Which intimation, which wisdom, which knowing, is exactly that of our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos, and which culture - with its personal recounting, and artistic renderings, of tragedy, love, loss, suffering, and war - is a far better guide to the numinous than conventional religions. [6]

All of which is why I wrote in my *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* that in my view "the numinous is primarily a manifestation of the muliebral," and that revealed religions such as Christianity, Islam, and Judaism primarily manifest a presencing of the masculous. Such religions - indeed all religions - therefore have not presenced, and do not and cannot presence, the numinous as the numinous can be presenced. Neither did Greco-Roman culture, for all its assimilation of some muliebral mythoi, adequately presence the numinous, and just as no modern organized paganus revival dependant on mythoi and anthropomorphic deities can adequately presence the numinous.

For the cultivation of the faculty of empathy is the transition from mythoi and anthropomorphic deities (theos and theoi) to an appreciation of the numinous sans denotatum and sans religion.

A New Appreciation Of The Numinous

How then can the faculty of empathy be cultivated? My own practical experience of various religions, as well as my own pathei-mathos, inclines me to favour the personal cultivation of muliebral virtues and a return to a more local, a less organized, way or ways of living based initially on a personal and mutual and loyal love between two individuals. A living of necessity balanced by personal honour given how the world is still replete with dishonourable hubriatic individuals who, devoid of empathy, are often motivated by the worst of intentions. For such a personal honour - in the immediacy of the personal moment - is a necessary restoration of the numinous balance that the dishonourable deeds of a hubriatic individual or individuals upsets [7].

For such a personal love, such a preparedness to restore the natural balance through honour, are - in my admittedly fallible view - far more adequate presencings of the numinous than any religious ritual, than any religious worship, or any type of contemplative (wordless) prayer.

David Myatt
January 2018

[1] *Toward Understanding Physis*. Included in the 2015 compilation *Sarigthersa*.

[2] I have endeavoured in recent years to make a distinction between a religion and a spiritual 'way of life'. As noted in my 2013 text *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, Appendix II - Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, *Religion*,

"One of the differences being that a religion requires and manifests a codified ritual and doctrine and a certain expectation of conformity in terms of doctrine and ritual, as well as a certain organization beyond the local community level resulting in particular individuals assuming or being appointed to positions of authority in matters relating to that religion. In contrast, Ways are more diverse and more an expression of a spiritual ethos, of a customary, and often localized, way of doing certain spiritual things, with there generally being little or no organization beyond the community level and no individuals assuming - or being appointed by some organization - to positions of authority in matters relating to that ethos.

Religions thus tend to develop an organized regulatory and supra-local hierarchy which oversees and appoints those, such as priests or religious teachers, regarded as proficient in spiritual matters and in matters of doctrine and ritual, whereas adherents of Ways tend to locally and informally and communally, and out of respect and a personal knowing, accept certain individuals as having a detailed knowledge and an understanding of the ethos and the practices of that Way. Many spiritual Ways have evolved into religions."

Another difference is that religions tend to presence and be biased toward the masculous, while spiritual ways tend to be either more muliebral or incorporate muliebral virtues.

[3] Myatt, David. *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, 2103. Appendix II - Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, *The Numinous*.

[4] In my note *Concerning σωφρονεῖν* - included in my "revised 2455621.531" version of *The Balance of Physis - Notes on λόγος and ἀληθεία in Heraclitus. Part One, Fragment 112* - I mentioned that I use σωφρονεῖν (sophronein) in preference to σωφροσύνη (sophrosyne) since sophrosyne has acquired an English interpretation - "soundness of mind, moderation" - which in my view distorts the meaning of the original Greek. As with my use of the term πάθει μάθος (pathei-mathos) I use σωφρονεῖν in an Anglicized manner with there thus being no necessity to employ inflective forms.

[5] Myatt, *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. Appendix II - *Immediacy-of-the-Moment*.

[6] One aspect of the apprehension of the numinous that empathy provides - which I have briefly touched upon in various recent personal writings - is that personal love is personal love; personal, mutual, equal, and germane to the moment and to a person. It thus does not adhere to manufactured or assumed abstractive boundaries such as gender, social status, or nationality, with enforced adherence to such presumptive boundaries - such as opposition to same gender love whether from religious or political beliefs - contrary to empathy and a cause of suffering.

[7] As mentioned in my *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*,

"The personal virtue of honour, and the cultivation of wu-wei, are - together - a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἁρμονίη.

For personal honour is essentially a presencing, a grounding, of ψυχή - of Life, of our φύσις - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη.

This balancing of compassion – of the need not to cause suffering – by σωφρονεῖν and δίκη is perhaps most obvious on that particular occasion when it may be judged necessary to cause suffering to another human being. That is, in honourable self-defence. For it is natural – part of our reasoned, fair, just, human nature – to defend ourselves when attacked and (in the immediacy of the personal moment) to valorously, with chivalry, act in defence of someone close-by who is unfairly attacked or dishonourably threatened or is being bullied by others, and to thus employ, if our personal judgement of the circumstances deem it necessary, lethal force.

This use of force is, importantly, crucially, restricted – by the individual nature of our judgement, and by the individual nature of our authority – to such personal situations of immediate self-defence and of valorous defence of others, and cannot be extended beyond that, for to so extend it, or attempt to extend it beyond the immediacy of the personal moment of an existing physical threat, is an arrogant presumption – an act of ὕβρις – which negates the fair, the human, presumption of innocence of those we do not personally know, we have no empathic knowledge of, and who present no direct, immediate, personal, threat to us or to others nearby us.

Such personal self-defence and such valorous defence of another in a personal situation are in effect a means to restore the natural balance which the unfair, the dishonourable, behaviour of others upsets. That is, such defence fairly, justly, and naturally in the immediacy of the moment corrects their error of ὕβρις resulting from their bad (their rotten) φύσις; a rotten character evident in their lack of the virtue, the skill, of σωφρονεῖν. For had they possessed that virtue, and if their character was not bad, they would not have undertaken such a dishonourable attack."

A Sacramental Link?



Would being connected again to the 'source of grace' through the Catholic sacrament of confession and Holy Communion provide expiation for past transgressions and be cathartic? Possibly, given that certain passages from the gospel of John have somewhat resonated with me since I began the task, in 2017, of translating that Gospel.

Among the passages were, in my translation, "aware as he [Jesus] was of the person within" (2:25) and "receive the Halig Spiritus [Holy Spirit]. If you release anyone from their errors, they are released; if you hold onto them, they are held onto," 20:22-23. [1] [2] With, according to my fallible understanding, the second quotation the genesis of one of the founding principles of the Roman Catholic Church: of an ordained Priest having the religious authority to give absolution for the errors [1] a person has committed, and the authority to specify what penance is required for expiation. There is thus a sacramental, a living, link to the message of Jesus.

Which reminds me of what you mentioned in previous correspondence about the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church toward a having a partner of the same gender. In my experience, the attitude at the Parish and monastic level is often more understanding and compassionate than some past or ancient announcement or some work emanating from the Vatican perhaps suggested and suggests.

Having endeavoured to translate the gospel of John what I found was, to quote what I wrote in the *Introduction* to my translation of chapters 1-5 of the Gospel of John, that

"it imparts something important regarding the teachings, and the life, of Jesus of Nazareth: something quite human, something rather different from a stern preacher preaching about 'sin'; something which seems to express what the Beatitudes express, and something which individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox and William Penn many centuries later tried to say and write about Christianity and about the teachings and the life of Jesus of Nazareth."

Which is that it is the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from past moralistic interpretations based on inflexible notions of 'sin' and hence on what is considered 'good' and what is considered 'evil'.

It seems that such an appreciation - perhaps more correctly, re-appreciation - of this is slowly permeating, at the Parish level and around most of the world, the Roman Catholic Church.

As for me, and in respect of Catholic sacraments, perhaps I am weakening as my last mortal days seem to near, just as the libertine and poet Earl Rochester confessed on his death-bed, and just as the character Lord Marchmain, portrayed by Laurence Olivier, symbolically did in his last moments in that wonderful 1981 adaptation of *Brideshead Revisited*.

David Myatt
September 2023

A slightly revised extract from a letter to a personal correspondent

[1] I translated ἁμαρτία not by the conventional *sin* but rather as 'error' or 'mistake' for reasons I attempted to explain in my commentary and in various essays such as *Exegesis and Translation*. One of the reasons relates to how Julian of Norwich perceived the teaching of Jesus; another to the c. 880 AD translation of the c. 525 AD text *Consolatio Philosophiae*; another to something Thomas Aquinas wrote.

As explained in my *Exegesis and Translation*,

One of the prevalent English words used in translations of the New Testament, and one of the words now commonly associated with revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam, is sin. A word which now imputes and for centuries has imputed a particular and at times somewhat strident if not harsh moral

attitude, with sinners starkly contrasted with the righteous, the saved, and with sin, what is evil, what is perverse, to be shunned and shudderingly avoided.

One of the oldest usages of the word sin - so far discovered - is in the c. 880 CE translation of the c. 525 CE text *Consolatio Philosophiae*, a translation attributed to King Ælfred. Here, the Old English spelling of syn is used:

ƿæt is swiðe dyslic & swiðe micel syn ƿæt mon ƿæs wenan scyle be Gode

The context of the original Latin of Boethius [i] is *cogitare*, in relation to a dialogue about goodness and God, so that the sense of the Latin is that it is incorrect - an error, wrong - to postulate/claim/believe certain things about God. There is thus here, in Boethius, as in early English texts such as *Beowulf*, [ii] the sense of doing what was wrong, of committing an error, of making a mistake, of being at fault; at most of overstepping the bounds, of transgressing limits imposed by others, and thus being 'guilty' of such an infraction, a sense which the suggested etymology of the word syn implies: from the Latin sons, sontis.

Thus, this early usage of the English word syn seems to impart a sense somewhat different from what we now associate with the word sin, which is why in my translation of John, 8.7 [iii] I eschewed that much overused and pejorative word in order to try and convey something of the numinous original:

So, as they continued to ask [for an answer] he straightened himself, saying to them: Let he who has never made a mistake [Ἀναμαρτητος] throw the first stone at her.

ὥς δὲ ἐπέμενον ἐρωτῶντες αὐτόν, ἀνέκυψεν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὁ ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν πρῶτος ἐπ' αὐτὴν βαλέτω λίθον.

Jesus here is not, in my view, sermonizing about sin, as a puritan preacher might, and as if he is morally superior to and has judged the sinners. Instead, he is rather gently and as a human pointing out an obvious truth about our human nature; explaining, in v.11, that he has not judged her conduct:

ἡ δὲ εἶπεν· οὐδεὶς, κύριε. εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· οὐδὲ ἐγὼ σε κατακρίνω· πορεύου, ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε

[And] she answered, No one, my Lord. Whereupon Jesus replied "Neither do I judge [κατακρίνω] you, therefore go, and avoid errors such as those". [iv]

Such a translation avoids the rather contradictory nature of most other translations which have Jesus clearly stating that he also does not judge her but then have him go on to say that she should 'sin no more' with the obvious implication that he has indeed judged her in that in his judgement she had indeed sinned before.

Understood and appreciated thus, sans the now culturally-biased word sin, these passages from the gospel according to John - together with passages such as Luke 19.10 and Romans 13.10 [v] - perhaps usefully summarize the evangel of Jesus of Nazareth; the (in my view) rather human message of avoiding judging others because we ourselves are prone to error, the message of love, and the message of redemption (forgiveness) for those who in the past have made mistakes but who have thereafter tried to avoid making such mistakes again, those hitherto perhaps damaged or lost.

Footnotes:

[i] Quare quod a summo bono diversum est sui natura, id summum bonum non est; quod nefas est de eo cogitare, quo nihil constat esse praestantius. *Consolatio Philosophiae*, Liber Tertius, pr. x

[ii] *Beowulf*, 2470f, where the spelling synn is used:

eaferum laefde, swa deð eadig mon,
lond ond leodbyrig, ƿa he of life gewat.
ƿa wæs synn ond sacu Sweona ond Geata
ofer wid wæter, wroht gemæne,
herenið hearda, syððan Hreðel swealt

[iii] qv. Myatt, *Fifty Years of Diverse Peregrinations*. 2013

[iv] The conventional interpretation of ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε is "from now on sin no more".

[v] (a} Luke 19.10:

ἦλθεν γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ζητῆσαι καὶ σῶσαι τὸ ἀπολωλός. "The arrivance [ἔρχομαι] of the Son of Man was to seek and to save what was lost.

However, a more interesting interpretation is:

The arrivance of the Son of Man was to seek and to repair [σώζω] what had been damaged [ἀπόλλυμι]

and which interpretation is suggested by (i) the sense of σώζω: keep safe, preserve, maintain -

whence repair, and (ii) the sense of ἀπόλλυμι: destroy, ruin, kill, demolish, and - metaphorically - damaged, lost, and die.

(b) Romans 13.10:

ἡ ἀγάπη τῷ πλησίον κακὸν οὐκ ἐργάζεται· πλήρωμα οὖν νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη

love brings no harm to the neighbour; love is the completion of the law

[2] As I noted in my commentary on John 1:33 regarding the Holy Spirit, which I translated as Halig Spiritus:

ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ. *in Halig Spiritus*. I have here used the Old English word Halig - as for example found in the version of John 17.11 in the Lindisfarne Gospel, 'Du halig fæder' - to translate ἅγιος rather than the later word 'holy' derived as that is from halig and used as it was by Wycliffe in his 1389 translation of this phrase, "in the Hooly Gost", which itself echoes the ASV, "on Halgum Gaste."

The unique phrase *in Halig Spiritus* - in place of the conventional 'with the Holy Spirit' - may thus express something of the numinosity, and the newness, of the original Gospel, especially as the word 'holy' has been much overused, imputes particular meanings from over a thousand years of exegesis, and, latterly in common parlance, has become somewhat trivialized. In respect of ἐν, while most translators have opted here (as in respect of 1.26 ff) for "with", I have opted for "in", given that John baptized "in water" - for example, in Aenon - and given that Jesus baptizes "in, with" (in the name of) Halig Spiritus.

Related:

The Gospel According To John

Chapter 1 - 5

Translation and Commentary

<https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2023/08/myatt-gospel-john-1-5.pdf>

Exegesis And Translation

<https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/exegesis-and-translation-partsone-two.pdf>

Image credit:

Icon of Jesus Pantocrator, Δέησις Mosaic
Hagia Sophia, c. 1260 CE

Appreciating Classical Literature

Having read and once been in possession of a few of the printed published volumes of *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* [1] I seem to at last understand how that continuing scholarly endeavour, begun decades before the First World War, is emblematic of the importance of academic scholarship, and emblematic of the temporal nature of wars and especially of such national and regional conflicts as we have endured, and continue to be involved in, during the past one hundred and fifty years. Wars, and conflicts, with their human suffering and their often civilian deaths which an appreciation of classical (Ancient Greek and Latin) literature can place into a necessary supra-personal and supra-national perspective. For the *pathei-mathos* which such literature - and often the associated *mythoi* - can impart is of our hubris and our need for the wisdom enshrined in the phrase *καλὸς κάγαθός*. That is, in the melding of *τὸ καλόν* (the beautiful) and *τὸ ἀγαθόν* (the honourable) as in tractate XI:3 of the *Corpus Hermeticum*:

Ἡ δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ σοφία τί ἔστι; Τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ καλὸν καὶ εὐδαιμονία καὶ ἡ πᾶσα ἀρετὴ καὶ ὁ αἰὼν.

But the Sophia of the *theos* is what? The noble, the beautiful, good fortune, *arête*, and Aion. [2]

Where, however, *τὸ καλόν* refers, in terms of individuals, to not only physical beauty - the beautiful - but also to a particular demeanour indicative of a well-balanced, noble, personal character, as for example mentioned by Xenophon in *Hellenica*, Book V, 3.9,

πολλοὶ δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ τῶν περιοίκων ἐθελονταὶ καλοὶ κάγαθοι ἠκολούθουν, καὶ ξένοι τῶν τροφίμων καλουμένων, καὶ νόθοι τῶν Σπαρτιατῶν, μάλα εὐειδεῖς τε καὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ πόλει καλῶν οὐκ ἄπειροι

A personal character which Marcus Tullius Cicero also explained, in his *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*,

Honestum igitur id intellegimus, quod tale est, ut detracta omni utilitate sine ullis praemiis fructibusve per se ipsum possit iure laudari. quod quale sit, non tam definitione, qua sum usus, intellegi potest, quamquam aliquantum potest, quam communi omnium iudicio et optimi cuiusque studiis atque factis, qui permulta ob eam unam causam faciunt, quia decet, quia rectum, quia honestum est, etsi nullum consecuturum emolumentum vident. (II, 45f)

I am inclined to believe that it is unfortunate that the societies of the modern West no longer consider "a classical education" - the learning of Ancient Greek and Latin, and a study of Ancient Greek and Latin texts such as those of Cicero, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Aristotle - a necessity, as a way to wisdom, as a means to understanding our human physis. That some individuals, such as the scholars engaged in endeavouring to complete *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, do still appreciate Ancient Greek and Latin texts provides this old man, in the twilight of his life, some comfort, some hope for our human future.

ἀθάνατοι θνητοί, θνητοὶ ἀθάνατοι, ζῶντες τὸν ἐκείνων θάνατον, τὸν δὲ ἐκείνων βίον τεθνεῶτες

The deathless are deathful, the deathful deathless, with one living the other's dying with the other dying in that other's life. [3]

David Myatt
December 2019

Extract from a letter to an Oxfordian friend, with footnotes post scriptum

[1] <https://www.thesaurus.badw.de/en/tll-digital/tll-open-access.html>

[2] As I have mentioned in several essays, and in my *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates: Translation and Commentary*, the *theos* - ὁ θεός - is the chief classical deity (such as Zeus in Ancient Greek *mythoi*) and should not be understood as equivalent to the monotheistic creator God of Christianity and of the ancient Hebrews. For ὁ θεός is not omnipotent, and can be overthrown, as Zeus overthrew Kronos and as Kronos himself overthrew his own father.

[3] Heraclitus, Fragment 62, Diels-Krantz.

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All translations by DWM

Towards Understanding Ancestral Culture

As manifest in my weltanschauung, based as that weltanschauung is on pathei-mathos and an appreciation of Greco-Roman culture, the term Ancestral Culture is synonymous with Ancestral Custom, with Ancestral Custom represented in Ancient Greek mythoi by Δίκη, the goddess Fairness as described by Hesiod:

σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης, μὴδ' ὕβριν ὄφελλε:
ὕβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῷ βροτῷ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς
215 ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύναται, βαρύθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς
ἐγκύρσας ἄτησιν: ὁδὸς δ' ἐτέρηφι παρελθεῖν
κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει
ἐς τέλος ἐξελθοῦσα: παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω

You should listen to Fairness and not oblige Hubris
Since Hubris harms unfortunate mortals while even the more fortunate
Are not equal to carrying that heavy a burden, meeting as they do with Mischief.
The best path to take is the opposite one: that of honour
For, in the end, Fairness is above Hubris
Which is something the young come to learn from adversity.

Hesiod, Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι [Works and Days], vv 213-218 [1]

That Δίκη is generally described as the goddess of 'justice' - as 'Judgement' personified - is unfortunate given that the terms 'justice' and 'judgement' have modern, abstract, and legalistic, connotations which are inappropriate and which detract from understanding and appreciating the mythoi of Ancient Greece and Rome.

Correctly understood, Δίκη - and δίκη in general - represents the natural and the necessary balance manifest in ἁρμονία (harmony) and thus not only in τὸ καλόν (the beautiful) but also in the Cosmic Order, κόσμος, with ourselves as human beings (at least when unaffected by hubris) a microcosmic re-presentation of such balance, κόσμον δὲ θεοῦ σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον [2]. A sentiment re-expressed centuries later by Marsilii Ficini:

Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona.

How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned. [3]

This understanding and appreciation of ἁρμονία and of κόσμος and of ourselves as a microcosm is perhaps most evident in the Greek phrase καλὸς κάγαθός, describing as it does those who are balanced within themselves, who - manifesting τὸ καλόν and τὸ ἀγαθόν - comport themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner, part of which comportment is living and if necessary dying in a honourable, a noble, manner. For personal honour presences τὸ καλόν and τὸ ἀγαθόν, and thus the numinous.

For in practice honour manifests the customary, the ancestral way, of those who are noble, those who presence fairness; those who restore balance; those who (even at some cost to themselves) are fair due to their innate physis or because they have been nurtured to be so. For this ancestral way - such ancestral custom - is what is expected in terms of personal behaviour based on past personal examples and thus often manifests the accumulated wisdom of previous generations.

Thus, an important - perhaps even ethos-defining - Ancestral Custom of Greco-Roman culture, and of Western culture born as Western culture was from medieval mythoi involving Knights and courtly romance and from the re-discovery of Greco-Roman culture that began the Renaissance, is chivalry and which personal virtue - presencing the numinous as it does and did - is not and cannot be subject to any qualifications or exceptions and cannot be confined to or manifest by anything so supra-personal as a particular religion or anything so supra-personal as a political dogma or ideology.

Hence, the modern paganus weltanschauung that I mentioned in my *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* as a means "to reconnect those in the lands of the West, and those in Western émigré lands and former colonies of the West, with their ancestral ethos," is one founded on καλὸς κάγαθός. That is, on chivalry; on manners; on gentrified romance; and on the muliebral virtues, the gender equality, inherent in both chivalry and personal manners, consciously and rationally understood as chivalry and manners now are as a consequence of both our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos and of our empathic (wordless) and personal apprehension of the numinous.

David Myatt
January 2018
(Revised March 2018)

[1] My translation. Some notes on the translation:

a. δίκη. The goddess of Fairness. In this work, as in Θεογονία (Theogony), Hesiod is recounting and explaining part of the ancestral tradition of ancient Greece, one important aspect of which tradition is understanding the relation between the gods and mortals.

Given both the antiquity of the text and the context, 'Fairness' - as the name of the goddess - is, in my view, more appropriate than the now common appellation 'Justice', considering the modern (oft times impersonal) connotations of the word 'justice'.

b. Μischief. The sense of ἄτησιν here is not of 'delusion' nor of 'calamities', per se, but rather of encountering that which or those whom (such as the goddess of mischief, Ἄτη) can bring mischief or misfortune into the 'fortunate life' of a 'fortunate mortal', and which encounters are, according to classical tradition, considered as having been instigated by the gods. Hence, of course, why Sophocles [Antigone, 1337-8] wrote ὡς πεπρωμένης οὐκ ἔστι θνητοῖς συμφορᾶς ἀπαλλαγὴ (mortals cannot be delivered from the misfortunes of their fate).

c. δίκαιος. Honour expresses the sense that is meant: of being fair; capable of doing the decent thing; of dutifully observing ancestral customs. A reasonable alternative for 'honour' would thus be 'decency', both preferable to words such as 'just' and 'justice' which are not only too impersonal but have too many inappropriate modern connotations.

d. νήπιος. Literal - 'young', 'uncultured' (i.e. un-schooled, un-educated in the ways of ancestral custom) - rather than metaphorical ('foolish', ignorant).

[2] "a cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings." Tractate IV:2. Corpus Hermeticum. Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς.

[3] De Vita Coelitus Comparanda, XXVI. This is also a philosophical restatement of the phrase "quod est inferius est sicut quod est superius" (what is above is as what is below) from the Latin version, published in 1541, of the medieval Hermetic text known as *Tabula Smaragdina*.

scribal corruption of the name Thoth.

Esoteric Discourse. λόγος απόκρυφος. While 'esoteric' is an apt translation in regard to απόκρυφος, 'discourse' is not entirely satisfactory in respect of λόγος since it could be here interpreted to mean 'disclosure' or 'explanation'. However, given what follows in section 1 – πυθομένου τὸν τῆς παλιγγενεσίας λόγον μαθεῖν...παραδιδόναι μοι – 'discourse' does seem appropriate.

Palingenesis. Rather than ascribe a particular meaning to παλιγγενεσία – such as 'rebirth' or 'regeneration' – I have chosen the English word palingenesis (from the Latin palingenesia) with that word explained by what follows in this particular discourse, qv. sections 12 and 13.

Requirement. The sense of ἐπαγγελία here, given what is discussed in this tractate, is 'requirement' rather than the strident 'command' or what is implied by the rather vague word 'promise'.

The First Line

The first part of the first line of XIII is: Ἐν τοῖς Γενικοῖς, ὦ πάτερ, αἰνιγματωδῶς καὶ οὐ τηλαυγῶς ἔφρασας περὶ θειότητος διαλεγόμενος.

Conventionally: "In the General Sermons, father, thou didst speak in riddles most unclear, conversing on Divinity."

My translation is:

When, father, you in the Exoterica conversed about divinity your language was enigmatic and obscure.

Which translation, as with title, requires some explanation:

Father. The Greek ὦ πάτερ – literally 'my father' – is a polite form of address, akin to the English 'sir'. Similarly, ὦ τέκνον – 'my son' – is a polite reply. Given the esoteric nature of the text, a possible interpretation here of ὦ πάτερ would be 'Master', and of ὦ τέκνον 'my pupil'.

in the Exoterica. Ἐν τοῖς γενικοῖς. Since the term γενικῶν λόγων occurs in tractate X it is reasonable to assume that γενικός here refers to the same thing although the meaning of the term is moot given that no details are provided in this tractate nor in tractate X, nor in Stobaeus – *Excerpts*, III, 1 and VI, 1 – where the term also occurs. While most translators have assumed that it refers to 'generic' things or 'generalities' and thus (by adding λόγοι) have opted for an expression such as 'General Sermons', and given that a transliteration – such as genikois or genikoi – is awkward, I have in respect of the γενικοὶ opted for exoterica (from the Latin via the Greek τὰ ἐξωτερικά) with the meaning of "exoteric treatises designed for or suitable to the generality of disciples or students," with the plausible suggestion thus being that there are exoteric Hermetic treatises and esoteric Hermetic treatises, with Reitzenstein describing these other treatises as διεξοδικοί λόγοι (R.A. Reitzenstein. *Poimandres*. Teubner, Leipzig. 1904. p.118) a distinction he also mentioned in his later work *Die Hellenistischen Mysterien Religionen*. One such esoteric treatise is tractate XIII.

The Esoteric Song

This much translated part of XIII has, in my opinion, been somewhat misunderstood given, for example, that θεὸς has invariably been translated by 'God' – implying as that word now so often does the God of Christianity – and φῶς (as in translations of the New Testament) translated by 'light', with ἀλήθεια as some kind of abstract 'truth', and with ὕμνος as 'hymn' suggestive as that English word now so often is of the hymns of Christian worship.

Conventionally, the first few verses are translated along the following lines:

"Let every nature of the World receive the utterance of my hymn!
Open thou Earth! Let every bolt of the Abyss be drawn for me. Stir not, ye Trees!
I am about to hymn creation's Lord, both All and One.
Ye Heavens open, and ye Winds stay still; and let God's deathless Sphere receive my word."

My translation [1] is as follows:

Let every Physis of Kosmos favourably listen to this song.
Gaia: be open, so that every defence against the Abyss is opened for me;
Trees: do not incurvate;
For I now will sing for the Master Artisan,
For All That Exists, and for The One.
Open: you Celestial Ones; and you, The Winds, be calm.
Let the deathless clan of theos accept this, my logos.

Which, for me at least, evokes – as tractate XIII does in its entirety – something redolent of paganism rather than of Christianity.

David Myatt
2017

[1] <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

Image credit:

The beginning of tractate XIII from the book *Mercvrii Trismegisti Pœmandres*, published in Paris in 1554

An Indebtedness To Ancient Greek And Greco-Roman Culture

One of my fond memories of English schooldays was as a Sixth Form boarder in the late 1960's when I had a room to myself and an allowance from my father who had returned to live and work in Africa.

As recounted elsewhere [1] the allowance allowed me to travel and buy books, often from bookshops in London, Oxford, and Cambridge, and one such purchase was of the complete, multi-volume, Oxford English Dictionary, and almost every evening I loved

"to dip into it for an hour or so, discovering new words, their etymology, and a quotation or two to betake me, in the days following, to some library or some bookshop to find and to read the work or works in question. I enjoyed the richness, the diversity, the flexibility, of the English language; its assimilation of so many words from other languages, and that ambiguity of sound which sometimes led to or could lead to such variations in spelling as sometimes seemed to annoy those who desired to reform that language and which reform would see its versatility, quirkiness, and heritage, lost in order to fit some boring manufactured schemata." [2]

Such schoolboy habits would prove useful when I began to develop my philosophy of *pathei-mathos* and sought to express my intuitions about Being and about our mortal being through the medium of English words.

Such an expression led me to use some non-English terms mostly from Ancient Greek but occasionally from Latin in the hope that such terms would not only be able to convey my meaning better than some easily mis-understood English term but also might be assimilated into the English language as philosophical terms either in their transliterated English form or in their Greek and Latin form.

Such terms might also reveal my indebtedness to Ancient Greek and Greco-Roman culture and how and why the philosophy of *pathei-mathos* is both a "transition from mythoi and anthropomorphic deities (theos and theoi) to an appreciation of the numinous sans denotatum and sans religion" [3] and thus a return to individual insight and understanding over impersonal abstractions/ideations, over denotatum, and over religious and political dogma, with the Latin denotatum – used as an Anglicized term and which thus can be used to describe both singular and plural instances of denoting and naming – a useful example of my somewhat idiosyncratic methodology.

Thus and for example I used and use σοφόν instead of σοφός when the sense implied is not the usual "skilled", or "learned" or "wise" but rather what lies beyond and what was/is the genesis of what is presented in a person as skill, or learning, or wisdom.

I used and use σωφρονεῖν in preference to σωφροσύνη (sophrosyne) to suggest a fair and balanced personal judgement rather than the fairly modern English interpretation of sophrosyne as "soundness of mind, moderation".

I used and use Δίκη instead of δίκη when the sense implied is "what lies beyond and what was the genesis of δίκη personified as [a] goddess", which is the natural instinct in those of noble physis (φύσις) for honour, fairness, and beauty – καλὸς κάγαθός [4] – and thus the natural balance rather than "the correct/customary/ancestral way" or an abstract, impersonal, modern-type of "justice".

In most such cases the Greek words are used, as I wrote in *A Note On Greek Terms In The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos*, in an Anglicized way – as transliterated terms such as *pathei-mathos* and *enantiodromia* are – with there being no need to employ Greek inflective forms.

In the cases where the Greek words are not transliterated – σωφρονεῖν as *sophronein* for example – the intent was to not only provide a direct link to Ancient Greek and Greco-Roman culture but also to signify that the word represents an important or interesting metaphysical principle in the philosophy of *pathei-mathos*.

Hence σοφόν – *sophon* – is how and why empathy and *pathei-mathos* can reveal and can present our physis, the nature of our being, the nature of Being itself, and reveal that Time is not only causal but acausal. It also suggests, as do Δίκη and σωφρονεῖν, the primacy and the importance of individual insight and understanding.

In a world where propaganda and disinformation still proliferate, based as they are on denotatum and often on political dogma and impersonal abstractions/ideations, and in a world where mythoi and anthropomorphic deities (theos and theoi) and thus organized religion still seem to dominate, the philosophy of *pathei-mathos* provides an alternative: the individual way of *pathei-mathos* and of empathy, based as it is on four axioms:

(i) that it is empathy and *pathei-mathos* which can wordlessly reveal the ontological reality both of our own physis and of how we, as sentient beings, relate to other living beings and to Being itself; (ii) that it is denotatum – and thus the abstractions deriving therefrom – which, in respect of human beings, can and often do obscure our physis and our relation to other living beings and to Being; (iii) that denotatum and abstractions imply a dialectic of contradictory opposites and thus for we human beings a separation-of-otherness; and (iv) that this dialectic of opposites is, has been, and can be a cause of suffering for both ourselves, as sentient beings, and – as a causal human presented effect – for the other life with which we share the planet named in English as Earth. [5]

Does my idiosyncratic use of Ancient Greek and Latin terms make this philosophy confusing, difficult to understand and difficult to appreciate? Perhaps. But since *philosophia* – φιλοσοφία – is, at least according to my fallible understanding, becoming a friend of σοφόν, [6] and since such a personal friendship involves seeking to understand Being, beings, and Time, and since part of the ethos of the culture of the West – heir to Ancient Greek and Greco-Roman culture – is or

at least was a personal and rational quest for understanding and knowledge, then perhaps some effort, as befits those of noble physis who appreciate and who may seek to presence καλὸς κάγαθός, is only to be expected.

David Myatt
April 2019

[1] *Early Years*, in *Myngath: Some Recollections of a Wyrdful and Extremist Life*. 2013. ISBN 978-1484110744.

[2] *The Joy Of Words*, 2013.

[3] *From Mythoi To Empathy: Toward A New Appreciation Of The Numinous*. 2018.

[4] I have described καλὸς κάγαθός in my two recent books *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*, and *Tu Es Diaboli lanua*.

[5] *Physis And Being: An Introduction To The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos*. 2019.

[6] *The Way of Pathei-Mathos: A Philosophical Compendiary*, in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, fifth edition, 2018. ISBN 978-1484096642.



Perhaps Words Are The Problem

Of the many metaphysical things I have pondered upon in the last five or so years, one is the enigma of words. More specifically, of how nomen - a name, a term, a designation - can not only apparently bring-into-being abstractions (and their categories) but also prescribe both our thinking and our actions, with such abstractions and such prescription so often being used by us, we mortals, to persuade, to entreat, to manipulate, to control, not only ourselves but through us others of our human kind. Whence how denotatum can and so often does distance, distract, us from the essence - the physis - that empathy and its wordless (acausal) knowing can reveal and has for certain mortals so often in past millennia revealed.

For we seem somehow addicted to talk, to chatter - spoken and written - just as we assume, we believe, so often on the basis of nomina that we expand our pretension of knowing beyond the local horizon of a very personal wordless empathy breeding thus, encouraging thus, such hubris as has so marked our species for perhaps five thousand years. With such hubris - such certitude of knowing - being the genesis of such suffering as we have so often inflicted on others and, sometimes, even upon ourselves.

Would that we could, as a sentient species, dispense with nomen, nomina, and thus communicate with others - and with ourselves - empathically and thus acquire the habit of acausal wordless knowing. There would then be no need for the politics of propaganda and the rhetoric of persuasion; no need - no ability - to lie or pretend to others. For we would be known - wordlessly revealed - for who and what we really are. And what a different world that would be where no lie, no deception, would work and where guilt could never be concealed.

For some, a few mortals, such a wordless knowing is already, and has been for centuries, the numinous reality, born as such a personal reality is either via their pathei-mathos or via their innate physis. Which is perhaps why such others often secrete, or desire to secrete, themselves away: an isolated or secluded family - rural, or island - living, perhaps, and perhaps why Cistercians, some mystics, some artists, and others of a similar numinous kind, have sought to dwell, to live, in reclusive or communal silence.

There is - or so there seems to me to be according to my admittedly, fallible, uncertainty of knowing - a presencing of the essence of almost all religions here in such a knowing of the value, the mysterium, of silence. Of that which we so often in our hubris forget, have forgotten, or never known: that wordless, that empathic, that so very personal acausal knowing, that personal grief and personal suffering - that the personal awareness of the numinous - so often engenders, so often breeds, as has been so recounted for millennia in our human culture of pathei-mathos.

Given this culture - so accessible now through institutions of learning, through printed books, through art, memoirs, and music, and via this medium of this our digital age - shall we, can we, learn and apply the learning of that culture to significantly change our lives, thus somehow avoiding that periodicity of suffering which for millennia our hubris, our certainty of knowing born of nomen and nomina and the resultant abstractions, has inflicted and continues to inflict upon us?

I do so wish I had an answer. But for now, all I can do is dwell in hope of us en masse so evolving that such empathy, such wordless knowing, has become the norm.

David Myatt
2016

Extract From A Letter To A Friend

Corpus Hermeticum

Eight Tractates

I, III, IV, VI, VIII, XI, XII, XIII

Translation and Commentary

David Myatt

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Bibliography

Preface

This work collects together my translations of and commentaries on the eight tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum which were published separately between 2013 and 2017. From the fourteen Greek tractates that have been traditionally referred to as the Corpus Hermeticum, I chose the eight (the *ogdoad*) whose texts I considered were the most metaphysical and mystical and thus which can provide an understanding of what came to be termed hermeticism.

In the case of the Corpus Hermeticum, the task of translating ancient Greek into English is complicated by the terminology used in the text. Words such as λόγος, νοῦς, πνεῦμα, δημιουργόν, φῶς, ψυχή (καὶ τὰ λοιπά), all require careful consideration if the text is to be understood in relation to the cultural milieu existing at the time of its composition; a milieu where a Hellenistic paganism, of various types and hues, thrived alongside the still relatively new religion of Christianity.

All too often, such Greek words are translated by an English word which has, over centuries, acquired a meaning which is not or which may not be relevant to that milieu, resulting in a 'retrospective reinterpretation' of the text. One thinks here of (i) θεός translated as god or as God, and of λόγος translated as 'word' (or Word) which thus suffuse, or can suffuse, the text with the meanings that nearly two thousand years of Christian exegesis have ascribed to those terms; of (ii) νοῦς translated as either "intellect" or as "mind", neither of which is satisfactory especially given what both of those English words have come to denote, philosophically and otherwise, in the centuries since the Greek tractates were written. In an effort to avoid such retrospective reinterpretation here, and the preconceptions thus imposed upon the text, I have sometimes used transliterations, sometimes used a relatively obscure English word, and sometimes used a new term.

However, given that the goal of the translator is to provide for the general reader an intelligible interpretation of the text, to utilize transliterations for every problematic word would fail to accomplish that goal. Which is why the translator has to use their judgement and why every translation is 'a fallible interpretation of meaning'.

The methodology of using some transliterations, some relatively obscure

English words, and some new term or expression (such as noetic sapientia) results in a certain technical - an 'esoteric' - vocabulary which requires or may require contextual, usually metaphysical, interpretation. Often, the interpretation is provided by reference to the matters discussed in the particular tractate; sometimes by reference to other tractates; and sometimes by considering Ancient Greek, and Greco-Roman, philosophy and mysticism. Occasionally, however, the interpretation is to leave some transliteration - such as physis, φύσις - as a basic term of the particular hermetic weltanschauung described in a particular tractate and, as such, as a term which has no satisfactory English equivalent, metaphysical or otherwise, and therefore to assimilate it into the English language. All of which make these translations rather different from other English versions, past and present, with these translations hopefully enabling the reader to approach and to appreciate the hermetic texts sans preconceptions, modern and otherwise, and thus provide an intimation of how such texts might have been understood by those who read them, or heard them read, in the milieu of their composition.

One of the intentions of these translations of mine of various tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum is provide an alternative approach to such ancient texts and hopefully enable the reader without a knowledge of Greek (and of the minutiae of over a century of scholarly analysis of the Greek text) to appreciate the texts anew and understand why they have - in the original Greek - been regarded as important documents in respect of particular, ancient, weltanschauungen that have, over the centuries, proved most influential and which can still be of interest to those interested in certain metaphysical speculations and certain esoteric matters.

Why an alternative approach to such ancient texts? Because current, and past interpretations - based on using terms such as God, Mind, and Soul - make them appear to be proto-Christian or imbued with an early Christian weltanschauung or express certain philosophical and moralistic abstractions. Also, because I incline toward the view that such texts, in the matter of cosmogony and metaphysics, are more influenced by the classical Greek and the Hellenistic ethos than by any other, and thus in many ways are representative of that ethos as it was being developed, or as it was known, at the time texts such as those in the Corpus Hermeticum were written. An ethos, a cosmogony and a metaphysics, exemplified - to give just a few examples - by terms such as ἀρρενόηλυσ (Poemander), by the shapeshifting of Poemander (τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἡλλάγη τῇ ἰδέᾳ), by mention of a septenary system (Poemander, Tractate XI), by the 'voyages of the psyche' (Tractate XI: 20) and by terms such as ἱερός Λόγος (Tractate III) and which term dates back to the time of Hesiod [1].

In respect, for example, of the ἱερός Λόγος tractate, my view is that it is the story of genesis according to an ancient pagan, and esoteric, weltanschauung; a text in all probability older than the other texts in the Corpus Hermeticum and certainly older, as an aural tradition, than the story given in the Biblical

Genesis; and a text which the author of the Poemandres tractate might well have been familiar with, as a reading of both texts indicates.

As an example of my alternative approach (and perhaps the most controversial example) is my interpretation of ἀγαθός as honour/nobility /honesty, τὸ ἀγαθόν as the honourable/the noble/nobility, and thus as embodied in noble, trustworthy, honest, individuals, and which interpretation I am inclined to view as an expression of both the classical Greek and the Greco-Roman (Hellenic) ethos, including the ethos of Greco-Roman mysticism, just as the expression τί ἐστὶν ἀλήθεια, attributed to a certain Roman, is an expression of that ethos; whereas ἀγαθός as some disputable 'abstract', impersonal or philosophical 'good' does not in my view exemplify that ethos and the milieu in which it flourished. Furthermore, given how such a disputable 'abstract', moral, good has been generally understood for the last millennia (partly due to the influence of Christianity, partly due to post-Renaissance philosophy, and partly due to Western jurisprudence) then it seems desirable to avoid using the term 'good' in translations of such ancient texts - as also elsewhere, in other metaphysical tractates of the Hellenic era - since 'good' now has certain post-Hellenic connotations which can distance us from what such ancient tractates may well have expressed. [2]

In respect of the texts, I incline toward the view that they generally represent the personal weltanschauung of their authors germane to their time. That is, that rather than being representative of some axiomatical pre-existing philosophy or of some religious school of thought, they reproduce the insight and the understanding of individuals regarding particular metaphysical matters; an insight and an understanding no doubt somewhat redolent of, and influenced by, and sometimes perhaps paraphrasing, some such existing philosophies and/or some such schools of thought; and an insight which often differs from tractate to tractate.

Regarding my translation, some may well consider the words of Diogenes Laertius - *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 3.1 (64) - in relation to Plato, quite apposite:

χρῆται δὲ ὁ Πλάτων ἐνίοτε αὐτῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ κακοῦ: ἔστι δ' ὅτε καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ μικροῦ. πολλάκις δὲ καὶ διαφέρουσιν ὀνόμασιν ἐπὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ σημαυνομένου χρῆται.

For I have sometimes translated the same Greek word in two different ways in order to try and elucidate the meaning of the text [exempli gratia: ἀπερίοριστον, as undefinable and unmeasurable] just as I have idiosyncratically translated certain Greek words [exempli gratia: ἅγιος, as numinous], differences and idiosyncrasies I have endeavoured to explain in my commentary.

The Greek text used is that of A.D. Nock & A-J. Festugiere, *Corpus*

Hermeticum, Third Edition, 1972. Occasionally I have followed the reading of the MSS or the emendations of others rather than Nock's text with such variations noted in my commentary. Text enclosed in angled brackets < > indicates a conjectural editorial addition, and <...> indicates a lacuna.

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[1] a) ἔστι λόγος περὶ αὐτοῦ ἱρὸς λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 48, s3. (b) ἔστι ἱρὸς περὶ αὐτοῦ λόγος λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 62, s2. (c) ἔστι δὲ περὶ αὐτῶν ἱρὸς λόγος λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 81, s2.

[2] I have endeavoured to explain such interpretations in various essays, including (i) *Some Examples Regarding Translation and Questions of Interpretation*, (ii) *Concerning ἀγαθός and νοῦς in the Corpus Hermeticum*; and (iii) *Cicero On Summum Bonum*.

Ποιμάνδρης

Pœmandres

Tractate I

Introduction

The Greek text of the tractate often referred to as the Pœmandres/Pymander part of the Corpus Hermeticum was first published by Turnebus in Paris in 1554 and of the origin of the knowledge expounded in the text, the author declares at v.2 that

εἰμὶ ὁ Ποιμάνδρης ὁ τῆς αὐθεντίας νοῦς οἶδα δὲ βούλει καὶ σύνειμί σοι
πανταχοῦ

Which implies - qv. my translation, and notes and commentary on the text - that what Pœmandres is about to reveal is an authentic perceivration, and this supernatural being [or archetype] knows what is desired/wanted because, like the guardian daemons of classical and Hellenic culture, Pœmandres is close by.

What is revealed is a summary of that weltanschauung that has been termed hermetic philosophy; a summary widely regarded as an important hermetic text and as dating from the second or the third century CE; and a summary which contains many interesting notions and allusions, such as logos, physis/Physis, the septenary system, the gospel of John, the feminine character of Physis/Nature, the doxology Agios o Theos, and θεός as being both male and female in one person - that is, either ἀνδρόγυνος or (more controversially) bisexual.

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Translation

[1] Once, while concentrating on and pondering what is real, my intuitions freely flowed, and, my alertness dulled as from an excess of wearisome bodily toil or too much eating, it seemed as if a huge being - too large to measure -

chanced by calling out my name and asking what it was I wanted to see and hear about and learn and have knowledge of.

[2] Who are you, I asked.

I am Pœmandres, the perceivration of authority, knowing your desires and eachwhere with you.

[3] I answered that I seek to learn what is real, to apprehend the physis of beings, and to have knowledge of theos. That is what I want to hear.

So he said to me, remember all those things you wanted to learn, for I shall instruct you.

[4] So saying, his form altered whereupon I at once sensed everything; an indefinity of inner sight, with everything suffused in phaos - bright and clear - so that from this seeing, a desire. But all too soon there came down upon it a heavy darkness - stygian, strange - and slithering <as a serpent> until that darkness changed in physis: flowing, of an untellable disorder, with smoke as from a fire and an indescribable sound followed by some aphonous noise as if phaos was calling out.

[5] And then, from the phaos, a numinous logos came upon that physis with pure Fire going forth to the height of that physis; easily and effective and efficient. Since Air is agile, it followed the pneuma, up and above Earth and Water and as far as Fire, to be as if it were hanging from that, there.

Earth and Water remained, coagulating together such that <Earth> could not be seen apart from Water until they were stirred by the sound of the pneumal logos that came down upon them.

[6] Pœmandres asked, had I apprehended the sense of that inner seeing? And I said I shall have knowledge of it.

I am, he said, that phaos; perceivration, your theos, and prior to the flowing physis brought forth from darkness. [And] the phaomal logos, from perceivration, is the child of theos.

So I said for him to continue.

Then know that within you - who hears and sees - is logos kyrios, although perceivration is theos the father. They are not separated, one from the other, because their union is Life.

Thank you, I said.

Then discover phaos and become familiar with it.

[7] So saying, he stared at me for so long a duration that I shivered because of the way he looked. But, as he tilted his head back, I, observing, discovered the phaos of unmeasurable forces and an undefinable cosmic order coming-into-being. While the fire, embraced by a strong force, was subdued and kept in stasis.

Such I observed and discovered because of those words of Pœmandres. But, since I was vexed, he spoke to me again. From your seeing, an awareness of the quidditas of semblance; of the primal before the origin without an end.

This was what Pœmandres said to me, then.

[8] So I asked from what place, then, the parsements of physis?

To which he answered, from the deliberations of theos, who, having comprehended the logos and having seen the beauty of the cosmic order, re-presented it, and so became a cosmic order from their own parsements and by the birth of Psyche.

[9] Theos, the perceivation, male-and-female, being Life and phaos, whose logos brought forth another perceivation, an artisan, who - theos of Fire and pneuma - fashioned seven viziers to surround the perceptible cosmic order in spheres and whose administration is described as fate.

[10] Directly, from the downward parsements, the logos of theos bounded to the fine artisements of Physis and joined with the perceivation of that artisan, for it was of the same essence. Thus the descending parsements of Physis were left, devoid of logos, to be only substance.

[11] The perceivation of that artisan, in combination with logos, surrounded the spheres, spinning them around, a twizzling of artisements of some indefinite origin and some undeterminable end, finishing where they began. Turning around and around as perceivation decreed, the spheres produced, from those descending parsements, beings devoid of logos, for they were not given logos, while Air produced what flew, and Water what swam. Divided, one from the other, were Earth and Water, as perceivation had decreed, with Earth delivering from within herself beings four-footed and crawling, and animals savage and benign.

[12] Perceivation, as Life and phaos, father of all, brought forth in his own likeness a most beautiful mortal who, being his child, he loved. And theos, who loved his own image, bequeathed to him all his works of Art.

[13] Thus, having discovered what that artisan with that father's assistance had wrought, he too determined on such artisements, which the father agreed to. Ingressing to the artisan's realm, with full authority, he appreciated his

brother's artisements, and they - loving him - each shared with him their own function.

Having fully learned their essence, and having partaken of their physis, he was determined to burst out past the limit of those spheres to discover the one who imposed their strength upon the Fire.

[14] With full authority over the ordered cosmos of humans and of beings devoid of logos, he burst through the strength of the spheres to thus reveal to those of downward physis the beautiful image of theos.

When she beheld such unceasing beauty - he who possessed all the vigour of the viziers and was the image of theos - she lovingly smiled, for it was as if in that Water she had seen the semblance of that mortal's beautiful image and, on Earth, his shadow. And as he himself beheld in that Water her image, so similar to his own, he desired her and wanted to be with her.

Then, his want and his vigour realized, and he within that image devoid of logos, Physis grasped he whom she loved to entwine herself around him so that, as lovers, they were intimately joined together.

[15] Which is why, distinct among all other beings on Earth, mortals are jumelle; deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal. Yet, although deathless and possessing full authority, the human is still subject to wyrd. Hence, although over the harmonious structure, when within become the slave. Male-and-female since of a male-and-female father, and wakeful since of a wakeful one. <...>

[16] <...> my perceivation, for I also love the logos. Then Pœmandres said, this is a mysterium esoteric even to this day. For Physis, having intimately joined with the human, produced a most wondrous wonder possessed of the physis of the harmonious seven I mentioned before, of Fire and pneuma. Physis did not tarry, giving birth to seven male-and-female humans with the physis of those viziers, and ætherean.

Pœmandres, I said, a great eagerness has now arrived in me so that I yearn to hear more. Do not go away.

Then, Pœmandres replied, be silent for this primary explanation is not yet complete.

I shall, I said, therefore, be silent.

[17] To continue, those seven came into being in this way. Earth was muliebral, Water was lustful, and Fire maturing. From Æther, the pneuma, and with Physis bringing forth human-shaped bodies. Of Life and phaos, the human came to be of psyche and perceivation; from Life - psyche; from phaos - perceivation; and with everything in the observable cosmic order cyclic until its completion.

[18] Now listen to the rest of the explanation you asked to hear. When the cycle was fulfilled, the connexions between all things were, by the deliberations of theos, unfastened. Living beings - all male-and-female then - were, including humans, rent asunder thus bringing into being portions that were masculous with the others muliebral. Directly, then, theos spoke a numinous logos: propagate by propagation and spawn by spawning, all you creations and artisements, and let the perceiver have the knowledge of being deathless and of Eros as responsible for death.

[19] Having so spoken, foreknowing - through wyrd and that harmonious structure - produced the coagulations and founded the generations with all beings spawning according to their kind. And they of self-knowledge attained a particular benefit while they who, misled by Eros, love the body, roamed around in the dark, to thus, perceptively, be afflicted by death.

[20] But why, I asked, do the unknowing err so much that they are robbed of immortality.

You seem, he said, not to have understood what you heard, for did I not tell you to discover things?

I said I do recall and am discovering, for which I am obliged.

Then tell me, if you have discovered, why death is expected for those in death.

Because originally the body began with that stygian darkness, from whence the flowing physis which formed the body within the perceptible cosmic order which nourishes death.

[21] Your apprehension is correct. Yet why, according to the logos of theos, does the one of self-discovery progress within themselves?

To which I replied, phaos and Life formed the father of all beings, from whence that human came into being.

You express yourself well. For phaos and Life are the theos and the father from whence the human came into being. Therefore if you learn to be of Life and phaos - and that you perchance are of them - then you progress to return to Life. Thus spoke Pøemandres.

Can you - who are my perceivation - therefore tell me how I may progress to Life? For does not theos say that the human of perceivation should have self-knowledge?

[22] And do not all humans posses perceivation?

Again you express yourself well. I, perceivration, attend to those of respectful deeds, the honourable, the refined, the compassionate, those aware of the numinous; to whom my being is a help so that they soon acquire knowledge of the whole and are affectionately gracious toward the father, fondly celebrating in song his position.

Before they hand over their body to its death they loathe the influencing impressions, for they know their vigour. That is, I - perceivration - do not allow what the vigour of the body embraces to be achieved. For, as guardian, I close the entrance to the bad and the dishonourably vigorous, preventing their procrastinations.

[23] I keep myself distant from the unreasonable, the rotten, the malicious, the jealous, the greedy, the bloodthirsty, the hubriatic, instead, giving them up to the avenging daemon, who assigns to them the sharpness of fire, who visibly assails them, and who equips them for more lawlessness so that they happen upon even more vengeance. For they cannot control their excessive yearnings, are always in the darkness - which tests them - and thus increase that fire even more.

[24] You, perceivration, have instructed me well about all those things I sought. But could you tell me how the Anados will occur?

To which Pœmandres replied, first, the dissolution of the physical body allows that body to be transformed with the semblance it had disappearing and its now non-functioning ethos handed over to the daimon, with the body's perceptions returning to their origin, then becoming separated with their purpose, transplanted, and with desire and eagerness journeying toward the physis devoid of logos.

[25] Thus does the mortal hasten through the harmonious structure, offering up, in the first realm, that vigour which grows and which fades, and - in the second one - those dishonourable machinations, no longer functioning. In the third, that eagerness which deceives, no longer functioning; in the fourth, the arrogance of command, no longer insatiable; in the fifth, profane insolence and reckless haste; in the sixth, the bad inclinations occasioned by riches, no longer functioning; and in the seventh realm, the lies that lie in wait.

[26] Thus, stripped of the activities of that structure, they enter into the ogdoadic physis, and, with those there, celebrate the father in song for they, together, rejoice at this arrival who, now akin to them, hears those forces beyond the ogdoadic physis celebrating theos in melodious song. Then, in order, they move toward the father to hand themselves over to those forces, and, becoming those forces, they become united with theos. For to so become of theos is the noble goal of those who seek to acquire knowledge.

Why, therefore, hesitate? Should it not be that, having received all these things,

you should become a guide to those who are suitable so that, because of you, descendants of mortals may - through theos - escape?

[27] Having so spoken to me, Pœmandres joined with those forces, while I, having given thanks to and expressed my gratitude toward the father of all beings, went forth strengthened and informed regarding the physis of everything and with an insight of great importance.

So it was that I began to tell mortals about how beautiful knowledge and an awareness of the numinous were. You earth-bound mortals, you who have embraced intoxicating liquor, sleepfulness, and are unknowing of theos: soberize, stop your drunkenness, for you are beguiled by irrational sleepfulness.

[28] Hearing this, they, with the same purpose, gathered round. And I said, you who are earth-bound, why do you embrace death when you have the means to partake of immortality? Change your ways, you who have accompanied deception and who have kinship with the unknowing ones. Leave the dark phaos, partake of immortality, move away from your destruction.

[29] Then some of them, having ridiculed, went away, embracing as they did the way of death; although some others, desirous of being informed, threw themselves down at my feet. I asked them to stand, and thus became a guide to those of my kind, informing them of the logoi - of the way and the means of rescue - and engendered in them the logoi of sapientia, with the celestial elixir to nurture them.

And with the arrival of evening with the rays of Helios beginning to completely wane, I bid they express their gratitude to theos, after which - with that expression of gratitude completed - they each retired to their own bed.

[30] Commemorating within myself the noble service of Pœmandres - replete with what I had desired - I was most pleased, for the sleep of the body engendered temperance of psyche, the closing of the eyes a genuine insight, with my silence pregnant with the noble, and the expression of the logos breeding nobility.

Such is what transpired for me, received from perceivization - that is, Pœmandres; for it was by being theos-inspired that I came upon this revealing. Therefore, from my psyche and with all my strength, I offer benedictions to theos, the father.

[31]

Agios o Theos, father of all beings.

Agios o Theos, whose purpose is accomplished by his own arts.

Agios o Theos, whose disposition is to be recognized and who is recognized by his own.

Agios es, you who by logos form all being.
Agios es, you who engender all physis as eikon.
Agios es, you whom the Physis did not morph.
Agios es, you who are mightier than all artifice.
Agios es, you who surpass all excellence.
Agios es, you who transcend all praise.

You - ineffable, inexpressible, to whom silence gives voice - receive these respectful wordful offerings from a psyche and a heart that reach out to you.

[32] I ask of you to grant that I am not foiled in acquiring knowledge germane to our essence; to invigorate me, so that - by that favour - I may bring illumination to the unknowing who, kindred of my kind, are your children.

Such I testify and believe; to advance to Life and phaos. For you, father, a benediction. Your mortal's purpose is to share in your numinosity, for which you have provided every means.

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Notes and Commentary on the Text

The numbers refer to the sections of the Greek text, 1-32.

1.

what is real. Regarding τῶν ὄντων cf. Plato, Republic, Book 7 (532c) - πρὸς δὲ τὰ ἐν ὕδασι φαντάσματα θεῖα καὶ σκιάς τῶν ὄντων ἀλλ' οὐκ εἰδώλων σκιάς δι' ἑτέρου τοιούτου φωτὸς ὡς πρὸς ἥλιον κρίνειν ἀποσκιαζομένους - where the φάντασμα (the appearance) of some-thing natural (god-given), such as the σκιά (image) that is reflected by water, is stated to be real, and contrasted with what is not considered to be real (what is an unsubstantial image) such as that cast by a fire rather than by the Sun.

intuition. For διανοίας. As with νοῦς (see 2. below) a term which deserves some scrutiny. Conventionally, it is translated as 'thought', or 'thinking', as if in reference to some sort of idealized faculty we human beings are said to possess and which faculty deals with ideations and their collocations and is considered as necessary to, or the foundation of, understanding and reason.

More accurately, in a classical context, διανοίας is (i) 'intelligence' (or intuition) in the sense of understanding some-thing or someone (i.e. in being able to perceive some-thing correctly or to correctly understand - to know - a person), or (ii) 'intention'.

I have opted for 'intuition' as suggesting, and as manifesting, insight, often from

contemplation, as the etymology, from the Latin *intueri*, suggests. For the English word 'thought' now conveys modern meanings which, in my view, are not relevant here. And an 'intuition' that is related to, but somewhat different from, the perceivment that is νοῦς.

Alertness. αἴσθησις. Alertness here in the sense that the normal, alert, awareness of the physical senses is dulled by interior intuition, insight, or revelation. An appropriate alternative translation would thus be *awareness*, as in awareness of one's surroundings.

Huge. ὑπερμεγέθη - qv Plutarch *Romulus*, 16.5 ἐπὶ στρατοπέδου δρυὶν ἔτεμεν ὑπερμεγέθη - chopped down a huge tree there in that encampment.

Huge, and too large to measure by ordinary means. I do not see any need to exaggerate what is implied, as some other translations do.

Have knowledge of. In the tractate, γινῶναι is related to νοῦς and διανοίας as an expression of what is perceived, or one is aware of. Here, of what one discerns in the sense of distinguishing some-thing from something else and thus 'knowing' of and about that thing.

2.

Pæmandres. Ποιμάνδρης. The older interpretation of 'shepherd of men' is unacceptable because speculative; the speculation being that it derives from ποιμήν, which has a variety of meanings other than shepherd, for example, chief, and owner.

A more recent etymology involves some ancient Egyptian term associated with the god Re. However, this etymology, first proposed by Francis Griffith in the 1920's [qv. W. Scott and A. S. Ferguson: *Hermetica: the ancient Greek and Latin writings which contain religious or philosophical teachings ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924-1936] was based on a linguistic and stylistic analysis of Coptic sources dating well over a millennia after the god Re was worshipped in ancient Egypt.

Also, the book *From Poimandres to Jacob Bohme: Hermetism, Gnosis and the Christian Tradition*, edited by Roelof van den Broek and published in 2000 (Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica) which mentions this etymology by Griffiths and which is often cited as confirming this etymology, does not provide further context in the form of extant Egyptian hieroglyphic inscriptions or references to papyrus fragments from long before the Coptic period, but instead makes various conjectures, as for example in respect of an alternative Coptic form of the genitive n-re, and relies on other linguistic/stylistic analysis of much later texts.

Until a link can be established to such primary Egyptian sources, or to reliable

sources much earlier than such Coptic texts, I remain unconvinced in respect of the ancient Egyptian origins of the name Ποιμάνδρης, and therefore am inclined to leave it as a personal name, transliterated Poemandres.

perceivance. νοῦς. The conventional interpretation here is 'mind', as if in contrast to 'the body' and/or as if some fixed philosophical and abstract principle is meant or implied.

This conventional interpretation is in my view incorrect, being another example of not only retrospective reinterpretation but of using a word which has acquired, over the past thousand years or more, certain meanings which detract from an understanding of the original text. Retrospective reinterpretation because the assumption is that what is being described is an axiomatic, reasoned, philosophy centred on ideations such as Thought, Mind, and Logos, rather than what it is: an attempt to describe, in fallible words, a personal intuition about our existence, our human nature, and which intuition is said to emanate from a supernatural being named Poemandres.

In addition, one should ask what does a translation such as 'I am Poimandres, mind of sovereignty' [*vide* Copenhagen] actually mean? That there is a disembodied 'mind' which calls itself Poemandres? That this disembodied 'mind' is also some gargantuan supernatural shapeshifting being possessed of the faculty of human speech? That some-thing called 'sovereignty' has a mind?

I incline toward the view that the sense of the word νοῦς here, as often in classical literature, is *perceivance*; that is, a particular type of astute awareness, as of one's surroundings, of one's self, and as in understanding ('reading') a situation often in an instinctive way. Thus, what is not meant is some-thing termed 'mind' (or some faculty thereof), distinguished as this abstract 'thing' termed 'mind' has often been from another entity termed 'the body'.

Perceivance thus describes the ability to sense, to perceive, when something may be amiss; and hence also of the Greek word implying resolve, purpose, because one had decided on a particular course of action, or because one's awareness of a situation impels or directs one to a particular course of action. Hence why, in the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, Sophocles has Creon voice his understanding of the incipient hubris of Oedipus, of his pride without a purpose, of his apparent inability to understand, to correctly perceive, the situation:

εἴ τοι νομίζεις κτῆμα τὴν αὐθαδίαν
εἶναί τι τοῦ νοῦ χωρίς, οὐκ ὀρθῶς φρονεῖς.

If you believe that what is valuable is pride, by itself,
Without a purpose, then your judgement is not right.

Translating νοῦς as perceivance/perceivation thus places it into the correct context, given αὐθεντίας - authority. For "I am Pœmandres, the perceivation of authority" implies "What [knowledge] I reveal (or am about to reveal) is authentic," so that an alternative translation, in keeping with the hermeticism of the text, would be "I am Pœmandres, the authentic perceivation." [The English word authentic means 'of authority, authoritative' and is derived, via Latin, from the Greek αὐθεντία]

eachwhere. An unusual but expressive (c.15th century) English word, suited to such an esoteric text. The meaning here is that, like a guardian δαίμων of classical and Hellenic culture, Pœmandres is always close by: eachwhere with you.

3.

Apprehend. νοέω. To apprehend also in the sense of 'discover'. Again, I have tried to make a subtle distinction here, as there is in the text between the related νοῦς, γνῶναι, and διανοίας.

physis. A transliteration, to suggest something more than what 'nature' or 'character' - of a thing or person - denotes. That is, to know what is real and apprehend the physis of those real things - νοῆσαι τὴν τοῦ τῶν φύσιν; to discern the physis, the true nature, of beings. That is, to have an understanding of ontology; for physis is a revealing, a manifestation, of not only the true nature of beings but also of the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being.

γνῶναι τὸν θεόν. To have - to acquire - knowledge of θεός. Does θεός here mean God, a god, a deity, or the god? God, the supreme creator Being, the only real god, the father, as in Christianity? A deity, as in Hellenic and classical paganism? The god, as in an un-named deity - a god - who is above all other deities? Or possibly all of these? And if all, in equal measure, or otherwise?

The discourse of Pœmandres, as recounted in the tractate, suggests two things. First, that all are meant or suggested - for example, Τὸ φῶς ἐκεῖνο, ἔφη, ἐγὼ νοῦς ὁ σοῦ θεός could be said of Pœmandres as a god, as a deity, as the god, and also possibly of God, although why God, the Father - as described in the Old and New Testaments - would call Himself Pœmandres, appear in such a vision, and declare what He declares about θεός being both male and female in one person, is interesting. Second, that the knowledge that is revealed is of a source, of a being, that encompasses, and explains, all three, and that it is this knowing of such a source, beyond those three conventional ones, that is the key to 'what is real' and to apprehending 'the physis of beings'.

Hence, it is better to transliterate θεός - or leave it as θεός - than to use god; and a mistake to use God, as some older translations do.

remember all those things you want to learn. Ἔχε νῶ: 'hold the awareness' [be aware] of what you said you wanted to learn - that is, 'remember' them; which is better, and more expressive, than the somewhat colloquial and modern 'keep in mind'.

4.

So saying, his form [ιδέα] altered. For τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἠλλάγη τῇ ιδέα. Or - more expressively - 'he shapeshifted'. A common theme in Greek mythology and literature, as in the ancient Hymn to Demeter:

ὥς εἰποῦσα θεὰ μέγεθος καὶ εἶδος ἄμειψε γῆρας ἀπωσαμένη

Having so spoken, the goddess changed in height and cast off that aged appearance

[An] indefinity of inner sight [inner seeing]. ὁρᾷ θεὰν ἀόριστον. The sense of ὁράω here is metaphorical, of an interior knowing or apprehension not occasioned by the faculty of sight; the inner knowing, for example, that the blind Tiresias has in respect of Oedipus in the *Oedipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles - his apprehension of what Oedipus has done and what he will do. Such an 'inner seeing' includes the Tiresian kind a prophetic knowing as well as the 'interior visions' of a mystic.

In respect of ἀόριστος, I have opted for indefinity, an unusual [read obscure] English word derived c.1600 from indefinite.

phaos. A transliteration of φῶς - using the the Homeric φάος. Since φάος metaphorically (qv. Iliad, Odyssey, Hesiod, etcetera) implies the being, the life, 'the spark', of mortals, and, generally, either (i) the illumination, the light, that arises because of the Sun and distinguishes the day from the night, or (ii) any brightness that provides illumination and thus enables things to be seen, I am inclined to avoid the vague English word 'light' which other translations use, and which English word now implies many things which the Greek does not or may not; as for instance in the matter of over a thousand years of New Testament exegesis, especially in reference to the gospel of John. A transliteration requires the reader to pause and consider what phaos may, or may not, mean, suggest, or imply; and hopefully thus conveys something about the original text.

Also, φῶς δὲ πάντα γεγεννημένα suggests '[with] everything *suffused in phaos*' and not 'everything *became* light' as if to imply that suddenly everything was transformed into 'light'.

clear and bright. εὐδιόν τε καὶ ἱλαρόν - if one accepts the emendation εὐδιόν [clear] then ἱλαρόν might suggest the metaphorical sense of 'bright' (rather

than the descriptive 'cheery') which fits well with the contrasting and following φοβερόν τε καὶ στυγνόν.

Downward. κατωφερές - cf. Appian, *The Civil Wars*, Book 4, chapter 13 - κατωφερές δ' ἐστὶ τὸ πεδίον.

stygian. For στυγνόν, for stygian is a word which in English imputes the sense of the original Greek, as both its common usage, and its literary usage (by Milton, Wordsworth, Ralph Waldo Emerson, et al) testify. Some-thing dark, gloomy, disliked, abhorred. One might, for example, write that "that river looks as stygian", and as unforgiving, as the water of Styx - ἀμείλικτον Στυγὸς ὕδωρ.

serpent. ὄφει is one of the emendations of Nock, for the meaning of the text here is difficult to discern. Given what follows - re the smoke and fire - it is tempting to agree with Reitzenstein that what may be meant is a not an ordinary serpent but a dragon, δράκοντι, qv. the Iliad (II, 308) and the seven-headed dragon of Revelation 12, 3-17.

flowing (as in fluidic). The sense of ὑγρός here, since what follows - ἀφάτως τεταραγμένην καὶ καπνὸν ἀποδιδοῦσαν - does not suggest either 'watery' or 'moist'. Cf. Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 314 - ταῦτ' ἄρ' ἐποιοῦν ὑγρᾶν Νεφελᾶν στρεπταιγλᾶν δάιον ὀρμάν - where clouds are described as flowing and in their flowing-moving obscure the brightness (of the day).

aphonous ... phaos calling out. I follow the MSS which have φωτὸς, which Nock emended to πυρός. While the emendation, given the foregoing mention of fire, makes some sense, it does render what follows, with the mention of φωτὸς, rather disjointed. However, if - as I suggested above - φῶς is not translated as 'light', but, as with physis and λόγος [qv. 5. below], is transliterated, then φωτὸς here is fine, for it is as if "phaos was calling out" in an aphonous - an un-human, animal-like, and thus wordless - way from beneath the covering of darkness that has descended down, and descended with an indescribable noise. And aphonous here because covered - smothered, obscured, muffled - by the indescribably noisy darkness. Which leads directly to the mention of φῶς and λόγος in the next part of the text; that is, to the ascension of φῶς and λόγος.

If one reads πυρός, then the interpretation would be that it is the fire which is calling out in an un-human, animal-like, and thus wordless way.

5.

Logos. λόγος. A transliteration, which as with my other transliterations, requires the reader to pause and reflect upon what the term may, or may not, mean, suggest, or imply. The common translation as 'Word' does not express or even suggest all the meanings (possible or suggested) of the Greek, especially as Word - as in Word of God - now imputes so much (in so many different often

doctrinal ways) after two thousand years of Christianity and thus tends to lead to a retrospective re-interpretation of the text.

Numinous. ἅγιος. Numinous is better - more accurate - than 'holy' or 'sacred', since these latter English words have been much overused in connexion with Christianity and are redolent with meanings supplied from over a thousand years of exegesis; meanings which may or may not be relevant here.

Correctly understood, numinous is the unity beyond our perception of its two apparent aspects; aspects expressed by the Greek usage of ἅγιος which could be understood in a good (light) way as 'sacred', revered, of astonishing beauty; and in a bad (dark) way as redolent of the gods/wyrd/the fates/morai in these sense of the retributive or (more often) their balancing power/powers and thus giving rise to mortal 'awe' since such a restoration of the natural balance often involved or required the death (and sometimes the 'sacrifice') of mortals. It is the numinous - in its apparent duality, and as a manifestation of a restoration of the natural, divine, balance - which is evident in much of Greek tragedy, from the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus (and the *Orestia* in general) to the *Antigone* and the *Oedipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles.

The two apparent aspects of the numinous are wonderfully expressed by Rilke:

Wer, wenn ich schrie, hörte mich denn aus der Engel
Ordnungen? und gesetzt selbst, es nähme
einer mich plötzlich ans Herz: ich verginge von seinem
stärkeren Dasein. Denn das Schöne ist nichts
als des Schrecklichen Anfang, den wir noch grade ertragen,
und wir bewundern es so, weil es gelassen verschmäht,
uns zu zerstören. Ein jeder Engel ist schrecklich.

Who, were I to sigh aloud, of those angelic beings might hear me?
And even if one of them deigned to take me to his heart I would dissolve
Into his very existence.
For beauty is nothing if not the genesis of that numen
Which we can only just survive
And which we so admire because it can so calmly disdain to betake us.
Every angel is numinous

wenn ich schrie. 'Were I to sigh aloud' is far more poetically expressive, and more in tune with the metaphysical tone of the poem and the stress on *schrie*, than the simple, bland, 'if I cried out'. A sighing aloud - not a shout or a scream - of the sometimes involuntary kind sometimes experienced by those engaged in contemplative prayer or in deep, personal, metaphysical musings.

der Engel Ordnungen. The poetic emphasis is on Engel, and the usual translation here of 'orders' - or something equally abstract and harsh (such as hierarchies) - does not in my view express the poetic beauty

(and the almost supernatural sense of strangeness) of the original; hence my suggestion 'angelic beings' - of such a species of beings, so different from we mortals, who by virtue of their numinosity have the ability to both awe us and overpower us.

came upon that physis. Came upon that which had the physis of darkness and then changed to become fluidic.

Fire. A capitalization, since 'fire' here is suggestive of something possibly elemental.

Air. A capitalization, as with Fire; ditto with the following Water and Earth.

A possible alternative here might be to use the Homeric meaning of ἀήρ - mist - since 'air' is just too general, does not describe what is happening, and thus is confusing.

pnuema. For πνεύματι/πνεῦμα. A transliteration, given that the English alternatives - such as 'spirit' or 'breath' - not only do not always describe what the Greek implies but also suggest things not always or not necessarily in keeping with the Hellenic nature of the text.

This particular transliteration has a long history in English, dating back to 1559 CE. In 1918, DeWitt Burton published a monograph - listing, with quotations, the various senses of πνεῦμα - entitled *Spirit, Soul, and Flesh: The Usage of Πνεῦμα, Ψυχή, and Σάρξ in Greek Writings and Translated Works from the Earliest Period to 225 AD* (University of Chicago Press, 1918)

I incline toward the view that πνεῦμα here - like λόγος - does not necessarily imply something theological (in the Christian sense or otherwise) but rather suggests an alternative, more personal, weltanschauung that, being a weltanschauung, is undoctinal and subtle, and which weltanschauung is redolent of Hellenic culture. Subtle and undoctinal in the way that early alchemical texts are subtle and undoctinal and try to express, or hint at (however obscurely to us, now), a weltanschauung, and one which is more paganus than Christian.

coagulating. For συμμεμιγμένα, which suggests something more elemental - more actively joined - than just 'mixed or mingled' together.

pneumal logos. πνευματικὸν λόγον. The term *pneumal logos* is interesting and intended to be suggestive and thus open to and requiring interpretation. In contrast, the usual translation is verbo spirituali (spiritual word), as if what is meant or implied is some-thing theological and clearly distinct from the corporeal, as Thomas Aquinas wrote in *Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate*: Ex quo patet quod nomen verbi magis proprie dicitur de verbo spirituali quam de

corporali. Sed omne illud quod magis proprie invenitur in spiritualibus quam in corporalibus, propriissime Deo competit. Ergo verbum propriissime in Deo dicitur. (*De veritate*, q. 4a. 1s. c2).

6.

apprehended the sense of that inner seeing. Given what follows, the English word 'sense' is perhaps appropriate here, rather than the inflexible word 'meaning'.

phaomal logos. φωτεινὸς λόγος. As with *pneumal logos*, this is suggestive, and open to interpretation.

child of theos. υἱὸς θεοῦ. The scriptural sense - 'son of god', for example Mark 15.39, Ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν - is usually assumed; a sense which follows the general usage of υἱὸς (son) as in Homer et al. But the later (c.2nd/3rd century CE) usage 'child' is possible here, a usage known from some papyri (qv. *Papiri Greci e Latini*, edited by Girolamo Vitelli). This also has the advantage of being gender neutral, for which see the note under ἀναγνωρίσας ἑαυτὸν in section 19.

logos kyrios. λόγος κυρίου (cf. *pneumal logos* and *phaomal logos*). Invariably translated as 'word of the lord', echoing the formula found in LXX (qv. for example Jeremiah 1.4 ἐγένετο λόγος κυρίου πρὸς με) although, as attested by many papyri, kyrios was also used in the Hellenic world as an epithet both of a deity and of a powerful potentate [hence 'logos kyrios' rather than 'kyrios logos'] implying respect and an acknowledgement of their authority and power.

7.

duration. For reasons I outlined in the *The Art of Translation, and A Question About Time* section of Appendix I, I prefer to translate χρόνος as duration (or something akin) and not as 'time'. Briefly explained, the English word 'time' now denotes what the term χρόνος did not.

tilted his head back. Perhaps suggestive of looking up toward the heavens, qv. the c. 2nd century CE writer Achilles Tatius (writing around the time the *Corpus Hermeticum* was written) who, in *Leucippe and Clitophon*, Book V, 3.3, wrote - ἀνανεύσας εἰς οὐρανὸν ὧ Ζεῦ, τί τοῦτο ἔφην φαίνεις ἡμῖν τέρας

unmeasurable. ἀπερίοριστον - beyond being countable, impossible to be counted; from ἀριθμητός - countable.

cosmic order. κόσμος. The word 'cosmos' by itself is probably insufficient here, for the Greek term κόσμος carries with it the suggestion that the cosmos is an ordered structure, an order evident in the observed regularity of heavenly bodies such as the moon, the constellations, and the planets.

undefinable. ἀπεριόριστον: A slightly different sense here to previously, and an interesting contrast with εὐπεριόριστον - well-defined - as used by Strabo when describing the process of measuring and defining, in geographical terms, a region of the Earth:

τὸ γὰρ σημειῶδες καὶ τὸ εὐπεριόριστον ἐκεῖθεν λαβεῖν ἔστιν, οὗ
χρεῖαν ἔχει ὁ γεωγράφος: εὐπεριόριστον δέ, ὅταν ἢ ποταμοῖς ἢ ὄρεσιν
ἢ θαλάττῃ δυνατὸν ᾖ (Geography, 2.1.30)

coming-into-being. γεγεννημένον. The meaning here is somewhat obscure. Is what is described a discovery of how the already existing and known cosmic order *came* into being, or the apprehension of a - or some sort of - cosmic order coming-into-being? Or does γεγεννημένον refer to phaos?

8.

quidditas of semblance. ἀρχέτυπον εἶδος. The transliteration 'archetype' here is, unfortunately, unsuitable, given what the term archetype now suggests and implies (vide Jungian psychology, for example) beyond what the Greek of the text means. Appropriate words or terms such as 'primal-pattern' or 'protoform' are awkward, clumsy. Hence quidditas (11th/12th century Latin), from whence came 'quiddity', a term originally from medieval scholasticism which was then used to mean the natural (primal) nature or form of some-thing, and thus hints at the original sense of ἀρχέτυπον. As used here, quidditas means exactly what ἀρχέτυπον does in the text, sans Jungian psychology; sans modern 'popular psychology'; sans expositions of hermetic/gnostic philosophy (or what is assumed to be a hermetic/gnostic philosophy) and sans expositions of Plato's philosophy.

The whole passage - τὸ ἀρχέτυπον εἶδος, τὸ προάρχον τῆς ἀρχῆς τῆς ἀπεράντου - is concerned with various shades of ἀρχή, and is rather obscure. ἀρχή as the origin - 'the beginning' - of beings and thus of their εἶδος (the ἀρχέτυπον), of their semblance, their type; and ἀρχή - the primal before (προάρχον) that beginning, of beings - as that origin (that beginning) which has no end, no known limits, ἀπεράντου.

parsements. For στοιχεῖον, and thus avoiding the word 'elements' whose meanings, being now many and varied, somewhat detract from the meaning of the text. By a parsement - an unusual variant of partiment (from the Latin partimentum) - is meant the fundamental (the basic, elemental, primal) components or principles of 'things' as understood or as posited in Hellenic times; and whether or not these are undescribed or described in terms of a particular philosophy or weltanschauung (for example, as Air, Fire, and so on).

deliberations of theos. βουλῆς θεοῦ. 'Deliberations' is the sense here; as in theos - whomsoever or whatever theos is - having pondered upon, or considered, a

particular matter or many matters. cf. Herodotus [Histories, 9.10] - ὁ μὲν σφί ταῦτα συνεβούλευε: οἱ δὲ φρενὶ λαβόντες τὸν λόγον αὐτίκα - where a similar following expression (λαβόντες τὸν λόγον) occurs.

Translations such as 'will/decreed of god' are, in my view, far too presumptive.

ἤτις λαβοῦσα τὸν λόγον. This is suggestive of theos having fully comprehended - completely understood - logos [qv. the passage from Herodotus, where the result of the deliberations was understood, approved of: 'taken to heart'], rather than of God 'taking in the Word' or 'receiving the Word'. A 'taking in' from whence to where? A 'receiving' from where?

re-presented. In the sense of a divine mimesis - *μίμησις* - which is the Greek word used here, and which mimesis is a important theme in ancient pagan culture, from Art to religion. It is tempting therefore to consider the suggestion that this mimesis by theos is akin to a masterful, a sublime, work of Art.

Psyche. For ψυχή, and leaving untranslated so as not to impose a particular meaning on the text. Whether what is meant is *anima mundi* - or some-thing else, such as the 'soul' of a human being - is therefore open to debate, although I have used a capital P to intimate that it is, in the text, an important, and primal, principle, and might imply here the original sense of 'spark' (or breath) of life; of that 'thing' [or being] which [or who] animates beings making them 'alive'.

9.

male-and-female. ἀρρενόθηλυσ. The theos - or deity/divinity/God - is both male and female, which can be interpreted as implying a bisexual nature, or androgyny, or hermaphroditism, or a being with the unique ability to both give birth and inseminate, or a being beyond all such mortal (causal) categories and assumptions.

whose logos brought forth another perceiviation. ἀπεκύησε λόγῳ ἕτερον Νοῦν δημιουργόν. An interesting phrase, possibly open to interpretation, for it might suggest 'whose utterance [who by speaking] brought forth...'

Consider, for example, Psalms 33.6:

τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ κυρίου οἱ οὐρανοὶ ἐστερεώθησαν καὶ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ
στόματος αὐτοῦ πᾶσα ἡ δύναμις αὐτῶν

בְּדִבְרֵי יְהוָה שָׁמַיִם נִעֲשְׂוּ וּבְרִיּוֹתָיו כָּל־צָבָאִם

with the Greek of LXX, literally translated, meaning "By the logos of the master [κύριος] the heavens were established and, by the pneuma from his mouth, all

their influence" [δύναμις], with the Hebrew stating it is יהוה [Yhvh - Jehovah] who has established שמים [shamayim, the heavens] and His רוח [ruach, pneuma] their power.

Hence, Pœmandres might well be saying that is was by speaking, by the act of uttering or declaiming a logos, that this theos - whomsoever or whatever theos is - brought forth a[nother] perceiv[er]ation; that is, another way or means of apprehending - of knowing, understanding, and appreciating - the cosmic order.

artisan. δημιουργόν. It is tempting to transliterate - as demiourgos - so as not to impose a meaning on the text. Does the word here imply - as possibly with Fire, pneuma, etcetera - an assumed elemental force of principle? Or a demiurge who is a (or the) theos of Fire and pneuma? Or does it imply some creator, the Theos of Fire and Pnuema? Or is some sort of artisan meant? And is this an artisan who, possibly by memesis, can create/manufacture a sublime work of Art that at the very least enables us to perceive the cosmic order - the world - in a new way and who, being a theos, can also possibly create, perhaps as a work of Art, a new cosmic order?

However, I incline toward the view, given what follows - ἐδημιούργησε διοικητάς τινάς ἐπτά [see below, *fashioned seven viziers*] - that what is meant here is artisan, rather than demiurge.

fashioned seven viziers. ἐδημιούργησε διοικητάς τινάς ἐπτά.

The word ἐδημιούργησε occurs in Diogenes Laertius [*Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 3.1 (71) - ὅτι καὶ τὸ ὑπόδειγμα ἐν ᾧ ἄφ' οὗ αὐτὸν ἐδημιούργησε] in the section concerned with Plato, where the meaning is what someone (such as a worker or artisan) has wrought, fashioned, or produced.

Viziers captures the meaning of διοικητάς (at the time the text was written) in a way that terms such as controllers, procurators, governors, do not, given the modern senses such terms now have and especially given the context, ἡ διοίκησις αὐτῶν εἰμαρμένη καλεῖται: that their administration - how these viziers discharge their duties; how they operate given their powers - "is described as fate." That is, is understood, by we mortals, as fate or destiny.

Vizier is a term used in Persia (in its various older forms) and ancient Egypt (a transcription of a hieroglyph), and also later on in the Middle East and North Africa following the rise of Islam, to denote a person who governed or who ruled over - in the name of a higher authority - a particular region or territory or who had a particular sphere of influence; a role similar to the Viceroy of the British Empire.

The seven viziers are the seven classical planetary bodies, named Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Sun, Jupiter, and Saturn, and well-described in ancient

texts, from ancient Persia onwards. Copenhaver [*Hermetica, The Greek Corpus Hermeticum and the Latin Asclepius*, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p.105] refers to some of the scholarly literature regarding these 'seven'.

spheres. The context - the cosmic order, and especially the seven planetary viziers who surround or encompass - suggest the meaning of spheres (or orbs) rather than 'circles'. Cf. Sophocles, *Antigone*, 415-6 where κύκλος could suggest sphere, or orb, or circle, but where circle seems apposite:

χρόνον τάδ' ἦν τοσοῦτον, ἔστ' ἐν αἰθέρι μέσω κατέστη λαμπρὸς ἡλίου
κύκλος καὶ καῦμ' ἔθαλπε

And long this continued until Helios with his radiant circle had established himself in middle-sky, burning us

10.

downward parsements ... logos of theos. Given that the MSS have στοιχείων τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος the meaning here is conjectural.

'Downward parsements' implies that the fundamental (elemental, primal) components by their nature had a tendency to descend, rather as rain descends down by nature and not because it is 'heavy' [cf. Xenophon, *On Hunting*, 5.3: ἀφανίζει δὲ καὶ ἡ πολλὴ δρόσος καταφέρουσα αὐτά] Hence 'descending parsements' would also be an appropriate translation here.

Regarding θεοῦ λόγος, I have again opted for a transliteration since the common translation here of 'word of God' imposes a particular, Christian, interpretation on the text, (i) given that 'word of god' is most probably what Cyril of Alexandria meant by the phrase, since τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος interestingly occurs in *Cyrilli Epistula Tertia ad Nestorium*:

μονογενῆς τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος ὁ ἐξ αὐτῆς γεννηθεὶς τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ
πατρὸς ὁ ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ θεὸς ἀληθινός τὸ φῶς τὸ ἐκ τοῦ φωτός ὁ
δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο τά τε ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ τὰ ἐν τῇ γῇ

only-offspring of the logos of theos, born from the essence [οὐσία] of the father, genuine god from genuine god, the phaos from the phaos, by whom all things in heaven and on Earth came into being

and (ii) given that this paraphrases the Nicene creed of 325 CE, with the notable exception of μονογενῆς τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος instead of τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ, the latter conventionally translated as 'only begotten Son of God'.

Thus, were the translation of 'word of god' to be accepted, with the implied meaning from the *Epistula Tertia ad Nestorium*, then Pœmandres is, apparently,

here stating that 'the Word of God' - Jesus of Nazareth, true god from true god, Light from Light, and the only begotten son of God by whom all things in heaven and on Earth came into being - somehow bounded up to be reunited with the work of the artisan-creator (presumably, in this context, God) who is of the same essence [ὁμοούσιος].

While this is a possible interpretation of the text given that Poemandres uses the same word, in reference to logos, as Cyril of Alexandria - οὐσία (which correctly understood means the very being - the essential nature/physis, or essence - of someone or some-thing) - it does seem somewhat restrictive, considering (i) the many possible meanings, and shades of meaning, of both λόγος and θεός (before and after the advent of Christianity and especially in the context of pagan, Hellenic, weltanschauungen) and (ii) how theos is described by Poemandres (for example, as being both male and female).

fine artisements of Physis. Fine - καθάρως; clean and free of defects. Artisement - the product of the skilled work of the artisan and the artist; their artisanship (cf. the 16th century English verb artize) and which artisements include beings of various kinds (including living and/or 'archetypal' ones).

It thus becomes clear, especially given what follows, why transliterating φύσις is better than translating it always as 'nature', as if φύσις here implied what we now, after hundreds years of scientific observation and theories such as that of Darwin, understand as 'the natural world', as a 'nature' that we are or can be or should be masters of and can and do and should control, and which we can (or believe we can) understand.

Physis is capitalized here, as in section 14, to suggest the objectification that the text here implies; and objectified as possibly a being - whomsoever or whatever such a being is - or possibly as some apprehension/emanation of theos (whomsoever or whatever theos is), or some fundamental principle, or some form such as what we now understand as an archetype. This Physis, therefore, might or might not be Nature (as Nature was understood in Hellenic times) although, given what follows about Earth delivering (from her womb) living beings [ἡ γῆ ἐξήνεγκεν ἀπ' αὐτῆς ἃ εἶχε ζῶα...] it might be that it is not Nature but something else, for example what may have been understood as the genesis of what we now denote by Nature.

It is interesting that here it is "the descending parsements of physis" (not Physis) who were "left, devoid of logos" while in section 14 it is Physis that is, by implication, described as 'devoid of logos' - ὥκησε τὴν ἄλογον μορφήν. This is often understood in the pejorative sense, as if this Physis, and the living beings devoid of logos - ζῶα ἥνεγκεν ἄλογα - in section 11, are somehow [to quote one translation] 'unreasoning' beings (or forms) - lacking in reason - and thus somehow [to quote another translation] 'irrational' compared to (and by extension somewhat inferior to) the 'son of theos', which mistaken and unnecessary value-judgements arise from interpreting and translating λόγος as

'Word' or as meaning/implying 'reason'. However, logos is just logos, and devoid of (without) logos - ἄλογος - could be, depending on how logos is interpreted, akin to ἀθάνατος said in respect, for example, of theos [Θεὸν δ' εἶναι ζῶον ἀθάνατον] or implying 'cannot be reduced to something else' and thus heterogeneous [αἱ δὲ ταύτη ἀσύμμετροι ἄλογοι καλείσθωσαν], or lacking the faculty of human speech (as in animals, who are not all 'brutish') or (more esoterically) suggestive of *sans denotatum*, of not denoting things or beings by assigning names or terms to them and thus not distinguishing them or marking them as separate from the whole, the unity, of which one type of wholeness is Physis understood as the goddess of Nature, as the creative force that is the genesis of, and which maintains the balance of, the life which inhabits the Earth.

Substance. ὕλη. Since the Greek term does not exactly mean 'matter' in the modern sense (qv. the science of Physics) it is better to find an alternative. Hence 'substance' - the *materia* of 'things' and living beings - contrasted with οὐσία, essence.

11.

the perceiviation of that artisan. As previously, and like physis, both νοῦς and λόγος are here objectified.

spinning them around. δινῶν ροίζω.

12.

brought forth...a mortal. ἀπεκύησεν ἄνθρωπον. The word ἀπεκύησεν in relation to πατήρ perhaps refers back to where theos, the perceiviation, is described as being both male and female [ἀρρενόθηλος] although whether the meaning here is the literal 'gave birth' or the descriptive 'brought forth' is interesting, especially a different word, ἐξήνεγκεν [which the English word delivered - in the sense of giving birth, of 'a woman having disburdened herself of a foetus' - usefully describes] is used in reference to the (female) Earth. This different usage, and the Epistle of James, written not long before the Pœmandres tractate where 'brought forth' is apposite [v.1.15 ἡ δὲ ἀμαρτία ἀποτελεσθεῖσα ἀποκύει θάνατον] incline me toward 'brought forth' here.

In respect of ἄνθρωπος (often emended to ἄνθρωπος) the sense here, as often, is the gender neutral 'human being' - a mortal - and not 'a man'.

image. μορφή. Image in both senses of the English term - as outward physical appearance, and as the impression (or concept) that others may have of, or see in, a person.

Image plays an important part in what follows; the image that the son of theos

has of himself and sees reflected back to him and which image he loves. The image Physis has of him and sees a reflection of, and the image which he has of her and which makes him desire her.

bequeathed to him all his works of Art. παρέδωκε τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πάντα δημιουργήματα. This is a very interesting phrase; theos as artisan, as artist, whose works - whose creations, whose artisements, whose divine re-presentations (μίμησις) - apparently include both the cosmic order, the artisan mentioned previously, and we mortals. Less suggestive of the meaning is 'bequeathed to him all his (various) artisements'.

13.

that father. Reading πατρί, with the MSS, and not the emendation παρί.

Ingressing to the artisan's realm. γενόμενος ἐν τῇ δημιουργικῇ σφαίρᾳ. The realm of the artisan: where the artisan works, and produces artisements and divine works of art, and where someone - here, the mortal, son of theos - can learn and master that skill and produce his own works. This realm is that of the seven spheres, the seven viziers.

function. τάξεως. Cf. Plato, *Laws*, 809d - ἡμερῶν τάξεως εἰς μηνῶν περιόδους καὶ μηνῶν εἰς ἕκαστον τὸν ἐνιαυτὸν ἵνα ὥραι καὶ θυσίαι καὶ ἑορταὶ τὰ προσήκοντ' ἀπολαμβάνουσιν ἑαυταῖς ἕκασται τῷ κατὰ φύσιν ἄγεσθαι - where the sense is of the periodic, the orderly, functioning of things; of days into weeks, weeks into months, and of months into a year; and which functionality enables us to know when to celebrate and undertake the seasonal festivals and feasts.

limit. περιφέρεια. Not here the literal Euclidean meaning of circumference [for example, Euclid, *Elements*, Book 13, Proposition 10 - ἐπεὶ ἴση ἐστὶν ἡ ΑΒΓΗ περιφέρεια τῇ ΑΕΔΗ περιφερείᾳ] but rather of the limits, the boundary, set or marked by the seven spheres; a limit that the mortal, son of theos, is "determined to burst out past".

imposed their strength upon the Fire. Cf. section 7 - περισχεσθαι τὸ πῦρ δυνάμει μεγίστη (the fire, embraced by a strong force).

14.

burst through the strength of the spheres. I follow the reading of the MSS, which have ἀναρρήξας τὸ κράτος τῶν κύκλων, amended by Scott and Nock to ἀναρρήξας τὸ κύτος [burst through the container].

harmonious structure. Here, ἁρμονία implies the 'structure' of the κόσμος, the

cosmic order [qv. the note on κόσμος in section 7] and which structure is harmonious [qv. ἁρμονίας ἐναρμόνιος in section 15].

vigour. ἐνέργεια. The words 'force' and 'energy' bring too many irrelevant modern connotations to the text, and 'vigour' well expresses the meaning of ἐνέργεια here, with the suggestion, as often elsewhere, of 'vigorous activity'.

When she beheld. This, as what follows suggests, is Physis, personified. In respect of beholding such beauty, cf. section 8 - *having seen the beauty of the cosmic order*.

on Earth, his shadow. τὸ σκίασμα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. Cf. Diogenes Laertius [*Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.146, Zeno] not especially for the similarity - τὸ τῆς γῆς σκίασμα - but more for the interesting section, preceding this mention of the shadow of the moon on Earth during an eclipse, of how the cosmic order came into being [142] and for the equally interesting following discussion [147] which concerns the attributes and images of theos - the god - who is described as 'the father of all', who has both male and female aspects, and which aspects of the divinity are given their classical pagan names with their areas of authority specified. The interest lies in how the classical gods, and the creation of the cosmic order, and thus Hellenic paganism, were understood and remembered not long after the *Hermetica* was written, and thus how they echo in part some of the metaphysical themes in, and the cosmogony of, the *Pœmandres* tractate.

Physis grasped [...] intimately joined together. ἡ δὲ φύσις λαβοῦσα τὸν ἐρώμενον περιεπλάκη ὅλη καὶ ἐμίγησαν ἐρώμενοι γὰρ ἦσαν. The sense of μίγνυμι here is that of a physical union, a sexual joining together - not of some 'philosophical mingling' of 'forms'. Similarly, περιπλέκω is not some ordinary 'embrace' but a sexual twinning (of limbs). Cf. Hesiod, *Theogony*, 375 - Κρίω δ' Εὐρυβίην τέκεν ἐν φιλότῃ μιγεῖσα Ἀστραῖον.

jumelle. For διπλοῦς. The much underused and descriptive English word jumelle - from the Latin gemellus - describes some-thing made in, or composed of, two parts, and is therefore most suitable here, more so than common words such as 'double' or 'twofold'.

deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal. θνητὸς μὲν διὰ τὸ σῶμα, ἀθάνατος δὲ διὰ τὸν οὐσιώδη ἄνθρωπον. Here, in respect of my choice of English words, I must admit to being influenced by Chapman's lovely poetic translation of the Hymn to Venus from the Homeric Hymns:

That with a deathless goddess lay a deathful man

In respect of οὐσιώδης, I prefer, given the context, 'inner' - suggestive of 'real' - rather than the conventional 'essential'; although 'vital' is an alternative

translation here, suggested by what Eusebius wrote (c.326 CE) about φῶς [phaos] pre-existing even before the cosmic order, with φῶς used by Eusebius to mean Light in the Christian sense:

τό τε φῶς τὸ προκόσμιον καὶ τὴν πρὸ αἰώνων νοερὰν καὶ οὐσιώδη σοφίαν τὸν τε ζῶντα [Historia Ecclesiastica, Book 1, chapter 2]

The Light of the proto-cosmos, the comprehension and vital wisdom existing before the Aeons

wyrd. For ἡ εἰμαρμένη. A much better choice, here, than either 'fate' or 'destiny' given how overused both those words now are and how their interpretation is also now so varied. An overview of how the concept may have been understood in the late Hellenic period (around the time the Hermetica was probably written) is given in the 2nd century CE discourse *De Fato*, attributed to Plutarch, which begins by stating that εἰμαρμένη has been described in two ways, as ἐνέργεια (vigorous activity) and as οὐσία (essence) -

πρῶτον τοίνυν ἴσθι, ὅτι εἰμαρμένη διχῶς καὶ λέγεται καὶ νοεῖται: ἡ μὲν γάρ ἐστιν ἐνέργεια ἡ δ' οὐσία

of a wakeful one <...> There is some text missing, indicated by <...>, for after ἄϋπνος ἀπὸ ἄϋπνου the MSS have κρατεῖται [mastered/ruled by - cf. 4 Maccabees 2.9 ἢ ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου κρατεῖται διὰ τὸν λογισμὸν]. Although some suggestions have been made as to this missing text (such as "ruled by love and sleep" [ἔρωτος καὶ ὕπνου] - they are purely conjectural.

16.

<...> *my perceiviation*. Again, the suggestions for the missing text are purely conjectural.

a mysterium esoteric. For κεκρυμμένον μυστήριον. The term mysterium - a truth or insight or knowledge about some-thing, which is considered religious and/or metaphysical ('hermetic') and which is unknown/unrevealed to or as yet undiscovered by others, and hence 'mysterious' to them - expresses the meaning of the Greek here (as the word mystery by itself does not). Likewise in respect of esoteric - kept concealed or which is concealed/hidden to most or which is revealed to an individual by someone who already 'knows' what the mysterium in question is.

Hence why I write *a* mysterium here rather than *the* mysterium, and why "a mysterium, esoteric even to this day", is better than the rather bland "the mystery kept hidden until this very day".

possessed the physis of the harmonious seven. The seven viziers. A more literal translation would be 'possessed the physis of the [harmonious] structure of the

seven'. Here, physis could mean 'character' (of a person) or some-thing more archetypal/elemental of which such character or personal characteristics are an outward manifestation.

seven male-and-female humans. These seven humans, born from Physis, are thus akin to both theos and the child of theos who also have a male (a masculous) and a female (a muliebral) aspect. That is, although mortal - having been brought forth by and from divinities - these humans are, in their very being, both male and female and thus, in their creation, dissimilar to ordinary mortals, for reasons which Pœmandres goes on to explain.

In addition, these seven mortals have the same or a similar physis as the 'harmonious seven'.

ætherean. For μεταρσίους. Ætherean is the metaphorical sense of μεταρσίους here, not 'exalted' or 'sublime' (which imply some sort of human admiration or some sort of religious attitude/apprehension). For the sense is similar to what Dio Chrysostom wrote, in his tract on leadership, about the sons of Boreas, who - semi-divine - have the attributes of their father and who are depicted in and belonging to their natural realm:

ὁποίους τοὺς Βορεάδας ἐνεθυμήθησάν τε καὶ ἔγραψαν οἱ γραφεῖς
ἐλαφρούς τε καὶ μεταρσίους ταῖς τοῦ πατρὸς αὔραις συνθέοντας
[Orationes, 4.1]

Ætherean is used in the poetic sense - that is, 'supernal', meaning of the harmonious - the heavenly - cosmic order and also refined: of the essence, οὐσία, and thus not just ὕλη, substance (qv. section 10).

Primary explanation. πρῶτον λόγον [cf. Plato, *Republic*, Book 3 [395b] εἰ ἄρα τὸν πρῶτον λόγον διασώσομεν]. An explanation of our origins, as mortals, and thus of the 'first principle' that forms the basis of the 'hermetic weltanschauung'.

17.

those seven came into being in this way. It is interesting to compare 'these seven' with 'the 'nine' and the seven spheres (Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sol, Venus, Mercury, Moon) of the Somnium Scipionis described by Cicero:

Novem tibi orbibus vel potius globis conexas sunt omnia, quorum unus est caelestis, extimus, qui reliquos omnes complectitur, summus ipse deus arcens et continens ceteros; in quo sunt infixi illi, qui volvuntur, stellarum cursus sempiterni. Cui subiecti sunt septem, qui versantur retro contrario motu atque caelum. Ex quibus summum globum possidet illa, quam in terris Saturniam nominant. Deinde est hominum

generi prosperus et salutaris ille fulgor, qui dicitur Iovis; tum rutilus horribilisque terris, quem Martium dicitis; deinde subter mediam fere regionem Sol obtinet, dux et princeps et moderator luminum reliquorum, mens mundi et temperatio, tanta magnitudine, ut cuncta sua luce lustret et compleat. Hunc ut comites consequuntur Veneris alter, alter Mercurii cursus, in infimoque orbe Luna radiis solis accensa convertitur. Infra autem iam nihil est nisi mortale et caducum praeter animos munere deorum hominum generi datos; supra Lunam sunt aeterna omnia. Nam ea, quae est media et nona, Tellus, neque movetur et infima est, et in eam feruntur omnia nutu suo pondera. [*De Re Publica*, Book VI, 17]

Nine orbs - more correctly, spheres - connect the whole cosmic order, of which one - beyond the others but enfolding them - is where the uppermost deity dwells, enclosing and containing all. There - embedded - are the constant stars with their sempiternal movement, while below are seven spheres whose cyclicity is different, and one of which is the sphere given the name on Earth of Saturn [...]

Muliebral. For θηλυκή. The term muliebral derives from the classical Latin word *muliebris*, and is used here to refer to those positive traits, abilities, and qualities, that are conventionally and historically associated with women. Muliebral is more expressive - and more redolent of the meaning of the Greek - than 'feminine', especially given how the word 'feminine' is so often misused (sometimes in a pejorative way).

It should be noted that the older reading of θηλυκή γὰρ ὁ ἀήρ makes Air - not Earth - the muliebral one.

Lustful. For ὀχευτικόν. The sense is similar to ἐπιθυμία as used, for example, in Romans 14.13 - τῆς σαρκὸς πρόνοιαν μὴ ποιῆσθε εἰς ἐπιθυμίας [make no intention regarding the flesh, to gratify its carnal desires]

From Æther, the pneuma. ἐκ δὲ αἰθέρος τὸ πνεῦμα ἔλαβε. It is best to transliterate αἰθήρ - as Æther - given that it, like Earth, Air, Fire, Water, and pneuma, is an elemental principle, or a type of (or a particular) being, or some-thing archetypal.

cyclic until its completion. μέχρι περιόδου τέλους. I follow the reading of the Turnebus MS, taking περίοδος to refer to a posited cyclic - periodic - cosmic order, of Aeons, which periodicity continues until its purpose is achieved/fulfilled/completed.

18.

the connexions between all things. Compare this unbinding of the cosmic bonds with the 'connexions' that make up the nine spheres in the Somnium Scipionis

[qv. the quotation from Cicero, above].

bringing into being portions that were masculous with the others muliebral. ἐγένετο τὰ μὲν ἀρρενικὰ ἐν μέρει τὰ δὲ θηλυκὰ ὁμοίως. The meaning of ἀρρενικὰ and θηλυκὰ are not 'male' and 'female' but rather masculous (masculine) and muliebral (of or considered appropriate to women).

propagate by propagation and spawn by spawning. The same Greek words - αὐξάνεσθε and πληθύνεσθε - occur in LXX, Genesis 1.22: ἡὺλόγησεν αὐτὰ ὁ θεὸς λέγων αὐξάνεσθε καὶ πληθύνεσθε ["Theos praised them, saying: propagate and spawn"; Tyndale - "God blessed them saying, grow and multiply"; KJV - "God blessed them saying, Be fruitful and multiply"].

creations and artisements. κτίσματα καὶ δημιουργήματα. Although κτίσμα is generally translated here as 'creature' (as also for example in most translations of Revelation 5.13) I incline toward the view, given the context, that the more general sense of a 'creation' (or 'created thing') is meant - cf. Strabo, Geography, Book 16. 1 [ἥς ἐστὶ κτίσμα ἢ Βαβυλῶν] where what is described is a construct, a creation - a work constructed by or on behalf of someone. Here, what is described are the creations of theos.

In respect of 'artisements', see section 10.

the perceiver. ὁ ἔννοους.

Eros as responsible for death. τὸν αἴτιον τοῦ θανάτου ἔρωτα. The consensus is, and has been, that ἔρωτα here signifies 'carnal desire' - or something similar - so that it is assumed that what is meant is some sort of ascetic (or Gnostic or puritanical) statement about how sexual desire should be avoided or at the very least controlled. However, this seems rather at variance with the foregoing - regarding propagating and spawning - which inclines me to suggest that what is meant here is 'eros', not necessarily personified as the classical deity (ἡδ' Ἔρος ὃς κάλλιστος ἐν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι πάντων δὲ θεῶν πάντων τ' ἀνθρώπων δάμναται ἐν στήθεσσι νόον καὶ ἐπίφρονα βουλήν), although the comparison is interesting, but rather as an elemental or archetypal principle, akin to νοῦς and λόγος. Consider, for example, the following from *Daphnis and Chloe*, written by Longus around the same time as the Corpus Hermeticum: πάντως γὰρ οὐδεὶς ἔρωτα ἔφυγεν ἢ φεύζεται μέχρις ἂν κάλλος ᾗ καὶ ὀφθαλμοὶ βλέπωσιν [Book 1, Proem, 4 - "no one can avoid or has ever been able to avoid Eros, while there is beauty and eyes which perceive"]. In modern terms, few - poetically, metaphorically, none - have avoided or could avoid, at some time in their life, the unconscious power of the anima/animus.

Eros - as some-thing similar to an archetypal principle, applicable to or of (existing in/part of) "all beings/creations/things" - might also go some way toward explaining the καὶ πάντα τὰ ὄντα that follows in the text (for example in the Turnebus MS) for which various emendations have been proposed,

including omitting it altogether.

19.

foreknowing, through wyrd.....coagulations. The foreknowing of theos, which enabled theos through wyrd and the cosmic structure to 'found the generations'. The coagulations, the copulation, of beings (created things).

self-knowledge. ἀναγνωρίσας ἑαυτὸν. A pedantic aside: here, as often elsewhere, I have gone against convention (grammatical and otherwise) by, where possible, choosing neutral personal pronouns, thus avoiding sentences such as "And he who has self-knowledge..." This sometimes results in using third person plural pronouns - such as 'their' and 'they' - as if they were personal pronouns, or using constructs such as "the one of self-knowledge" or "whoever has self-knowledge". In addition, it should be noted that the grammatical categorization of a word (male, female, gender neutral) is only a grammatical categorization and does not always reflect the nature of the being that that word denotes or refers to.

a particular benefit. τὸ περιούσιον ἀγαθόν. Literally, 'the particular benefit' [an alternative, possibly better, translation would be 'the esoteric benefit']. What the text refers to is not some abstract 'good' but rather what is good for, what benefits, the person. Thus, self-knowledge can lead to a particular, a specific, benefit.

perceptively. αἰσθητῶς - cf. Strabo, *Geography*, Book 3, chapter 5.1, a description of a high tide; of the sea, due to the moon, begin to perceptively/visibly both rise and go far onto the shore - ἀρχεσθαι διοιδεῖν τὴν θάλατταν καὶ ἐπιβαίνειν τῆς γῆς αἰσθητῶς μέχρι μεσουρανήσεως.

20.

to discover things. That is, discover/apprehend for yourself, to reveal (dis-cover) the nature of things, and thus fully understand them; qv. section 3 ('apprehend the physis of beings') and section 6 ('then discover phaos and become familiar with it') and section 7 ('such I observed and discovered because of those words of Pœmandres').

why death is expected for those who are in death. διὰ τί ἄξιοί εἰσι τοῦ θανάτου οἱ ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ ὄντες. Somewhat obscure, given the phrase 'in death' and given that what follows - "because originally..." - does not really offer an explanation of it.

I take the meaning of ἀξιώ here to be 'expect' rather than 'worthy' given (i) what the English phrase 'they are worthy of death' (or 'they deserve death') implies, an implication - a moralizing attitude - that is not justified by either the immediate context or the rest of the text, and (ii) usages such as (a) νῦν παρ'

ὁμῶν τὸ αὐτὸ ἀξιοῦμεν κομίζεσθαι ['we now expect to receive the same from you'; Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, Book 1, chapter 43] and (b) ὥστε οὐκ οἴκτου οἱ τοιοῦτοι ἀξιοί εἰσιν, ἀλλὰ τιμωρίας ['they are expected to be punished not pitied', Hyperides, *Orations Against Philippides*, 2.12]

Nourishes. ἀρδεύεται here is obviously metaphorical, as it literally means "is irrigated/watered" as in Diodorus Siculus when he describes India - τὰ πολλὰ δὲ τῆς χώρας ἀρδεύεται καὶ διὰ τοῦτο διττοὺς ἔχει τοὺς κατ' ἔτος καρπούς ['much of the land is irrigated which is why there are two yields a year'; *Bibliotheca Historica*, Book 2, 35.3]

21.

progress within themselves. εἰς αὐτὸν χωρεῖ. Literally, 'progress to (or proceed/advance toward) him', with the usual assumption being that it is theos that is meant (hence, 'proceed toward theos'), with the alternative translation, of 'progress to themselves', ignored. However, given the immediate context - of a self-discovery - and given examples such as Mark 7.15 (εἰσπορευόμενον εἰς αὐτὸν, entering *into* him) and given that (insofar as I understand it) the tractate concerns (i) self-knowing, (ii) a 'mysterium' that is esoteric, and (iii) a desire to know and to understand 'the physis of beings', rather than a religious 'progressing toward god' à la Thomas à Kempis, then I am inclined to favour the somewhat radical translation of 'within themselves'.

the father of all beings. ὁ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων. The word 'all' by itself does not really capture the sense of ὅλων here, which is 'all beings'. The phrase ὁ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων occurs in many other writings, some of which are Christian. For instance in the Τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰουστίνου πρὸς Τρύφωνα Ἰουδαίου Διάλογος [The Dialogue of Justinus with Trypho, a Jew] where it is said in the context of Christ being crucified, dying, and then being raised again by 'the father of all' for the benefit of all human beings - τὸν ἑαυτοῦ Χριστὸν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐκ παντὸς γένους ἀνθρώπων ὁ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων τὰς πάντων κατάρας ἀναδέξασθαι ἐβουλήθη (xcv, 2).

However, interestingly and relevant here, the phrase also occurs in the polemic by Irenaeus against the 'heresy of gnosticism' - the *Adversus Haereses* [ἔλεγχος καὶ ἀνατροπή της ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως] - written not long before the Poemandres tractate:

μεταδοῦναί σοι θέλω τῆς ἐμῆς χάριτος ἐπειδὴ ὁ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων τὸν ἄγγελόν σου διαπαντὸς βλέπει πρὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ ὁ δὲ τόπος τοῦ μεγέθους ἐν ἡμῖν ἐστὶ δι' ἡμᾶς ἐγκαταστήσαι (Book I, Chapter 13, 3)

I desire to pass on to you my Charis because the father of all beings has observed that your angel is constantly before him

These are the words Irenaeus ascribes to a person called Marcus, 'the heretic'; words used by this person skilled in the trickery of sorcery (μαγικῆς κυβείας ἐμπειρότατον) to, apparently, entice men and wealthy women to be his followers. Irenaeus then goes on, in a passage also quoted by Eusebius in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* (4.11.5), to describe some of the rites - the 'disgusting initiation into the mysteries' - of these people, and which rites include a 'mystical marriage' (πνευματικὸν γάμον) as well as a doxology to 'the father and the mother', εἰς ὄνομα ἀγνώστου πατρὸς τῶν ὅλων εἰς ἀλήθειαν μητέρα τῶν πάντων, and which doxology, with its contrast between ὅλων (ascribed to the father) and πάντων (ascribed to the mother) may go some way toward explaining the meaning of ὅλων as used here, in the Pœmandres tractate, given that μητέρα πάντων - as Γαία, Earth Mother - is the subject of, among other things, one of the Homeric hymns, Εἷς Γῆν Μητέρα Πάντων, where She is described as πρέσβιστος, the elder among beings, and the mother of the gods, θεῶν μήτηρ.

Thus, πατρὸς τῶν ὅλων as the father of all beings, and μητέρα τῶν πάντων as the mother of being, of all Life, both mortal and immortal.

22.

respectful deeds. ὀσίοις. A difficult word to translate, given that most of the English alternatives - such as religious, pious, holy, devout, blessed, sinless, saintly, humble - have acquired, over centuries, particular religious meanings, often associated with Christianity or types of asceticism; meanings which, in my view, are not or may not be relevant here, and whose use would distort one's understanding of the text.

The correct meaning is someone who, aware of or sensitive to the difference between the numinous and un-numinous [regarding 'numinous', see the note on ἅγιος in section 5], seeks to avoid, in their behaviour, what might cause them to hubriatically 'overstep the limits' and thus unbalance them, so taking them away from that natural balance and that respect for the numinous, which they personally, by their (or a particular) way of living (personal, religious, spiritual, mystical, or otherwise) seek or desire to cultivate, or which (and importantly) is a natural part of their admirable (and often admired) character. For example:

ἐκεῖνός γε μὴν ὑμῶν οὐποτ' ἔληγεν ὥς τοὺς θεοὺς οἶοιτο οὐδὲν ἧττον ὀσίοις ἔργοις ἢ ἀγνοῖς ἱεροῖς ἡδεσθαι ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ ὁπότε εὐτυχοίη οὐκ ἀνθρώπων ὑπερεφρόνει ἀλλὰ θεοῖς χάριν ἥδει καὶ θαρρῶν πλείονα ἔθυσεν ἢ ὀκνῶν ἠῤῥχετο εἴθιστο δὲ φοβούμενος μὲν ἱλαρὸς φαίνεσθαι εὐτυχῶν δὲ πρᾶος εἶναι [Xenophon, *Agesilaus*, 11.2]

this person, whom I praise, never ceased to believe that the gods delight in respectful deeds just as much as in consecrated temples,

and, when blessed with success, he was never prideful but rather gave thanks to the gods. He also made more offerings to them when he was confident than supplications when he felt hesitant, and, in appearance, it was his habit to be cheerful when doubtful and mild-mannered when successful.

For these reasons, I have translated not as one English word, but as the phrase 'respectful deeds'. See also the note on εὐσεβέω below.

honourable. ἀγαθός. The sense is not of being 'good' in some moralistic, sanctimonious, superior, way, but rather of being of noble character, as for example described in the Corpus Aristotelicum:

τῆς δὲ φρονήσεώς ἐστι τὸ βουλευσασθαι, τὸ κρίναι τὰ ἀγαθὰ καὶ τὰ κακὰ καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν τῷ βίῳ αἰρετὰ καὶ φευκτά, τὸ χρῆσθαι πᾶσι καλῶς τοῖς ὑπάρχουσιν ἀγαθοῖς, τὸ ὁμιλῆσαι ὀρθῶς [*De Virtutibus et Vitiis Libellus* 1250a]

It is part of wisdom to accept advice, to distinguish the honourable, the dishonourable, and all that is, in life, acceptable or to be avoided; to fairly use all resources; to be genuine in company

refined. καθαροίς. Literally it means 'physically clean', often in the sense of being in a state of ritual purification: qv. the inscription on one of the ancient tablets (totenpasse) found in Thurii - ἔρχομαι ἐκ καθαρῶν καθαρὰ χθονίων βασιλεια (in arrivance, purified from the purified, mistress of the chthonic).

Since the English word 'pure' is unsuitable given its connotations - religious, sanctimonious, political, and otherwise - I have opted for the not altogether satisfactory 'refined'.

compassionate. ἐλεήμοσι. Those who undertake merciful, charitable, humane, deeds; qv. Luke 11.41 (πλὴν τὰ ἐνόντα δότε ἐλεημοσύνην, καὶ ἰδοὺ πάντα καθαρὰ ὑμῖν ἐστίν), Acts 10:2, κτλ.

aware of the numinous. εὐσεβοῦσι. As with ὁσίοις, εὐσεβέω is a difficult word to translate, given that most of the English alternatives - such as reverent, pious - have acquired, over centuries, particular religious meanings, often associated with Christianity or types of asceticism. The correct sense is 'aware of the numinous', and thus imbued with that sense of duty, that sense of humility - or rather, an awareness of their human limitations - which makes them appreciate and respect the numinous in whatever form, way, or manner they appreciate, feel, intuit, apprehend, or understand, the numinous, be it in terms of the gods, the god, Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες, God, or whatever. It is this

awareness which inclines a person toward 'respectful deeds' [qv. ὁσίοις, above].

soon acquire knowledge of the whole. εὐθὺς τὰ πάντα γνωρίζουσι. Knowledge of 'the whole picture'; of what has been and is being discussed: perceivization; the cosmic structure; the nature of humans; the seven viziers; and so on. The sense is not "gnosis of all things", which - in its hubris - is incompatible with the immediately proceeding mention of εὐσεβέω and ὁσίοις.

affectionately gracious toward. There are two ways of interpreting τὸν πατέρα ἰλάσκονται ἀγαπητικῶς and what follows. (i) As if it is some kind of Christian eulogy by the faithful, with mention of "lovingly propitiating the father" and the "singing of hymns" to him; and (ii) in a rather more religiously neutral way with phrases such as ἰλάσκονται ἀγαπητικῶς and words such as ὕμνεῦσιν suggesting the more Hellenic "affectionately gracious" and "celebrating in song". I have chosen the latter, as it is, in my view, more in harmony with the rest of the text.

the influencing impressions. αἰσθήσεις. What is meant here is not simply 'the [bodily] senses' nor what is perceptible to or perceived by the senses, but rather those particular impressions, conveyed by the senses, which influence a person in a way which is disliked because they do or they can affect a person in a manner detrimental to their immortality. That is, not all 'feelings' nor all 'sensations' are meant but only those which impresses upon [cf. Cicero, *Academica*, 2.6, impressum effictumque] a person in a certain way and thus affect that person also in a certain way, as 'impressionable feelings' do:

αὐτὸς δὲ διὰ ποιημάτων φιλοσοφεῖ, καθάπερ Ἡσίοδος τε καὶ
Ξενοφάνης καὶ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς κριτήριον δὲ τὸν λόγον εἶπε: τάς τε
αἰσθήσεις μὴ ἀκριβεῖς ὑπάρχειν φησὶ γοῦν [Diogenes Laertius,
Parmenides, 9.3]

he himself, through the form of verse, presented his knowledge, as did Hesiod, Xenophanes and Empedocles, stating that it was a way of judging what was reasonable since impressionable feelings were not an accurate enough starting point

This is the type of 'impression' - the type of influence - meant by some alchemical texts, for example, in the *Compound of Alchymy*, by Ripley, contained in the *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* ['the Body of the Spryte taketh impression' (ix. xi)] and also, some centuries later, by Hume in his *Treatise on Human Nature* ['those perceptions, which enter with most force and violence, we may name impressions' (I. i. 12)]. Cf. also Aristotle, *Poetics* 1451a - τοῦ δὲ μήκουσ ὅρος ὁ μὲν πρὸς τοὺς ἀγῶνας καὶ τὴν αἴσθησιν οὐ τῆς τέχνης ἐστίν - where what is meant is the 'impression' made upon an audience, which thus influences them.

the bad. The usual translation of κακός here, as often elsewhere, is 'evil'.

However, I regard such a translation as unhelpful, given that the English word 'evil' is (1) now often interpreted and understood in a moralistic, preconceived, way according to some theological dogma/criteria and/or according to some political/social doctrine, and (2) that it does not denote what the classical and the Hellenic term κακός does.

Classically understood κακός is what is bad in the sense of some-thing rotten or unhealthy, or – the opposite of κάλος – what is displeasing to see. κακός is also what is unlucky, a misfortune, and/or injurious, as for example in The Agamemnon

τὸ μὲν γυναιῖκα πρῶτον ἄρσενος δίχα
ἦσθαι δόμοις ἔρημον ἔκπαγλον κακόν (vv. 862-3)

Primarily, for a lady to be separate from her mate -
To remain unprotected by family – is a harsh misfortune

When applied to a person, the sense is of a 'rotten' person; someone with bad, harmful, physis; a bad - dishonourable, weak, cowardly - personal character; someone whose nature, for examples, inclines them toward doing harm and doing what is generally considered to be wrong.

This sense is still appropriate to Hellenic usage. For example, in respect of Romans 12.17 with its contrast of κακός and κάλος:

μηδενὶ κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἀποδιδόντες προνοούμενοι καλὰ ἐνώπιον πάντων ἀνθρώπων

Do not render what is bad with what is bad; rather, show concern for what all humans see is good

Similarly with the synonym σαπρός, as for example in Luke 6.43-5:

Οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν δένδρον καλὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν σαπρόν, οὐδὲ πάλιν δένδρον σαπρόν ποιοῦν καρπὸν καλόν, ἕκαστον γὰρ δένδρον ἐκ τοῦ ἰδίου καρποῦ γινώσκεται· ὁ ἀγαθὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ θησαυροῦ τῆς καρδίας προφέρει τὸ ἀγαθόν, καὶ ὁ πονηρὸς ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ προφέρει τὸ πονηρόν· ἐκ γὰρ περισσεύματος καρδίας λαλεῖ τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ

For no healthy tree brings forth rotten fruit just as a rotten tree cannot bring forth healthy fruit. For each tree is judged by its fruit. A good person from the store of good in their heart brings forth what is good, and a bad person from their bad store brings forth what is bad; for it is because of an overflowing heart that the mouth speaks.

23.

hubriatic. ἄσεβέσι; someone lacking in or who is arrogantly disdainful of σέβομαι, of what is regarded as honourable, revered, respected. Someone who is thus 'hubriatic'. It is the opposite of εὐσεβέω, that is, the opposite of someone who is aware of and respectful of the numinous.

the avenging daemon. τῷ τιμωρῷ δαίμον.

Τιμωρῷ is an epithet of the god Mars, mentioned by Cassius Dio Cocceianus in his *Historiae Romanae* when he recounts how Caligula, celebrating the murder of someone, sent three daggers to the temple of Mars the Avenger, in Rome, as offerings to the god - ξιφίδια τρία τῷ Ἄρει τῷ Τιμωρῷ ἐς [Book 59, chapter 22 v.7].

Correctly understood, a δαίμων (daemon) is neither a 'demon' nor one of the pantheon of major Greek gods - θεοί - but rather a lesser type of divinity who might be assigned by those gods to bring good fortune or misfortune to human beings and/or to watch over certain human beings and especially particular numinous (sacred) places.

which tests them. καὶ τοῦτον βασανίζει. The sense here is rather obscure, with some proposed emendations (for example, οὕτως, and τοῦτο for τοῦτον). I take the sense here of βασανίζω to be 'tested', as in being 'put to the test'; a sense in accord with what precedes and with what follows.

24.

Anados. ἄνοδος. A transliteration, as the word has specific meanings in ancient Greek 'mystery cults' and in Hellenic 'mysticism', one of which meanings is the ascent, or progress, or journey, of the initiate/individual toward their goal, however that goal/ascent/progress/journey is described and/or understood, and/or represented (symbolically, mythologically, or otherwise). Quite often, the journey - the 'way up' - is described as the one between the living and the dead (the next life) or as one from the chthonic (the underworld) to our mortal world; which journey sometimes involves a symbolic/mythological death and then a rebirth.

the dissolution of the physical body allows that body to be transformed. ἐν τῇ ἀναλύσει τοῦ σώματος τοῦ ὑλικοῦ παραδίδως αὐτὸ τὸ σῶμα εἰς ἀλλοίωσιν. Literally, 'in the dissolution of the material body it hands over that body to alteration'.

ethos. ἦθος. Here, ethos in the personal sense; the 'spirit' - the personality - of an individual: their traits, character, disposition, nature, temperament.

25.

in the first realm. The sphere of the Moon, the first of the seven planetary/alchemical/astrological spheres, realms, or emanations - the ἑβδομάς; hebdomad, septenary system - that, in respect of the journey (ἄνοδος) of the mortal toward immortality, form the basis of, are emanations of, the harmonious cosmic structure (qv. sections 9 and 14). On this journey, the mortal passes through each realm - sphere - in turn.

which grows and which fades. Cf. Sextus Empiricus - ταύτην δὲ ἤτοι αὐξητικήν ἢ μειωτικήν [Adversus Mathematicos, IX, 393]

arrogance of command. Reading ὑπερηφανίαν not προφανίαν.

26.

ogdoadic physis. ὀγδοατικήν φύσιν. An interesting and important term, often overlooked and often misinterpreted. What is meant is not a realm - ζώνη - or sphere, similar to but 'beyond' the seven realms, but rather 'of what' the mortal has become, is reborn as, at the end of the journey: partaking in and being of 'the ogdoadic physis', and thus sharing the being/existence of those who have, or who have attained, that particular type of being/existence/physis. The existence, that is, of an immortal beyond the seven emanations.

with the others there, celebrates the father in song. ὑμνεῖ σὺν τοῖς οὖσι τὸν πατέρα. Again - qv. section 22 - not 'hymns' in the Christian sense but rather celebrating in song/verse/chant; celebrating the father of this mortal, the parent of all mortals, and ὁ πατήρ τῶν ὅλων, the 'grandfather' of all beings (qv. section 21).

force. δύναμις. Cf. section 7. Those forces, those particular powers - or, more precisely, that type (or those types) of being(s) or existence - that are not only beyond the septenary system but beyond the ogdoadic physis of those mortals who have, because of their journey (ἄνοδος) through the septenary system, achieved immortality.

It is therefore easy to understand why some considered there were, or represented their understanding/insight by, 'nine' (seven plus two) fundamental cosmic emanations, or by nine realms or spheres [qv. the quote from Cicero in section 17] - the seven of the hebdomad, plus the one of the 'ogdoadic physis' mentioned here, plus the one (also mentioned here) of what is beyond even this 'ogdoadic physis'. However, as this text describes, there are seven realms or spheres - a seven-fold path to immortality, accessible to living mortals - and then two types of existence (not spheres) beyond these, accessible only after the mortals has journeyed along that path and then, having 'offered up' certain things along the way (their mortal ethos), 'handed over their body to its death'. Ontologically, therefore, the seven might somewhat simplistically be described as partaking of what is 'causal' (of what is mortal) and the two types of

existence beyond the seven as partaking of - as being - 'acausal' (of what is immortal). Thus, Poemandres goes on to say, the former mortal - now immortal - moves on (from this first type of 'acausal existence') to become these forces (beyond the ogdoadic physis) to thus finally 'unite with theos': αὐτοὶ εἰς δυνάμεις ἑαυτοὺς παραδιδόασιν καὶ δυνάμεις γενόμενοι ἐν θεῷ γίνονται.

26.

become united with theos. ἐν θεῷ γίνονται. Literally, '[they] become in theos', or '[they] enter into theos', although given what follows - θεωθῆναι - what is meant is 'become of/be united with theos', and thus 'become-of' what is no longer mortal but rather both immortal and 'of theos'.

become of theos. θεωθῆναι. This does not mean 'made divine/god', or 'achieve divinity' or 'become god/a god', or deification, but rather, having become immortal, to be (re)united with theos and thus, by such a 'becoming', re-present (become-of) in that new (acausal) existence the numinosity of theos, and which return and re-presentation is the real aim of our mortal lives and the function of λόγος, and of the λόγοι (such as pneumatic logos and the phantasmal logos). That is, as explained in some of the rather neglected works of Maximus of Constantinople [qv. Migne Patrologiae Graeca, 90 and 91], Θεώσις in the sense of reunited with theos - ultimately because of ἀγάπη - without actually being or becoming 'a divinity' or 'God':

τῆς ἐπὶ τῷ θεωθῆναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον μυστικῆς ἐνεργείας λήψεται
πέρας κατὰ πάντα τρόπον χωρὶς μόνης δηλονότι τῆς πρὸς αὐτὸν κατ'
οὐσίαν ταυτότητος. *Quaestiones ad Thalassium de Scriptura Sacra*,
XXII [Patrologiae Graeca, 90, c.0318]

the end of the opus mysterium of human beings becoming of Theos
can be in all ways except one, namely that of having the identity of
His Essence

the noble goal. τὸ ἀγαθὸν τέλος. This might well be taken as an axiom of the 'hermetic' weltanschauung presented in this tractate. In respect of ἀγαθός as honourable/noble, see the note in section 22.

those who seek to acquire knowledge. Given the use here of the word γνῶσις, the sense could be interpreted, and has by others been interpreted, to mean 'those who seek to acquire/attain gnosis'.

other mortals can - through theos - escape. I take the sense of σώζω here to be 'escape', for the English word 'saved' now imposes, after nearly two thousand years of scriptural exegesis and preaching, various religious preconceptions on the text. Also, the usual translation of 'saved by god' is somewhat at variance with the hermetic/gnostic weltanschauung which suggests a progression -

ἄνοδος - through the realms/spheres in order to attain immortality.

For the 'escape' is from the mortal to the immortal, and therefore to be 'saved', because of theos, so that (qv. section 21) they can "progress to return to Life"

27.

joined with those forces. The meaning here is somewhat obscure, although it possibly signifies that Pœmandres leaves the mortal realm and rejoins - returns to - his existence, beyond the hebdomad, where those forces/powers exist.

an insight of great importance. μεγίστην θέαν. An important 'insight into' the workings of the cosmos, immortality, and the nature of mortals, rather than 'a vision' or a 'revelation'.

awareness of the numinous. See the note on 'aware of the numinous'/εὐσεβέω in section 22.

earth-bound mortals. ἄνδρες γηγενεῖς. The literal meaning is 'earth-born mortals', which is rather obscure here, although what is meant is probably not the somewhat pejorative 'primordial/primitive' type [qv. ἔστι ἐν τῇ ἀκροπόλει ταύτῃ Ἐρεχθεὺς τοῦ γηγενέος λεγομένου εἶναι νηός, Herodotus, 8.55; and ἄλλοι δὲ γηγενεῖς καὶ χαλκασπίδας, Strabo, 10.3] nor even the 'earthy/rural' type [qv. μὴ μισήσης ἐπίπονον ἐργασίαν καὶ γεωργίαν ὑπὸ Ὑψίστου ἐκτισμένην, LXX, Sirach 7.15] but rather the contrast, mentioned in section 15, between those 'deathful of body' and the 'deathlessness of the inner mortal'; with a similar contrast occurring in Plato [οὐδὲν γὰρ γηγενὲς Ὀλυμπίων ἐντιμότερον ἄλλ' ὁ περὶ ψυχῆς ἄλλως δοξάζων ἀγνοεῖ ὡς θαυμαστοῦ τούτου κτήματος ἀμελεῖ, Laws 727e]. Hence my suggestion of 'earth-bound', which is apposite considering what follows - οἱ μέθη καὶ ὕπνω ἑαυτοὺς ἐκδε δωκότες.

sleepfulness. To translate ὕπνος here as simply 'sleep' is not particularly helpful to the reader, as what seems to be implied is not normal everyday 'sleep' - a necessity for all humans - since such normal healthy sleep is a strange companion for 'intoxicating liquor'. Regarding ὕπνος, Jebb in his commentary on *Antigone* in respect of ὕπνος ὁ παντογῆρως (v.606) mentioned that "sleep, the renewer of vigour, could not be described as 'bringing old age to all'. Nor can the epithet be explained as 'enfeebling all', in the sense of 'subduing them'; nor, again, as 'attending on all, even to old age'," which led him to write that παντογῆρως was probably corrupt and to suggest, as some others had done, an emendation.

The fact that sleep personified, as Hypnos/Somnus, is the brother of Death [qv. ἔνθ' Ὑπνῷ ξύμβλητο κασιγνήτῳ Θανάτῳ, Iliad, 14.231] is also in favour of normal, healthy, sleep not being meant, as does what follows - θελγόμενοι ὕπνῳ ἀλόγῳ. Thus a possible alternative would be to interpret ὕπνος here somewhat metaphorically, either as a 'state of mind' (such as 'sleepwalking through life')

or as something akin to soporation (an underused English word, from the Latin) with the meaning here of 'an inclination or a tendency to sleep excessively or unnecessarily; to be inactive, drowsy, sleepful; disconnected from reality'. Hence my tentative interpretation - 'sleepfulness'.

unknowing of theos. ἀγνωσία τοῦ θεοῦ. Unknowing is a more suitable English word - given its meaning, usage (past and present) and given the context - than 'ignorance'

stop your drunkenness. παύσασθε δὲ κραιπαλῶντες. Literally, 'cease to be intoxicated'. It is interesting to compare this preaching to what Plutarch wrote about Demosthenes:

ὁδυρομένου δὲ τοῦ Δημοσθένους πρὸς αὐτόν ὅτι πάντων φιλοπονώτατος ὢν τῶν λεγόντων καὶ μικροῦ δέων καταναλωκέναι τὴν τοῦ σώματος ἀκμὴν εἰς τοῦτο χάριν οὐκ ἔχει πρὸς τὸν δῆμον, ἀλλὰ κραιπαλῶντες ἄνθρωποι ναῦται καὶ ἀμαθεῖς ἀκούονται καὶ κατέχουσι τὸ βῆμα, παρορᾶται δ' αὐτός [Demosthenes, 7.1]

To him, Demosthenes complained that although he was an industrious orator and had expended much bodily vigour in pursuing that duty, he was not favoured by the people who ignored him but listened to those who were intoxicated, the ignorant, and sailors, when they and their like held the floor.

28.

change your ways. μετανοήσατε. Not 'repent', which imposes a particular religious interpretation upon the text.

have kinship with the unknowing ones. συγκοινωνήσαντες τῇ ἀγνοίᾳ. Kinship in the sense of being 'kindred spirits', or 'fellow travellers'.

dark phaos. σκοτεινοῦ φωτός. An interesting phrase, lost in translation when φως is translated as 'light'. See the note on phaos in section 4.

29.

threw themselves down at my feet. ἑαυτοὺς πρὸ ποδῶν μου ῥίψαντε. A literal translation, although, given what follows, it seems unlikely that this is a metaphorical expression of their eagerness to learn. Indeed, this whole section seems rather at variance with the rest of the text - especially considering the following καθοδηγὸς ἐγενόμην τοῦ γένους - although perhaps 'the guide', having only just been informed of certain esoteric matters by Pœmandres, is here in this section somewhat obliquely revealing that he himself has yet (qv. section 25) to offer up "that eagerness which deceives; the arrogance of command; profane insolence."

became a guide to those of my kind. That is, not 'a guide to my race/mankind' but a guide to those who, seeking immortality, desire to undertake the journey through the seven spheres and thus are akin to - of the same type as - the guide.

informing them of the logoi. τοὺς λόγους διδάσκων. The logoi [plural of logos] are - qv. the note on θεωθῆναι in section 26 - the various apparent forms (or emanations) of the logos, and include the pneumatic logos, the phasmal logos, and the logos kyrios, previously mentioned in the text. They are often considered to be how the logos is sometimes manifest to us, as mortals who are yet to begin or are yet to progress far along the septenary path toward immortality. Furthermore, those who are on the journey - following the way to theos - are also logoi.

logoi of sapientia. σοφίας λόγους. Something more than just 'words of [the] wisdom' is meant, especially as the English word 'wisdom' does not fully reflect the meaning (and the various shades) of σοφία, especially in a metaphysical (or esoteric) context, in this case of 'the opus mysterium'. The use here, in my translation, of the terms *logoi* and *sapientia* is intended - as with transliterations such as phaos - to cause the reader to pause and perhaps engender in them a certain curiosity as to what the terms may, or may not, mean, suggest, or imply, and to thus (and hopefully) convey something about the original text.

celestial elixir. ἀμβροσίου ὕδατος. Literally, 'ambrosial water'; the food/drink that, in mythology, confers and maintains the immortality of the gods and chosen mortals.

30.

temperance of [the] psyche. τῆς ψυχῆς νῆψις. Again transliterating ψυχῆς, since the English word 'soul' imposes particular - religious/philosophical, and/or modern - meanings on the text, whereas it may well be used here in its classical/Hellenic sense of 'spark' (or breath) of life; that is, as referring to that 'thing' (principle, or cause) which animates mortal beings making them 'alive', and which principle or cause was also personified as Psyche.

genuine insight. ἀληθινὴ ὄρασις. Cf. μεγίστην θέαν in section 27.

expression of the logos. It not clear how or in what form this manifestation of the logos occurs, although the context - of silence - might suggest that 'utterance' or 'speech' is not meant.

the logos of authority. τῆς αὐθεντίας λόγου. A similar expression occurs in section 3 also in reference to Pömandres - τῆς αὐθεντίας νοῦς, the perceivance of authority.

this revealing. I take the sense of ἀληθείας here to be not some abstract

(undefined, probably contentious and thus possibly undefinable) 'truth' but rather as a revealing of what is 'genuine' as distinct from what is mere 'appearance'. Here, literally, '*the* revealing' - of the nature of mortals, of the way to immortality, of logos and of theos.

31.

Agios o theos, father of all beings. ἅγιος ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων. For πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων, see the note in section 22.

I have given, as an intimation, a transliteration of the first part, as these are doxologies, similar to the Kyrie eleison [Κύριε ἐλέησον], and much (if not all) of their numinous/sacred/mystical/esoteric quality and meaning are lost when they are translated into plain - or into archaic, KJV type - English. Although they are best read/recited in the original Greek, the Latin preserves much of the numinosity of these and other such doxologies. The Latin of the nine doxologies given here is:

Sanctus deus pater universorum.
Sanctus deus, cuius consilium ad finem deducitur a propriis potentiis.
Sanctus deus, qui cognosci vult et cognoscitur a suis.
Sanctus es, qui verbo constituisti entia omnia.
Sanctus es, cuius universa natura imago nata est.
Sanctus es, quem natura non formavit.
Sanctus es, qui omni potentia es fortior.
Sanctus es, qui omni excellentia es maior.
Sanctus es, qui omnes superas laudes.

The Greek text is:

ἅγιος ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων.
ἅγιος ὁ θεὸς, οὗ ἡ βουλὴ τελεῖται ἀπὸ τῶν ιδίων δυνάμεων.
ἅγιος ὁ θεός, ὃς γνωσθῆναι βούλεται καὶ γινώσκεται τοῖς ἰδίοις.
ἅγιος εἶ, ὁ λόγῳ συστησάμενος τὰ ὄντα.
ἅγιος εἶ, οὗ πᾶσα φύσις εἰκὼν ἔφυ.
ἅγιος εἶ, ὃν ἡ φύσις οὐκ ἐμόρφωσεν.
ἅγιος εἶ, ὁ πάσης δυνάμεως ἰσχυρότερος.
ἅγιος εἶ, ὁ πάσης ὑπεροχῆς μείζων.
ἅγιος εἶ, ὁ κρείττων τῶν ἐπαίνων.

ἅγιος ὁ approximates to 'Numinous is' [theos] - qv. the note on ἅγιος in section 5 - and ἅγιος εἶ to 'Numinous are' [you].

As to why there are nine doxologies, it may be (and probably is) just a coincidence, or it may reflect the 7+2 structure of the 7 causal aspects (the hebdomad) and the 2 'acausal' modes of being beyond them (qv. the note on δύναμις in section 26).

his own arts. I take the sense of δυνάμεων here to be not 'powers', forces (or something similar) but 'arts'; that is, those abilities, qualities, skills, and strengths - of the 'artisan-creator' - which are inherent in theos and express the very nature of theos. Abilities, qualities, skills, and strengths, which an artisan - with assistance and help and instruction from theos, the chief artisan - uses, for example, to 'fashion seven viziers' and the 'fine artisements of physis'. See sections 9-13 and the notes thereon.

whose disposition is to be recognized. γνωσθῆναι here with γινώσκεται is not exactly the straightforward '[who] wills/desires to be known' but rather the more subtle '[whose] disposition is to be recognized', and (i) disposition/inclination as an expression of the nature, the very being, of theos, (ii) to be recognized in the sense of to be perceived for who and what theos is, in essence, in very being. Those who so recognize theos - who thus understand and 'appreciate' theos and are cognizant of the type of Being theos is - are those who partake in some way, or who re-present or emanate, or who 'imitate' [qv. Thomas à Kempis, The Imitation of Christ] the nature of that Being; and which Being is therefore 'recognized/understood by those who are of his [type of] being,' although the Greek literally means "is recognized by his own".

Agios es. For ἅγιος εἶ. Combining the Latin with the Greek, for readability and expressiveness.

form all being. In both senses of the term 'form' - constitute, and form being into beings and which beings are or can be re-united with Being (theos) by logos.

you who engender all physis as eikon. The meaning and significance of this are often overlooked and often lost in translation. I have transliterated εἰκὼν as here it does not only mean what the English words 'image' or 'likeness' suggest or imply, but rather it is similar to what Maximus of Constantinople in his *Mystagogia* [Patrologiae Graeca, 91, c.0658] explains. Which is of we humans, and the cosmos, and Nature, and psyche, as eikons, although according to Maximus it is the Christian church itself (as manifest and embodied in Jesus of Nazareth and the Apostles and their successors and in scripture) which, being the eikon of God, enables we humans to recognize this, recognize God, be in communion with God, return to God, and thus find and fulfil the meaning of our being, our existence.

According to the hermetic weltanschauung, as outlined by Pœmandres here, all physis - the being, nature, character, of beings - their essence beyond the form/appearance their being is or assumes or is perceived as - re-presents (manifests, is an eikon of) theos. That is, the physis of beings can be considered not only as an emanation of theos but as re-presenting his Being, his essence. To recognize this, to recognize theos, to be in communion with theos, to return to theos, and thus become immortal, there is the way up (anados) through the

seven spheres:

Thus does the mortal hasten through the harmonious structure, offering up, in the first realm, that vigour which grows and which fades, and - in the second one - those dishonourable machinations, no longer functioning. In the third, that eagerness which deceives, no longer functioning; in the fourth, the arrogance of command, no longer insatiable; in the fifth, profane insolence and reckless haste; in the sixth, the bad inclinations occasioned by riches, no longer functioning; and in the seventh realm, the lies that lie in wait. [Section 25]

you whom the Physis did not morph. Given the construction - ὃν ἡ φύσις - I have capitalized Physis here (see sections 14 and 17]. By 'morph' is meant what the Greek term (ἐμόρφωσεν) implies, which is 'shape or transform' into some-thing-else, to give some-thing the 'semblance' of theos . That is, theos was, is, and remains, theos; there is no-thing resembling theos.

you who are mightier than all artifice. The artifice - the works, expedients, skill, manifestations, artifices, products, machinations, ingenuity, the 'domination', and the force - of others.

It is interesting to compare this might, the strength and power of theos, with what Epictetus writes about human strength in his *Discourses*:

οὔτε τύραννος κωλύσει με θέλοντα οὔτε δεσπότης οὔτε οἱ πολλοὶ τὸν ἕνα οὔθ' ὁ ἰσχυρότερος τὸν ἀσθενέστερον: τοῦτο γὰρ ἀκώλυτον δέδοται ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἑκάστῳ [4.5]

neither a tyrannos nor some Lord shall negate my intent; nor some crowd although I be just one; nor someone stronger although I be weaker, since such unhindrance is a gift, to everyone, from theos

wordful. The expressive term 'wordful' is more suitable here than 'speech', and also contrasts well with 'ineffable' and 'inexpressible'.

32.

the knowledge. For τῆς γνώσεως, although 'acquiring the knowledge' and 'the gnosis' are alternatives, so that with the latter it reads "I ask of you to grant that I am not foiled in the gnosis germane to our essence", with the phrase 'our essence' referring to the essence - οὐσία - of both mortals and theos.

favour. χάρις. A gift, favour, or kindness, here from theos [χάρις θεοῦ] and which type of gift is also mentioned in the New Testament (for example, Luke, 2.40). See also the quotation from Irenaeus in the note on *the father of all beings* in section 21.

the unknowing. In respect of 'unknowing' see the note in section 27.

who are your children. In respect of υἱὸς as the gender neutral 'child', rather than 'son', see the note on υἱὸς θεοῦ in section 6, and also the note on gender neutrality under ἀναγνωρίσας ἑαυτὸν in section 19.

share in [your] numinosity. For συναγιάζειν.

Ιερός Λόγος

An Esoteric Mythos

Tractate III

A Pagan And Esoteric Mythos

While the title - Ιερός Λόγος - of the third tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum is generally translated as either "A Sacred Discourse" or "A Holy Sermon", it would perhaps be more accurate to translate as *An Esoteric Mythos* given (i) that it describes a numinous theogony of the kind recounted to initiates of the mystery traditions of ancient Greece, and thus recounts a mythos that pre-dates the Biblical story of Genesis, as given in the Septuagint (LXX), by centuries, and (ii) that ἱερός λόγος/ἱεροί λόγοι (an esoteric mythos/esoteric mythoi) were phrases often used to describe such mystery traditions, both Greek and Greco-Egyptian, as, for example, by Herodotus {1}.

For it is possible that the often-stated belief of the tractate being influenced by the story recounted in LXX is incorrect, and that whatever similarities there are between the text of the tractate and Greek text of the Biblical story of Genesis might be due either to the scribe of what was a previously esoteric aural tradition being familiar with LXX or some parts of it and borrowing a particular word or words to try and express an aspect of that paganus tradition (an opinion held by the Christian Byzantine historian Mikhael Psellus, d. 1078 CE), or to the Biblical story of creation itself being influenced by a more ancient Greek mythos or mythoi, just as it was influenced by similar, more ancient, mythoi from Sumeria and elsewhere. In addition, the overt polytheism of the tractate, and Greek concepts such as φύσις (physis) and Πνεῦμα (pneuma) {2}, are at odds with such influence and with that Biblical story.

Furthermore, far from it being (again, as has often been previously believed) a very corrupt, or overwritten text, the *Ἱερός Λόγος* most probably reasonably represents, like the *Pymander tractate*, a pagan metaphysical *weltanschauung* germane to the period of its composition and one which is based upon or recounts an earlier, and most probably aural, tradition. Furthermore, as Wildberg has suggested, the text might simply incorporate some marginalia {3}.

Such an esoteric mythos, as recorded in the *Ἱερός Λόγος* hermetic tractate, had - like the Biblical Genesis story - antecedents. Such as

οἱ Γῆς ἐξεγένοντο καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος

those who came-into-being from Gaia and the starry heavens {4}

from the *theogony* of Hesiod (106) - written c. 700 BCE - of which there is a remarkably similar expression in funerary inscriptions, from some four centuries later (c. 300 BCE) in Pharsalos, Thessalyon,

Γῆς παῖς εἰμι καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστ<ερόεντος>

I am a child of Gaia and the starry heavens

and on a gold funerary tablet (c. 200 BCE) found at Eleutherna, Crete,

ΓΑΣ ΥΙΟΣ ΕΙΜΙ ΚΑΙ ΟΥΡΑΝΟΥ ΑΣΤΕΡΟΕΝΤΟΣ

Γᾶς υἱός ἡμι καὶ Ὀρανῶ ἀστερόεντος {5}

and also in a, purportedly Orphic, religious text (the *Derveni papyrus*) dating from c. 330 BCE {6} which contains the Hesiodian phrase οἱ Διὸς ἐξεγένοντο [those who came-into-being from Zeus]. Thus, it is part of this ancient esoteric mythos, and/or its antecedents, that may well be echoed in LXX (Genesis, 1:1), written centuries later:

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν

In the beginning, Theos produced the heavens and the Earth {7}

and which Biblical text is, interestingly, given by Aquila - qv. the *Hexapla* {8} - as:

Ἐν κεφαλαίῳ ἐκτίσεν ὁ Θεὸς σὺν τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ σὺν τὴν γῆν

As foundation, Theos formed the heavens and the Earth {9}

It is thus my view that the third tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum is a valuable hermetic document, presenting as it does - probably after centuries of aural transmission as befitted ἱεροί λόγοι - an esoteric weltanschauung that pre-dates, and thus is independent of, not only Christianity but also of the myths, stories, and theology, manifest in the Old Testament.

Understood thus, the Ἱερός Λόγος tractate is the story of genesis according to an ancient pagan, and esoteric, weltanschauung; a text in all probability older than the other texts in the Corpus Hermeticum; and a text which the author of the *Poemandres* tractate might well have been familiar with, as a reading of both texts indicates.

Commentary, Translation, and Text

The references in the commentary here to the *Poemandres* tractate are to my translation of and commentary on that text for I have retained the transliterations, and some of the English phrases, used and explained there, such as physis, phaos, theos. I have also, as there, occasionally used some particular, or some quite obscure English words - or forms of them - in order to try and elucidate the meaning of the text or to avoid using, in what is a metaphysical text, some commonplace term with various connotations (contemporary or otherwise) that may lead to a misunderstanding of the text. I have endeavoured to explain such obscure words in the commentary. There is thus in this translation, as in my translation of *Poemandres*, a certain technical - or rather, esoteric - vocabulary.

Purely for readability, I have arranged the translation into (non-poetic) verses rather than long paragraphs. All translations in the commentary and notes are mine.

Notes

{1} (a) ἔστι λόγος περὶ αὐτοῦ ἱρὸς λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 48, s3. (b) ἔστι ἱρὸς περὶ αὐτοῦ λόγος λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 62, s2. (c) ἔστι δὲ περὶ αὐτῶν ἱρὸς λόγος λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 81, s2.

{2} In ἱεροί λόγοι and in many hermetic texts, φύσις suggests something more than what the terms 'nature' or 'character' - of a thing or person - denote. That is - qv. the *Poemandres* tractate (see footnote 8) - it suggests to "know what is real" and to apprehend the physis of those real things - νοῆσαι τὴν τοῦ τῶν φύσιν; to thus have an understanding of ontology. For physis is a revealing, a manifestation, of not only the true nature of beings but also of the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being.

In respect of pneuma, qv. DeWitt Burton: *Spirit, Soul, and Flesh: The Usage of Πνεῦμα, Ψυχή, and Σάρξ in Greek Writings and Translated Works from the Earliest Period to 225 AD* (University of Chicago Press, 1918)

{3} Christian Wildberg: *The Genesis of a Genesis: Corpus Hermeticum, Tractate III*, in Lance Jenott and Sarit Kattan Gribetz: *Jewish and Christian Cosmogony in Late Antiquity* (pp.139-166). *Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum*, 155. Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen, 2013.

{4} Pedantically, a more accurate translation of ἀστερόεντος would be stelliferous - hence the 'stelliferous heavens' - but 'starry heavens' is far more poetic.

{5} Interestingly, some similar inscriptions - such as another one from Eleutherna - are gender neutral and simply say ΓΥΑΤΗΡΚΑΙΩΠΑΝΩΑΣΤΕΡΟΕΝΤΟΣ. That is, 'of Gaia and the starry heavens'.

{6} Bernabé, Alberto, and Francesc Casadesús. *Orfeo y la tradición órfica: Un reencuentro*. Madrid: Akal. 2008.

{7} Although I give here, for Ἐν ἀρχῇ, the conventional 'In the beginning', I am inclined to prefer 'In primacy' (the first thing/principle/origin of; cf. Anaximander, where there is also mention of the heavens and 'the world' or cosmos: πρῶτος τοῦτο τοῦνομα κομίσας τῆς ἀρχῆς λέγει δ' αὐτὴν μήτε ὕδωρ μήτε ἄλλο τι τῶν καλουμένων εἶναι στοιχείων ἀλλ' ἑτέραν τινὰ φύσιν ἄπειρον ἐξ ἧς ἅπαντας γίνεσθαι τοὺς οὐρανοὺς καὶ τοὺς ἐν αὐτοῖς κόσμους. Simplicius, *Physics*, 24:13-21).

An alternative, suggested by the Greek text of Aquila of Genesis 1:1, would be "As foundation, Theos produced..." Furthermore, instead of the 'creavit' of the Latin Vulgate, the older Vetus Latina has 'In principio *fecit* deus caelum et terram.'

{8} Frederick Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum quæ Supersunt*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1875.

{9} Literally, "In foundation, Theos built/produced..."

The Latin of Jermone - who, according to certain sources, was acquainted with the text of Aquila - is *in principio creavit Deus caelum et terram*.

Translation

[1] The numen of all beings is theos: numinal, and of numinal physis.
The origin of what exists is theos, who is Perceivation and Physis and Substance:
The sapientia which is a revealing of all beings.
For the numinal is the origin: physis, vigour, incumbency, accomplishment, renewance.

In the Abyss, an unmeasurable darkness, and, by the influence of the numen,
Water and delicate apprehending Pnuema, there, in Kaos.
Then, a numinous phaos arose and, from beneath the sandy ground,
Parsements coagulated from fluidic essence.
And all of the deities <particularize> seedful physis.

[2] With all beings unformed and not yet presenced,
What was lightsome was separated out, upward
And what was burdensome set in fluidic ground
With all defined through Fire, then elevated - and conveyed - by Pnuema.
Thus the heavens became perceivable in seven spheres,
Deities represented in the arrangements of the stars,
With the outer revolving in the æther, and circulating by the Pnuema of theos.

[3] Through their distinguishing influence, each deity did what was assigned to them
So that there came-into-being beasts four-footed and slithering
And those dwelling in water and those that fly,
And harvestable seeds and pastures and all kinds of verdant flowers,
<Seeding within> the semination of rebirth.
Thus can the offspring of mortals apprehend the works of theos, a living witness of physis,
So that the multitude of mortals can husband all that is below the heavens,
Appreciate honour, and propagate by propagation and spawn by spawning.

Thus, every psyche - embodied in flesh - can
By the mirificence of the circumferent deities coursing the heavens
Apprehend the heavens, and honour, and physis presenced, and the works of theos;
Can understand divine influence as wyrdful change
And thus, regarding what is good and what is bad, discover all the arts of honour.

[4] For this is the commencement of their living, of such learning
As is - by circumferent deities coursing - wyrdful, and the discoagulation of it,
For the great earthly artialized memorials they have left
Will, with the passing of the seasons, fade
Just as, for the generations of psyche-bearing flesh and fruitful seeds and artiselements,
There will be renewance through incumbency, renewance through the divine
And by the circumferent coursing of Physis.

The divine is all of that mition: renewance of the cosmic order through Physis
For Physis is presenced in the divine.

Commentary

1.

The numen of all beings is theos. Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεός. The sense of δόξα here, especially given the following mention of θεῖος and φύσις, is of immanence and of transcendent sublimity, encompassing both (i) the interpretation given to the word in LXX and the New Testament, of a divine glory (qv. Exodus 16:10, Matthew 25:31, and Luke 2:9) and thus of what is considered to be - that is, is outwardly manifest as - glorious, or splendid, as in Matthew 4:8, a sense well-expressed in the Latin of Jerome: iterum adsumit eum diabolus in montem excelsum valde et ostendit ei omnia regna mundi et gloriam eorum, and (ii) the classical, more personal sense, of honour, and reputation or repute, the latter as for example referenced by Boethius: Unde non iniuria tragicus exclamat: ὦ δόξα, δόξα, μυρίοισι δὴ βροτῶν οὐδὲν γεγῶσι βίοτον ὠγκώσας μέγαν (Book III, vi).

Hence I have opted for 'numen', rather than the usual 'splendour' or 'glory' which do not, in my view given their modern connotations and common usage, express the sense of the Greek; with the meaning of 'numen' here being expressed by what follows: "numinal and of numinal physis", where by numinal - in this ἱερός λόγος - is meant divine not in the specific sense of a monotheistic and Biblical (a masculine) God but in the more general sense of pertaining to a deity or deities, male or female, as in a paganus (and not necessarily patriarchal) polytheism.

In this paganus context, the numinous is therefore what is, or what manifests (presences) or can manifest or remind us of (what can reveal) what is regarded or understood as sacred, numinal, sublime, awe-inspiring, beautiful, noble, esoteric, beyond the mundane, and beyond our ability, as mortals, to control. Thus, in terms of ἱεροὶ λόγοι in general, the numen reminds us of 'the natural order of things' (the physis of theos, of theoi, of Nature and of the heavens), reminds us of our own physis, and thus of our duties and responsibilities as mortals (especially in relation to deities) and thence the need to avoid hubris.

In respect of hubris, Hesiod, in Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι [Works and Days], vv 213-218, wrote:

σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης, μὴδ' ὕβριν ὀφελλε:

ὔβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῶ βροτῶ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς
215 ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύνатаι, βαρύθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς
ἐγκύρσας ἄτησιν: ὁδὸς δ' ἐτέρηφι παρελθεῖν
κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει
ἐς τέλος ἐξελθοῦσα: παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω

You should listen to [the goddess] Fairness and not oblige Hubris
Since Hubris harms unfortunate mortals while even the more fortunate
Are not equal to carrying that heavy a burden, meeting as they do with Mischief.
The best path to take is the opposite one: that of honour
For, in the end, Fairness is above Hubris
Which is something the young come to learn from adversity.

Notes:

- a. δίκη. The goddess of Fairness/Justice/Judgement, and – importantly – of Tradition (Ancestral Custom). In Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι, as in Θεογονία (Theogony), Hesiod is recounting and explaining part of that tradition, one important aspect of which tradition is understanding the relation between the gods and mortals. Given both the antiquity of the text and the context, 'Fairness' – as the name of the goddess – is, in my view, more appropriate than the now common appellation 'Justice', considering the modern (oft times impersonal) connotations of the word 'justice'.
- b. Mischief. The sense of ἄτησιν here is not of 'delusion' nor of 'calamities', per se, but rather of encountering that which or those whom (such as the goddess of mischief, Ἄτη) can bring mischief or misfortune into the 'fortunate life' of a 'fortunate mortal', and which encounters are, according to classical tradition, considered as having been instigated by the gods. Hence, of course, why Sophocles [Antigone, 1337-8] wrote ὡς πεπρωμένης οὐκ ἔστι θνητοῖς συμφορᾶς ἀπαλλαγὴ (mortals cannot be delivered from the misfortunes of their fate).
- c. δίκαιος. Honour expresses the sense that is meant: of being fair; capable of doing the decent thing; of dutifully observing ancestral customs. A reasonable alternative for 'honour' would thus be 'decency', both preferable to words such as 'just' and 'justice' which are not only too impersonal but have too many inappropriate modern connotations.
- d. νήπιος. Literal – 'young', 'uncultured' (i.e. un-schooled, un-educated in the ways of ancestral custom) – rather than metaphorical ('foolish', ignorant).

Theos. θεὸς. As with the Pœmandres tractate, I have opted for a transliteration, for the Biblical 'God' is not what is meant here, given the title of the tractate and the content, while the word 'god' (singular, lower case) now has certain connotations (some of which are theological) not always relevant to ancient Greek deities. In terms of *theos*, what is most probably meant here – cf. Hesiod's Theogony – is the, or a, prime, first, or primordial deity (such as Οὐρανός) from whence came-into-being the other Greek deities, including Zeus (cf. the use of πρῶτον by Plato in *Timeas*, 69b).

Thus, in respect of this tractate, I translate θεοὶ not as 'gods' but as 'deities' in the hope of providing a more balanced view of this particular ancient pagan text.

Physis. As in my translation of Pœmandres tractate I have given a transliteration to suggest, as I wrote there, "something more than what 'nature' or 'character' - of a thing or person - denotes. That is, to know what is real and apprehend the physis of those real things - νοῆσαι τὴν τοῦ τῶν φύσιν; to discern the physis, the true nature, of beings. That is, to have an understanding of ontology; for physis is a revealing, a manifestation, of not only the true nature of beings but also of the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being".

Occasionally I have capitalized physis, when the context merits it, such as when the physis of what we term Nature is meant or implied; or when - as here at the beginning - it is an attribute of theos.

τῶν ὄντων. What is real/what exists (Reality/Existence) - qv. the beginning of the Pœmandres tractate, and my commentary thereon.

νοῦς. *Perceivation*, not 'mind', qv. Pœmandres 2.

substance. ὕλη, the *materia* of 'things' and living beings - contrasted with οὐσία, essence. qv. Pœmandres 10.

sapientia. σοφία. qv. Pœmandres 29.

vigour. ἐνέργεια. In the sense of vitality and vigorous activity. See my note on ἡ εἰμαρμένη, Pœmandres 15.

incumbency. Often personified as Ἀνάγκης, the primordial goddess of incumbency; that is, of *wyrd*: of that which is beyond, and the origin of, what we often describe as our Fate as a mortal being. To render ἀνάγκη here somewhat blandly as 'necessity' is to miss both the subtle esotericism of an ἱερός λόγος and what Empedocles wrote:

ἔστιν Ἀνάγκης χρῆμα, θεῶν ψήφισμα παλαιόν,
αἰδίων, πλατέεσσι κατεσφρηγισμένον ὄρκοις·
εὖτέ τις ἀμπλακίησι φόνωι φίλα γυῖα μήνηι,
νείκεί θ' ὅς κε ἐπίορκον ἀμαρτήσας ἐπομόσσει,
δαίμονες οἷτε μακραίωνος λελάχασι βίοιο,
τρίς μιν μυρίας ὥρας ἀπὸ μακάρων ἀλάλησθαι,
φυομένους παντοῖα διὰ χρόνου εἶδεα θνητῶν
ἀργαλέας βιότοιο μεταλλάσσοντα κελεύθους.
αἰθέριον μὲν γάρ σφε μένος πόντονδε διώκει,
πόντος δ' ἐς χθονὸς οὐδας ἀπέπτυσσε, γαῖα δ' ἐς αὐγὰς
ἡελίου φαέθοντος, ὃ δ' αἰθέρος ἔμβαλε δίναις·
ἄλλος δ' ἐξ ἄλλου δέχεται, στυγέουσι δὲ πάντες.
τῶν καὶ ἐγὼ νῦν εἰμι, φυγὰς θεόθεν καὶ ἀλήτης,
Νείκεϊ μαινομένωι πίσυνος.

There exists an insight by Ananke, an ancient resolution
Of the gods, immutable and sealed by vows,
Regarding when one of the daimons - those whose allotted portion of life is long -
Has their own hands stained from murder
Or who, once having sworn an oath, because of some feud breaks that oath.
For they shall for ten thousand tripled seasons wander away from the beautified,
Begotten during that period in all manner of mortal form
And exchanging during that voyage one vexation for another:

The fierce Ætherials chase them to the Sea,
The Sea spits them out onto dusty ground,
Gaia hurls them to the burning light of the Sun
Who flings them back to those swirling Ætherials.
Moved from one to the other, all detest them.

I am one of those, a vagabond in exile from the gods
Who has to rely on strongful Disagreement.

Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker, Diels-Kranz, B115

Notes:

νεῖκος (disagreement) is - according to what we can adduce of the philosophy of Empedocles from the fragments of his writings that we possess - a fundamental principle, and one understood in relation to another fundamental principle, Φιλότης, expressive as they both are of the logos (λόγος) by which we can possibly apprehend the workings of the cosmic order (κόσμος). However, the common translations - of 'strife' and 'love' respectively - do not in my view express what Empedocles seems to be trying to convey, which is 'disagreement' and 'fellowship' (a communal or kindred working-together in pursuit of a common interest or goal). For while disagreement sometimes disrupts fellowship, it is often necessary as the genesis of productive change.

Thus, just as Odysseus had to rely on the support of Athena, who disagreed with how Poseidon treated Odysseus, so does the 'vagabond in exile from the deities/the gods' have to rely on disagreements among the immortals to end their own exile.

Abyss. ἄβυσσος.

A delicate apprehending pneuma. πνεῦμα λεπτὸν νοερόν. In respect of νοερός, the sense here is not 'intelligent'/'intelligence' - as in "quickness or superiority of understanding, sagacity", etcetera - but rather of self-awareness; that is, of possessing a faculty to perceive, comprehend, and to rationally understand the external world. Which is why I have opted for 'apprehending'.

influence. δύναμις. Not here 'force' or 'power' per se but rather the influence arising from, inherent in, the numen by virtue of the numinosity of theos. The kind of influence which can nurture a 'delicate apprehending pneuma'.

Kaos. χάος.

numinous phaos. φῶς ἅγιον. Regarding the transliteration of φῶς - using the Homeric φάος (phaos) - see my commentary on Pœmandres 4; and regarding ἅγιος as 'numinous', rather than the conventional 'holy' or 'sacred', refer to the commentary on Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεὸς above, and especially the note on the duality of the numinous in pagan weltanschauungen in my commentary on Pœmandres 5.

beneath (that) sandy ground. ὑφ' ἄμμῳ. Regarding ἄμμος, qv. Xenophon, *Apomnemoneumata* 3.3.6 - πότερον ἐπάγειν τοὺς πολεμίους ἐπὶ τὴν ἄμμον κελεύσεις - for the reference, in context, seems to be to sandy ground or to sea marshes or, and perhaps more metaphorically, to waterlogged (boggy, unsuitable) land in general, and not necessarily (as some have theorized) to the sandy places and sand dunes in North Africa (such as in Egypt and Libya) as mentioned in Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica* 3.50.2, τὴν δὲ χροάν ἄμμῳ παραπλησίαν ἔχουσι.

It is possible that ἄμμος, in regard to the ἱερός λόγος recounted in this tractate, had some esoteric or metaphysical meaning, now lost.

flowing (as in fluidic). The sense of ὑγρός here and in Pœmandres 4.

essence. οὐσίας. qv. Pœmandres 14.

parsements. For στοιχεῖον. qv. Pœmandres 8.

Coagulated. πήγνυμι.

<particularize>. As in 'distinguish between'. The MSS have καταδιερῶσι. Various emendations have been proposed, including καταδιωρῶσι, while Wildberg has suggested that "and all of the deities..." - καὶ θεοὶ πάντες καταδιωρῶσι - was originally marginalia.

2.

With all beings unformed and not yet presenced. ἀδιορίστων δὲ ὄντων ἀπάντων καὶ ἀκατασκευάστων. An interesting phrase, with the English term 'presenced' perhaps expressing at least something of its philosophical implications derived as that term is from the noun 'presencing' (dating from c.1637) and meaning as it does "the action or process of making some-thing manifest and/or present and/or established." For, as the tractate goes to explain, what becomes formed and manifest are 'the seven-fold heavens' and deities, manifest as stars, within them.

In respect of ἀκατασκευάστων, while some commentators have pointed to Genesis 1:2 - ἡ δὲ γῆ ἦν ἄορατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος, 'and the Earth was unperceived and formless' - as a parallel, σκευαστῶν occurs in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (5.1013b) in reference to the classification of differences in

causation, such as whether or not something is 'manufactured', as in produced by an artisan (such as a statue, ἀνδριάς) or by some other means, and, regardless, πάντα ὅθεν ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς μεταβολῆς ἢ στάσεως. Interestingly, in his commentary on the Metaphysics, Thomas Aquinas wrote: "Apposuit autem cum insit, ad differentiam privationis et contrarii: nam statua quidem fit ex aere, quod inest statuae iam factae; fit etiam ex infigurato, quod quidem non inest statuae iam factae. Unde aes est causa statuae, non autem infiguratum, cum sit principium per accidens tantum" (Commentaria, *In libros Physicorum*, 2, Lectio 5).

Thus, there is initially a 'privation of form', unformed being, which is then formed - as a statue from unshaped bronze - by theos as artisan-creator, and thus a possible metaphysical parallel in Pœmandres, such as in 31: πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων... οὗ ἡ βουλὴ τελεῖται ἀπὸ τῶν ἰδίων δυνάμεων...ὁ λόγῳ συστησάμενος τὰ ὄντα [father of all beings...whose purpose is accomplished by his own arts...you who by logos form all being]. It is also interesting to compare all this with Plato's description in the Timaeus, 69b-c, in which his expression καὶ τῶν μὲν θεῶν αὐτὸς γίγνεται δημιουργός is noteworthy.

lightsome/burdensome. Used in preference to the less descriptive, ubiquitous, 'light' and 'heavy'. The whole passage is somewhat obscure, but if ἀποδιωρίσθη τὰ ἐλαφρὰ εἰς ὕψος was a metaphorical 'separating out' of what is 'light' from what is not light - rather than what is 'light' being somehow sent upwards, 'to the heights', or 'separated off upwards' - and, in particular, if ἀνακρεμασθέντων πνεύματι ὀχεῖσθαι was understood as referring to what - having been defined by, wrought in form through Fire, as bronze and iron are formed and shaped through fire - becomes elevated and conveyed by Pneuma, then philosophically it makes sense, especially given the Greek concept of the psyche (the immortal essence, or 'spirit') of sentient beings being conveyed through life and beyond (and presenced) by (or as) Pnuema, or by our mortal body (as mentioned by Plato).

seven spheres. qv. Pœmandres 9, 17, etcetera.

the outer revolving in the æther. The text is rather obscure, and one assumes 'the outer' refers to the outermost, the peripheral, sphere. Furthermore, I have here translated ἀήρ not as 'air' but as æther since ordinary, terrestrial, air is most certainly not what is meant and the ambiguous term æther (understood classically or otherwise) is suggestive of what may be meant. For whether ἀήρ here - as æther - refers to the fifth element as mentioned by Plato in *Epinomis* (981c) - πέντε οὖν ὄντων τῶν σωμάτων, πῦρ χρὴ φάναι καὶ ὕδωρ εἶναι καὶ τρίτον ἀέρα, τέταρτον δὲ γῆν, πέμπτον δὲ αἰθέρα - or whether it refers to a more mystical or esoteric, or hypothesized, substance that formed part of ἱεροὶ λόγοι, is an interesting question.

So that there came-into-being beasts four-footed. cf. Pœmandres 11.

<Seeding within them> the semination of rebirth. τὸ σπέρμα τῆς παλιγγενεσίας ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἐσπερμολόγουν. Although the text is obscure and has been variously emended by Reitzenstein, Nock, et al, the presumption is that this rebirth - or, alternatively, and more probably, this 'regeneration through offspring' - refers either to the deities themselves or (more probably) to the previously described living things which the deities brought-into-being.

My view is that what seems to be suggested by the text is that the deities seeded within living beings (human, animal, and otherwise) the ability to regenerate through offspring.

Thus can the offspring of mortals apprehend the works of theos. There is an interesting parallel here with some Quranic ayat, such as:

"The creations in Heaven and Earth, the very change of Night to Day, are Signs [from Allah] for those gifted with understanding, those who whether sitting, standing or reclining on their sides, give praise to Allah and who frequently recall those creations in Heaven and Earth." 3:189-191 Interpretation of Meaning

mortals should husband all that is below the heavens. I take the sense of δεσποτεία here - given what precedes and what follows - to suggest husbandry (of Earth) rather than to mean power in the sense of mastery (as in over a slave).

appreciate honour. Given the context - mortals, theos, deities, physis - I take the meaning of ἀγαθός here to refer to what is personal, not to some abstract concept of 'good'. Hence the personal virtue of honour; to behaving, to living, in a noble, a valourous, way, as opposed to being dishonourable or cowardly; a contrast mentioned in the Iliad, Book 17, 631-2: τῶν μὲν γὰρ πάντων βέλε' ἄπτεται ὅς τις ἀφήη ἢ κακὸς ἢ ἀγαθός [whether hurled by someone honourable or dishonourable, all of the missiles still strike their target].

The personal sense of ἀγαθός here also has the virtue of making what follows, at the end of section 3 - γινῶναι ἀγαθῶν καὶ φαύλων καὶ πᾶσαν ἀγαθῶν δαιδαλουργίαν εὐρεῖν - somewhat more understandable. Hence, a discovery or a learning of "all the arts of honour" in contrast to discovering "every artful workmanship of good things".

propagate by propagation and spawn by spawning. qv. Pœmandres 18.

a living witness of physis. The sense of ἐνεργοῦσαν here is poetically metaphysical, not literal. Hence a "living witness of physis" rather than an 'active' or 'working' one. An alternative would be 'presenced', suggested by Aristotle's Metaphysics: ἐπεὶ δὲ περὶ τῆς κατὰ κίνησιν λεγομένης δυνάμεως

εἴρηται περὶ ἐνεργείας διορίσωμεν τί τέ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐνέργεια καὶ ποῖόν τι... ἔστι δὴ ἐνέργεια τὸ ὑπάρχειν τὸ πρᾶγμα μὴ οὕτως ὥσπερ λέγομεν δυνάμει. (1048a)

with every psyche, embodied in flesh. The text following this is (to the end of the tractate) is often so obscure (or corrupted) that any interpretation is tentative. Wildberg's suggestion that διὰ δρομήματος θεῶν ἐγκυκλίων τερασπορίας...καὶ φύσεως ἐνεργείας is marginalia, while interesting, does little to alleviate the obscurity of this part of the text.

mirificence. This rather neglected English word - from the post-classical Latin word *mirificentia*: the action or the fact of doing what is or appears to be wondrous, portentous - in my view expresses the meaning implicit in διὰ δρομήματος θεῶν ἐγκυκλίων τερασπορίας εἰς κατοπτεῖαν οὐρανοῦ somewhat better than such turns of phrase as "the wonder-working course of..," or "by portent-sowings of the course of..."

presenced. qv. the previous note on ἐνεργοῦσαν.

understand divine influence as wyrdful change. γνῶσιν θείας δυνάμεως μοίρης ὀχλουμένης. This exceptionally obscure Greek phrase has been interpreted in a variety of ways, with my interpretation just one among many. 'Wyrd' rather than 'fate', given how the term 'fate' has acquired contemporary meanings not relevant here.

all the arts of honour. Less poetically, more literally, "the skills of all the honourable arts".

4.

As is - by circumferent deities coursing - wyrdful. This is open to three different interpretations, as perhaps was intended. First, that it is the deities themselves who determine the wyrd of mortals. Second, that a person's wyrd can be discovered - learned, possibly predicted - by astrological means; that is, by understanding the movement of the planets and the stars associated with the deities since the "deities are represented in the arrangements of the stars". Third, given the septenary nature of the deities - for "the heavens are perceivable in seven spheres" - one's wyrd can be discovered by an esoteric and septenary anados as described in the *Poemander* tractate.

artialized. From verb *artize* - qv. 'artisements' below - and meaning here produced or constructed by an artisan or skilled craftsman.

which the passing of the seasons will fade. Not χρόνος as some abstract 'time' measured by some human manufactured mechanism such as a clock (a relatively recent concept, in terms of aeonic ἱεροὶ λόγοι), but rather measured by the passing of the seasons, as determined - for example - by the appearance and the disappearance in the night sky of certain constellations and stars:

θεοὺς μὲν αἰτῶ τῶνδ' ἀπαλλαγὴν πόνων
φρουρᾶς ἐτείας μῆκος, ἣν κοιμώμενος
στέγαις Ἀτρειδῶν ἄγκαθεν, κυνὸς δίκην,
ἄστρον κάτοιδα νυκτέρων ὁμήγυριν,
καὶ τοὺς φέροντας χειῖμα καὶ θέρος βροτοῖς
λαμπροὺς δυνάστας, ἐμπρέποντας αἰθέρι
ἀστέρας, ὅταν φθίνωσιν, ἀντολὰς τε τῶν.

Again I have asked the gods to deliver me from this toil,
This vigil a year in length, where I repose
On Atreidae's roof on my arms, as is the custom with dogs
Looking toward the nightly assembly of constellations
And they who bring to mortals the storm-season and the summer:
Those radiant sovereigns, distinguished in the heavens
As stars when they come forth or pass away.

(Agamemnon, 1-7)

artisements. The products of the skilled work of the artisan and the artist; their artisanship; cf. the 16th century English verb *artize*: to exercise a skill, to pursue a skilled occupation such as that of an artisan.

the circumferent coursing of Physis. Given the context, I have - as at the beginning of the text - capitalized *physis* here.

mixon. Alternate (old) spelling of *mixtion*, meaning the condition or state of being mixed, melded, compounded, combined.

Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς

Chaldron Or Monas

Tractate IV

Introduction

The title given to the fourth tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς, requires some consideration if it is to be translated without using English words that have, in the centuries since the text was written, acquired meanings which are not or which may not be relevant to or representative of the metaphysics, and the cosmogony, of such an ancient text; with an injudicious choice of words more often than not resulting in the modern reader projecting certain interpretations upon the text, as might be the case in translating, without some comment, κρατῆρ as 'basin', cup, or 'mixing bowl', μονάς as 'monad', and Τάτ as Thoth.

In respect of κρατῆρ, a more appropriate - and certainly more subtle - translation, given the esoteric nature and antiquity of the text, would be chaldron (an alternative spelling of 'cauldron'), since basin, cup, and 'mixing bowl' are not only too prosaic but also do not conjure the appropriate archetypal imagery: of the primal artisan-creator coagulating and mixing primal substances - cf. tractate III, Ἰερός Λόγος - to produce, to bring-into-being by means of Logos, the cosmic order and thence mortal beings.

In respect of μονάς, the transliteration monas would be more appropriate - and certainly more subtle - than 'monad' given that the term monad is now so often associated with such weltanschauungen as those termed Pythagorean/neo-Pythagorean and Gnostic, an association which may or may not be relevant here. Furthermore, monas has a long and interesting esoteric usage, including (somewhat recently) by John Dee in his *Testamentum Johannis Dee Philosophi*

summi ad Johannem Gwynn, transmissum 1568 - a text included (on page 334) in Elias Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum, Containing Severall Poeticall Pieces of our Famous English philosophers, who have written the Hermetique Mysteries in their owne Ancient Language*, published in London in 1652 - who wrote "our Monas trewe thus use by natures Law, both binde and lewse", and who also entitled one of his works *Monas Hieroglyphica* (Antwerp, 1564), in which work he described (in Theorem XVIII) a septenary system somewhat similar to that of the Poemandres tractate:

In respect of Τάτ, while there is no disputing that Thoth is meant, what may or may not be implied by the name Thoth is whether or not there is a primarily Egyptian genesis for the metaphysics and the cosmogony of this particular tractate. For what does 'Egyptian' mean in the context of the Corpus Hermeticum, written when Egypt was a post-Ptolemaic Roman province where Hellenism still thrived? That is, is the text propounding a metaphysics and a cosmogony primarily redolent of indigenous, pre-Alexandrian, times, with Hermes Trismegistus simply a Hellenic name for the ancient Dynastic deity Thoth, and thus with the Greek Hermes possibly being a son of that ancient Egyptian deity? Or is the text redolent of a classical metaphysics and a cosmogony; or of a Hellenic metaphysics and cosmogony; or of some syncretism of Egyptian (pre-Alexandrian) weltanschauungen with Hellenic mysticism? Or has the author (or authors) of Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς simply used the name of an ancient deity - Thoth - in order to appeal to an audience of Hellenized Egyptians, or Greeks/Romans dwelling in Egypt, or because it seemed to add some esoteric gravitas to the text? Or, as the title might be taken to imply - of Hermes to Thoth - is it a text intended to inform Egyptians (Hellenized or expatriate Greeks/Romans, or otherwise) about Greek/Hellenic metaphysics and cosmogony, with Thoth thus regarded, symbolically, esoterically, or otherwise, as the son of the Greek divinity Hermes?

In this matter, I incline toward the view - based on some forty years of study of the Corpus Hermeticum and similar mystical and esoteric texts, classical, Hellenic, medieval, Arabic and otherwise - that what is imparted in this tractate, as with the Poemandres and Ἰερός Λόγος, is primarily a mystical, and - for centuries - aural, Greek tradition, albeit one possibly influenced, over time and in some degree, by the metaphysical speculations of later philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle. That is, that in Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς and Ἰερός Λόγος and Ποιμάνδρης, we have an intimation of the metaphysics and the cosmogony taught to initiates of that (or those) ancient and aural and paganus Greek mystical tradition(s) mentioned by writers such as Herodotus. And an intimation that is not - a few borrowed illustrative terms notwithstanding - in any significant and metaphysical manner deriving from or influenced by Biblical stories or by early Christian theology or by indigenous Egyptian culture. In the matter of a paganus Greek mystical tradition, the opening of the fourth tractate is, metaphysically, very interesting:

Ἐπειδὴ τὸν πάντα κόσμον ἐποίησεν ὁ δημιουργός οὐ χερσὶν ἀλλὰ
λόγῳ ὥστε οὕτως ὑπολάμβανε ὡς τοῦ παρόντος καὶ ἀεὶ ὄντος καὶ
πάντα ποιήσαντος καὶ ἑνὸς μόνου τῇ δὲ αὐτοῦ θελήσει
δημιουργήσαντος τὰ ὄντα

Because the artisan crafted the complete cosmic order not by hand but through
Logos, you should understand that Being as presential, as eternal, as having crafted
all being, as One only, who by thelesis formed all that is.

For it is incorrect and misleading to write about those three tractates - and
some other tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum - as being in any way
indigenously Egyptian. Rather, their genesis - the tradition they represented -
was the Greek culture of post-Alexandrian Egypt, a cultural influence so evident
in the numerous papyri found in places such as Oxyrhynchus, containing as
such papyri do verses from Homer, Sappho, Menander, Sophocles, and other
Greek authors.

Commentary, Translation, and Text

The references in the commentary here to the *Pæmandres* and Ἱερός Λόγος are
to my translations of and commentary on those texts for, as I mentioned in my
Ἱερός Λόγος,

I have retained the transliterations, and some of the English phrases,
used and explained there, such as physis, phaos, theos. I have also, as
there, occasionally used some particular, or some quite obscure
English words - or forms of them - in order to try and elucidate the
meaning of the text or to avoid using, in what is a metaphysical text,
some commonplace term with various connotations (contemporary or
otherwise) that may lead to a misunderstanding of the text. I have
endeavoured to explain such obscure words in the commentary. There
is thus in this translation, as in my translation of *Pæmandres*, a
certain technical - or rather, esoteric - vocabulary.

As with my Ἱερός Λόγος, I have here, purely for readability, arranged the
translation into (non-poetic) verses rather than long paragraphs. All translations
in the commentary are mine.

Translation

[1] Because the artisan crafted the complete cosmic order not by hand but through Logos
You should understand that Being as presential, as eternal, as having crafted all being,
As One only, who by thelesis formed all that is.

That Being has no body that can be touched or seen or measured or which is separable
Or which is similar to any other body: not of Fire or Water or of Pneuma
Even though all such things are from that Being.
Since that Being is honourable, the desire was to entrust solely to that Being
Such a cosmic order on Earth:

[2] A cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings,
For just as the ever-living cosmic order had an advantage over them
So did they have an advantage over other living beings in their cosmos
Because of Logos and Perceiverance.
Thus did mortals perceive the works of theos, admire them,
Gaining knowledge of their creator.

[3] Thus, Thoth, to all mortals logos was assigned, but not perceiverance
Even though there was no ill-will, for such ill-will arrives not from there
But below, associated with mortals whose Psyche does not convey Perceiverance.

On account of what, father, did theos not assign perceiverance to all?

Son, the desire was to position it half-way between those psyches, as a reward.

[4] Where, then, was it placed?

In that large repleteful chaldron which was dispatched down
With an envoy assigned to declaim to the hearts of mortals:
If you have strength enough, immerse yourself in the chaldron
Should you accept you can ascend -
Having discovered how you came-into-being -
To the one who dispatched down that chaldron.

The many who understood that declaration and were immersive with perceiveration
Gained a certain knowledge, becoming more complete mortals
Through having received the perceiveration
While the many who misunderstood that declaration,
Having logos without the addition of perceiveration,
Are unperceptive regarding how and why they came-into-being.

[5] For they have the alertness similar to that of unthinking animals
And, having an angry and restive disposition,
Have no respect for what is really valuable
But instead follow bodily pleasures and their own desires
Confident as they are that mortals were born for such things.

And yet, Thoth, those who partake to that gift from theos become,
When set against their deeds, immortal instead of mortal

For they with their perceivance apprehend the Earthly, the Heavenly,
And what is beyond the Heavens.
Having gone so far, they perceive what is honourable, and, having so perceived,
They regard what preceded this as a delay, as a problem
And, with little regard for whatever is embodied and disembodied,
They strive toward the Monas.

[6] This, Thoth, is the episteme of perceivance,
Of <considering the divine> and of understanding divinity,
For the chaldron is numinous.

Father, I also desire to be so immersed.

My son, primarily, unless you have a prejudice about the body
You cannot have affection for yourself, and when you have affection for yourself
You can acquire perceivance and, having perceivance,
You can participate in episteme.

Can you, father, explain that?

It is not possible, my son, to be of both the deathful and the divine.
For there are two kinds of existents, the bodily and the non-bodily,
Perceived as deathful and divine; a choice of one or of the other
Should there be a desire to do so. It cannot be both
With the decline of one uncovering the reality of the other.

[7] By choosing the higher not only is there a good ending - the apotheosis of the mortal -
For the one who chooses but also a numinous awareness of theos,
While, if the lower, although it has been the ruination of mortals
It is no termination against theos
But rather something garish that passes by amid us yet is unaffectionate
Even if an impediment to others
Just as those others are garishly worldly
Having been influenced by bodily pleasures.

[8] Because of this, then - Thoth - what is from theos can be and has been ours
So let what accompanies us be that now instead of later.
For it is we who select dishonour rather than honour
With theos blameless in this.
Do you, my son, apprehend how many celestial bodies we have to traverse -
How many groups of Daimons and sequential constellations -
So that we hasten to the Monas.

For the honourable is unpassable, without limit, and unending
Even though to us its origin appears to be the knowledge.

[9] But even though such knowledge is not the origin of it
It yields to us the origin of our knowing.
Thus should we apprehend such an origin and hasten upon our journey
For it is not easy to abandon what we have become accustomed to
And go back to what is elden and in the past.

What is apparent can please us while what is concealed can cause doubt
With what is bad often overt while the honourable is often concealed
Having as it has neither pattern nor guise.

Which is why it is akin to itself but different from everything else
For it is not possible for what is disembodied to be overtly embodied.

[10] This is the distinction between what is akin and what is different
With what is different having a privation of what is akin.

Since the Monas is the origin and foundation of everything
It is within everything as origin and foundation
For if there is no origin there is nothing
And the origin is not from anything but itself
Since it is the origin of everything else,
Just as the Monas, since it is the origin, enfolds every arithmos
Without itself being enfolded by any,
Begetting every arithmos but not begotten by any:

[11] Everything that is begotten is unfinished, partible,
Liable to decline, resurgence
Which do not befall what is complete
For what is resurgent is resurgence from Monas
But what is brought low is so by its own malady
Because unable to hold Monas.

This, then, Thoth, is the eikon of the theos
Insofar as it can be drawn:
If you - clearly, carefully - and with the eyes of your heart apprehend it
Then I assure you, my son, that you shall find the path to what is above:
In truth, the eikon will guide you
Since the seeing of it is uniquely your own,
For those who attain such a beholding are attentively held, pulled up,
Just as it is said lodestone does with iron.

Commentary

1.

artisan. δημιουργόν. See Poemandres 9. The theme of an artisan-creator, and their artisements, is common to the third tractate (Ἰερός Λόγος) as well. That the tractate begins by using the term artisan, rather than theos, is perhaps significant.

that Being. The conventional and grammatical interpretation is "you should understand *him* as..." although how such a human-type gender could be adduced from or manifest by how the 'body' of the artisan-creator is described in subsequent verses is an interesting and relevant metaphysical question.

Can, or should, a 'body' that cannot be touched, that cannot be seen, that

cannot be measured, that is not separable - οὐδὲ διαστατόν - and thus which is not conventionally 'human', be described as male? It is to suggest such metaphysical questions (and the limitations of ordinary language in describing and answering such metaphysical questions) that I have here departed from convention and used 'that Being' instead of 'him'. The term 'Being' also has the advantage that it avoids the gender bias implicit in translating θεός as 'god' given that 'god/God' implies a male entity.

There is also an interesting and perhaps relevant mention, in the second tractate of the Corpus, of the one, the being, who - like an artisan - constructs things: ὁ οὖν θεός <τὸ> ἀγαθόν, καὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ὁ θεός. ἡ δὲ ἑτέρα προσηγορία ἐστὶν ἡ τοῦ πατρός, πάλιν διὰ τὸ ποιητικὸν πάντων. πατὴρ γὰρ τὸ ποιεῖν. (Thus theos is the noble and the noble is theos, although another title is that of father because the artifex of all being. For it is of a father to construct.)

However, in terms of gender and Hellenic mythos and metaphysics, it is sometimes overlooked that Γαῖα, Earth Mother, in one of the Homeric hymns, Εἷς Γῆν Μητέρα Πάντων, is described as πρέσβιστος: the elder among beings, and the mother of the gods, θεῶν μήτηρ. Thus, while it might be of "a father to construct" it is "of a mother to bring forth life", to give birth to beings, including the gods themselves.

presential. πάρειμι. Presential - from the classical Latin praesentia - means "having or implying actual presence", as manifesting (as being presenced) in a locality or with an individual, and is thus more apposite here than the rather bland word 'present'. Cf. the use of 'presenced' in ἱερός Λόγος 2, et sequentia.

One only. ἐνὸς μόνου. A formulaic mystic phrase, implying uniqueness. Cf. ordinary usage in Plato, *Crito* 47, ἢ ἐνὸς μόνου ἐκείνου [...] ἐνὸς μόνου.

thelesis. θέλησις. Given what follows - τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστὶ τὸ σῶμα ἐκείνου, οὐχ ἄπτόν, οὐδὲ ὀρατόν, οὐδὲ μετρητόν, οὐδὲ διαστατόν - a transliteration to suggest something other than a human type 'will' or 'desire'; such as 'disposition'. That is, Being (whatsoever of whomsoever Being is, in terms of gender and otherwise) is predisposed to craft - to presence - being as beings: as immortals (deities), as mortals (humans) and otherwise, qv. ἱερός Λόγος, Poemandres 8 ff, and Poemandres 31: οὐ ἡ βουλὴ τελεῖται ἀπὸ τῶν ιδίων δυνάμεων (whose purpose is accomplished by his own arts).

formed. As an artisan forms their artisements, and thus manifests their skill, their artistry, in what they produce. That is, the artisan-creator has formed, crafted, being (all existence) as beings.

(not) *separable*. οὐδὲ διαστατόν. What is not meant is 'dimension', given what the term 'dimension' now imputes scientifically and otherwise.

Pneuma. πνεῦμα. A transliteration for reasons explained in my commentary on

the text of Poemandres 5:

given that the English alternatives - such as 'spirit' or 'breath' - not only do not always describe what the Greek implies but also suggest things not always or not necessarily in keeping with the Hellenic nature of the text. This particular transliteration has a long history in English, dating back to 1559 CE. In 1918, DeWitt Burton published a monograph - listing, with quotations, the various senses of πνεῦμα - entitled *Spirit, Soul, and Flesh: The Usage of Πνεῦμα, Ψυχή, and Σάρξ in Greek Writings and Translated Works from the Earliest Period to 225 AD* (University of Chicago Press, 1918).

I incline toward the view that πνεῦμα here - like λόγος - does not necessarily imply something theological (in the Christian sense or otherwise) but rather suggests an alternative, more personal, weltanschauung that, being a weltanschauung, is undoctinal and subtle, and which weltanschauung is redolent of Hellenic culture. Subtle and undoctinal in the way that early alchemical texts are subtle and undoctinal and try to express, or hint at (however obscurely to us, now), a weltanschauung, and one which is more paganus than Christian.

Even though all such things are from that Being. ἀλλὰ πάντα ἀπ' αὐτοῦ. Literally, 'even though all are from that'. One therefore might understand it to imply 'even though all beings/things are from that Being.'

honourable. ἀγαθός. qv. Poemandres 22, where I referenced a quotation from the Corpus Aristotelicum:

τῆς δὲ φρονήσεως ἐστὶ τὸ βουλευσασθαι, τὸ κρῖναι τὰ ἀγαθὰ καὶ τὰ κακὰ καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν τῷ βίῳ αἰρετὰ καὶ φευκτά, τὸ χρῆσθαι πᾶσι καλῶς τοῖς ὑπάρχουσιν ἀγαθοῖς, τὸ ὁμιλῆσαι ὀρθῶς [De Virtutibus et Vitiis Libellus 1250a]

It is part of wisdom to accept advice, to distinguish the honourable, the dishonourable, and all that is, in life, acceptable or to be avoided; to fairly use all resources; to be genuine in company.

Honourable - noble - rather than some abstract or dogmatically defined 'good'. That is, the Hellenic distinction is between good (honourable) personal character and bad (dishonourable) personal character rather than - as for example in Christianity - referencing some abstract, or God-given or dogmatically (Church) defined 'good'.

entrust solely to. I follow the MSS, which have μόνῳ, with οὐ μόνῳ being a fairly recent emendation which completely changes the meaning.

orderly arrangement. κοσμέω. In esoteric terms, a presencing, on Earth, of the cosmic order itself, qv. Poemandres 8: "having comprehended the logos and having seen the beauty of the cosmic order, re-presented it..."

Regarding 'presencing', qv. my translation of and commentary on section two of the third tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, Ιερός Λόγος:

ἀδιορίστων δὲ ὄντων ἀπάντων καὶ ἀκατασκευάστων.

With all beings unformed and not yet presenced.

2.

a cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings. κόσμον δὲ θείου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον. That is, human beings re-present, presence, the 'divine body' and are, of themselves, a reflection of the cosmic order itself. This, and the preceding line, express a fundamental part of ancient and Renaissance hermeticism: human beings as a microcosm of the cosmic order and the divine.

Hence why the twenty-sixth chapter of the book *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda* by Marsilii Ficini (published in 1489 CE) has as its heading:

Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona.

How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned.

Also, in respect of ἄνθρωπος I have used here - as in my Poemandres - the gender neutral 'human being' instead of the more usual 'man', and also - as there - occasionally used the term 'mortal' when the context suggests it.

Regarding 'the cosmic order' (κόσμος) itself qv. Poemandres 7; 14, and Ιερός Λόγος 4:

The divine is all of that mision: renewance of the cosmic order through Physis
For Physis is presenced in the divine.

a deathful life and yet a deathless life. This (including the borrowing of the terms deathful and deathless, in juxtaposition, from Chapman) is explained in section 14 of the Poemandres tractate:

θυητὸς μὲν διὰ τὸ σῶμα, ἀθάνατος δὲ διὰ τὸν οὐσιώδη ἄνθρωπον.

deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal.

Logos and Perceiverance. In my commentary on the Poemandres tractate I have explained my reasons for transliterating (and sometimes capitalizing) λόγος as logos (qv. the commentary on section 5) - rather than as 'Word' or 'Speech' - and for translating νοῦς as perceiverance/perceivation rather than as the conventional 'mind' (see for example the commentary on sections 2 and 10). Refer also to comments there regarding terms such as pneuma logos (πνευματικὸν λόγον), phasma logos (φωτεινὸς λόγος) and θεοῦ λόγος.

Here Logos suggests 'reasoning', with perceiverance having its usual sense of 'awareness', of comprehending what is perceived, as for example, in being able to rationally or intuitively assess a situation, a person, or persons. As with (and for example) Logos, Psyche, and Physis, perceiverance - capitalized as Perceiverance - can also be personified and thus regarded as a fundamental quality germane to the life of deathful mortals.

3.

whose Psyche does not convey Perceiverance. It is possible to see in this an esoteric allusion to psyche personified, especially given what follows: τοῦτον ἐν μέσῳ ταῖς ψυχαῖς ὥσπερ ἄθλον ἰδρυῖσθαι. In ancient mythology - such as the ancient myth of Psyche and Eros, retold by Apuleius in his *Metamorphoses*, which was written around the same time as this Hermetic tractate, and which story also involves Hermes - Psyche initially lacked perceiverance but through striving to succeed in the trials given to her by Aphrodite she acquires it.

Hence why here I have personified both psyche and perceiverance. I have also transliterated ψυχή so as, as I noted in my Poemandres, to not impose a particular meaning on the text. For whether what is meant is anima mundi, or the ancient pagan sense of the 'spark' - the source, or breath - of life, or what we now denote by the terms 'soul' and 'spirit', is open to debate, especially as the terms soul and spirit possess much later and modern connotations that may not be relevant to such an ancient text. Connotations such as suggesting the incorporeal, or immaterial being, as distinct from body or matter; or the Christian concept of the soul.

As an illustration of matters of interpretation, two subtly different senses of ψυχή are evident in the Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles:

τῶνδε γὰρ πλέον φέρω
τὸ πένθος ἢ καὶ τῆς ἐμῆς ψυχῆς πέρι.

For my concern for their suffering

Is more than even that for my own psyche.

vv.93-4

ἀλλά μοι δυσμόρῳ γὰρ φθινὰς
τρύχει ψυχάν, τάδ' εἰ κακοῖς κακὰ
προσάψει τοῖς πάλαι τὰ πρὸς σφῶν.

But ill-fated would be my breath of life - which the decay in this soil
Already wears down - if to those troubles of old
There was joined this trouble between you and him.

vv.665-667

In respect of ψυχή, the Hermetic text here implies that ill-will is associated with those whose nature is such that they lack the ability to rationally or intuitively assess and comprehend a situation or other people.

father. ὦ πάτερ is a traditional way of showing respect for an elder, in this case of Thoth for Hermes.

position it half-way between those psyches, as a reward. Thus, while Logos is a gift to all mortals from theos, Perceiverance is not and has to be earned, striven for, as an athlete has to strive to earn a prize. [The English word athlete is related to the Greek word used here - ἄθλον - via the Greek ἀθλητής and thence the classical Latin athleta.]

chaldron. κρατήρ. See the Introduction.

envoy. While the conventional translation here of κήρυξ is 'herald', I consider it unsatisfactory given what that English term now often denotes: either the type of herald familiar from the New Testament or the herald of medieval literature and stories (qv. Morte Arthure, and The Knights Tale by Chaucer). Given the Greco-Roman context (Hermes, Thoth) and classical antecedents (such as Hermes as the protector of mortal envoys and messengers) then 'envoy' is more accurate especially given that this is an envoy from the artisan-creator assigned to impart information to mortals.

Ascend to the one [...] how you came-into-being. There are similarities here to the Poemandres tractate in relation to the anados - the journey up through the spheres (Poemandres 24) toward theos - and the desire "to apprehend the physis of beings" (Poemandres 3).

and were immersive with perceiveration. καὶ ἐβαπτίσαντο τοῦ νοός. That is, were or became characterized by having become immersed with - suffused by -

perceivation.

Here, as elsewhere the understanding of νοῦς as perceivance/perceivation rather than as 'mind' makes the text understandable: for the mortals became suffused with a particular (and, for most, probably a new type of) perception, a new way of seeing the world, themselves, and other mortals, and thus acquire a particular type of knowing, whereas an expression such as "immersed themselves with mind" is obscure to the point of being either unintelligible or requiring a long discourse on the nature of "mind" based as such discourses invariably are on certain philosophical assumptions.

The sense of acquiring a new way of seeing the world, themselves, and other mortals is evident in the text that follows: οὔτοι μετέσχον τῆς γνώσεως (gained, acquired, partook of, a knowing).

more complete mortals. The sense of τέλειος here is not that of being 'perfect' but rather of being 'entire', more completed, 'more rounded', than others. Thus there is no sense of "perfect people" or "perfect humans" - with implied moral, and other, superiority - but rather of those who, having a different perception of things to most others, were akin to initiates of a mystical or an esoteric tradition: apart from others because of that particular knowledge that their new, initiated, perception, has brought, but still mortal. This sense is evident in the text that follows: τὸν νοῦν δεξάμενοι.

received the perceivation. It is possible that this is an allusion to 'the perceivance' - the gnosis - that initiates of a particular mystic or esoteric tradition acquire when certain esoteric, mystic, knowledge is imparted to them.

4.

declaim to the hearts of mortals. A figurative usage of 'heart', referring here as often elsewhere in Greek and Hellenic culture to the feelings, the emotions (qv. Iliad, Book IX, 646 and The Odyssey, Book XVII, 489) as well as to the ethos, the nature, and the understanding, of the individual.

See also "with the eyes of the heart" in section 11.

5.

alertness. αἴσθησις. For which see Poemandres 1. The sense is that they are always alert, and - like animals - react instinctively because they lack the objective awareness that perceivance (νοῦς) brings and which objective awareness (of themselves and others) makes mortals into complete human beings.

Confident. Given the context, πιστεύω here suggests 'confidence' rather than 'belief'; for this is the arrogant instinctive confidence of those who lack

perceiverance and who have no firm belief in anything other than their own bodily pleasure and fulfilling their desires and who thus reject - or who cannot intuit - the numinous perspective of the divine, a perspective which would reveal the possibility of immortality.

parten to that gift [...] when set against their deeds. The text suggests that the gift of immortality which theos gives is freely bestowed among those whose deeds reveal that they have understood what the chaldron is and does, with the fourteenth century English word parten [to have something in common with something or someone else] expressing the meaning here of the Greek μετέχω.

apprehend the Earthly, the Heavenly, and what is beyond the Heavens. An alternative - following the Latin version of the text - omnia complexi sua mente, et terrena et caelestia et si quid est supra caelum - would be "apprehend the terran, the celestial, and what is beyond the celestial."

(as a) problem. The context suggests that what is meant is that life before "having so perceived" was a problem, not that it was a 'misfortune' or a calamity. A problem - a challenge - to overcome, which challenge they accepted leading to them gaining the prize, for theos had positioned that prize "half-way between those psyches, as a reward."

The same sense in respect of συμφορά is apparent in Oedipus Tyrannus by Sophocles:

θεοῖσι μὲν νυν οὐκ ἰσοῦμένον σ' ἐγὼ
οὐδ' οἶδε παῖδες ἐζόμεσθ' ἐφέστιοι,
ἀνδρῶν δὲ πρῶτον ἔν τε συμφοραῖς βίου
κρίνοντες ἔν τε δαιμόνων συναλλαγαῖς

Not as an equal of the gods do I,
And these children who sit by your altar, behold you -
But as the prime man in our problems of life
And in our dealings and agreements with daimons.

vv. 31-34

disembodied. ἀσώματος - etymologically, a privation of σωματικός - occurs in works by Aristotle and, perhaps more relevant here, in writers such as Iamblichus who in De Mysteriis, V, 16 writes in general terms about the body in relation to offering to the gods and daimons that which, or those things which, might free the body from ailments and bring health, and the necessity in such matters as offerings of not considering the body in either non-bodily or noetic terms:

τότε δὴ οὖν οὐ δῆπου νοερῶς καὶ ἀσωμάτως τὸ σῶμα

μεταχειριζόμεθα· οὐ γὰρ πέφυκε τῶν τοιούτων τρόπων τὸ σῶμα
μετέχειν· τῶν δὲ συγγενῶν ἑαυτῷ μεταλαγχάνον, σώμασι σῶμα
θεραπεύεται τε καὶ ἀποκαθαίρεται.

Thus the sense of καταφρονήσαντες πάντων τῶν σωματικῶν καὶ ἄσωμάτων ἐπὶ τὸ ἓν seems to be that what is important is a striving for the monas not a noetic concern for the difference between whatever is embodied and whatever is considered disembodied.

Monas. μονάς. A transliteration since it here does not necessarily, as I noted in the Introduction, signify "The One, The Only" (τὸ ἓν) of such weltanschauungen as those termed Pythagorean, neo-Pythagorean, or Gnostic; or 'the one God' of religious monotheisms such as Christianity.

6.

episteme. A transliteration of ἐπιστήμη, which could be - and has been - accented thus: épistémé. The meaning is 'a way', or a means or a method, by which something can be known, understood, and appreciated. In this case, perceiviation, which the artisan-creator has positioned "half-way between psyches, as a reward."

Episteme, therefore, should be considered a technical, esoteric, term associated with some of the weltanschauungen that are described in the Corpus Hermeticum. Thus, in the Poemandres tractate, the anados through the seven spheres is an episteme.

considering the divine. The MSS have ἐντοπία and various emendations, recent and otherwise, have been proposed including ἐντοπία and ιστορία. Interestingly, the Renaissance Latin text published in 1554 has, for the line, 'scientia mentis est diuinorum contemplatio & intelligentia dei, diuino existente cratere' with Parthey's 1854 edition reading 'mentis scientia, diuinorum inspectio et dei comprehensio, quia diuinus est crater.'

I am inclined toward ιστορία, which conveys the sense here of considering, of obtaining information about - of contemplating - divinity, the numinous, and thus the relation of mortals to divinity. A sense which fits well with the following καὶ ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ κατανόησις.

For the chaldron is numinous. θείου ὄντος τοῦ κρατῆρος. For θεῖος here I have opted for the English word numinous (dating from 1647 and from the classical Latin term numen) to express the sense of inclusion - of/from the divinity and of itself being divine - that the word 'divine' by itself does not, particularly given the previous "considering the divine and of understanding divinity."

Primarily, unless you have a prejudice about the body. Ἐὰν μὴ πρῶτον τὸ σῶμά σου μισήσης. To always - regardless of textual context and milieu - translate

μισέω/μῖσος as "hate" is or can be misleading, given how the English word hate implies (and is understood as meaning) an extreme personal emotion, an intense personal aversion to something, and also a certain malevolence. Consider, for example, the following from Thucydides:

ἀπὸ τούτου τε πρῶτον Περδίκκας Βρασίδαν τε πολέμιον ἐνόμισε καὶ ἐς τὸ λοιπὸν Πελοποννησίων τῇ μὲν γνώμῃ δι' Ἀθηναίους οὐ ζύνηθες μῖσος εἶχε, τῶν δὲ ἀναγκαίων ξυμφόρων διαναστὰς ἔπρασσε ὅτῳ τρόπῳ τάχιστα τοῖς μὲν ξυμβήσεται, τῶν δὲ ἀπαλλάξεται. (4.128)

His reaching an agreement with the Peloponnesians while at the same time still being determined to be rid of his foe does not imply an implacable, intense, personal hatred in the first place, but rather a generalized dislike (in this case just a certain prejudice) of the kind that can be dispensed with if it is personally - or strategically - advantageous to do so. Thus to translate the relevant part as "it was then that Perdiccas first considered Brasidas his foe and felt a prejudice toward the Peloponnesians" seems apt, especially given the qualification mentioned in the text: τῇ μὲν γνώμῃ δι' Ἀθηναίους.

The preference for the metaphysical, for striving for immortality and for understanding the numinous, that this tractate describes is not, as some have assumed, an ascetic "hatred" of the physical body. Instead, it is just a positive bias in favour of such metaphysical, spiritual matters, and a prejudice against a fixation on bodily and material things.

This preference is also evident in Poemandres 19:

"they of self-knowledge attained a particular benefit while they who, misled by Eros, love the body, roamed around in the dark, to thus, perceptively, be afflicted by death."

For, as noted in my commentary on τὸν αἴτιον τοῦ θανάτου ἔρωτα in Poemandres 19:

The consensus is, and has been, that ἔρωτα here signifies 'carnal desire' - or something similar - so that it is assumed that what is meant is some sort of ascetic (or Gnostic or puritanical) statement about how sexual desire should be avoided or at the very least controlled. However, this seems rather at variance with the foregoing - regarding propagating and spawning - which inclines me to suggest that what is meant here is 'eros', not necessarily personified as the classical deity (ἡδ' Ἔρος ὃς κάλλιστος ἐν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι πάντων δὲ θεῶν πάντων τ' ἀνθρώπων δάμναται ἐν στήθεσσι νόον καὶ ἐπίφρονα βουλήν), although the comparison is interesting, but rather as an elemental or archetypal principle, akin to νοῦς and λόγος. Consider, for example, the following from Daphnis and Chloe, written by Longus around the same time as the Corpus Hermeticum: πάντως

γὰρ οὐδεὶς ἔρωτα ἔφυγεν ἢ φεύζεται μέχρις ἂν κάλλος ἦ καὶ ὀφθαλμοὶ βλέπωσιν [Book 1, Proem, 4 - "no one can avoid or has ever been able to avoid Eros, while there is beauty and eyes which perceive"]. In modern terms, few - poetically, metaphorically, none - have avoided or could avoid, at some time in their life, the unconscious power of the anima/animus.

There are two kinds of existents, bodily and non-bodily. δύο γὰρ ὄντων τῶν ὄντων. This duality, in respect of mortals, is evident in the Poemandres tractate:

διὰ τοῦτο παρὰ πάντα τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς ζῶα διπλοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ ἄνθρωπος, θνητὸς μὲν διὰ τὸ σῶμα, ἀθάνατος δὲ διὰ τὸν οὐσιώδη ἄνθρωπον

distinct among all other beings on Earth, mortals are jumelle; deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal

(Poemandres 15)

This contrast between the deathful body and the immortality that is possible (the potential for immortality that lies within mortals) is essentially the same as the one described here: the bodily and the divine, the embodied and the disembodied.

7.

apotheosis of the mortal. Not here a literal making of "the mortal into a god" or even an actual "deification of the mortal" (by whomsoever) but rather a bringing about in the mortal an apotheosis - ἀποθέωσις - in the sense of an ascension toward immortality, a spiritual journey from earthly life, a figurative resurrection of, or actual elevation in, the life of the mortal.

This latter sense is evident in the use of ἀποθέωσις by Cicero in his Epistularum Ad Atticum - videsne consulatum illum nostrum, quem Curio antea ἀποθέωσιν vocabat, si hic factus erit, fabam mimum futurum (Liber Primus, XVI, 13) - for this early use of the Greek word concerns the elevated rank of Consul, and thus the honour and privileges that such a privileged rank brings.

a numinous awareness of theos. In respect of εὐσεβέω as an "awareness of the numinous" qv. my Poemandres, 22.

termeration. From the Latin *termere* and thus appropriate here, given the context, in respect of πλημμελέω, suggesting as it can both a violation and a profanation, while avoiding the interpretation that words such as "transgression" (toward god), "trespassed (against god) and "offence" (against god) impute, especially given the usual translations of Christian texts written in

Greek, such as translations of the following from the Septuagint: ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ περὶ ἐνὸς ἀπὸ πάντων ὧν ἐποίησεν καὶ ἐπλημμέλησεν αὐτῷ (Leviticus 5, 26).

something garish that passes by. The exact meaning of πομπή here is unclear, with suggestions ranging from parade, pageant, to procession (religious or otherwise), which all seem out of context since they all can have an affect, a purpose, and can achieve things other than just being a hindrance to passers-by.

The context suggests something metaphorical and similar to what Cicero wrote:

quem tu mihi addidisti sane ad illum σύλλογον personam idoneam.
Videbis igitur, si poteris, ceteros, ut possimus πομπεῦσαι καὶ τοῖς
προσώποις (Epistularum Ad Atticum, Liber Tertius Decimus, 32:3)

That is, similar to a showy or affected countenance or facade or personae, or an act, or some pompous attempt to impress which however is not effective as in Oedipus Tyrannus:

εἰπὼν ἄπειμ' ὧν οὔνεκ' ἦλθον οὐ τὸ σὸν
δείσας πρόσωπον οὐ γὰρ ἔσθ' ὅπου μ' ὀλεῖς

I shall go but speak that for which I was fetched, with no dread
Because of your countenance. For you cannot harm me. (448)

garishly worldly. I take the sense of κόσμος here to refer to 'that cosmos' - the world of mortals - previously described as "the cosmos of the divine body": the microcosm which the artisan-creator crafted and in which we mortals have our being. See the commentary in section 2 on the phrase *a cosmos of the divine body*.

Hence the poetic metaphor here: garishly worldly. Of living a garish - facile - life in our microcosm even though the artisan-creator has provided a means for us to attain immortality and thus, as described in the Poemandres tractate, become a part of a higher, a divine, cosmic order.

8.

select dishonour For κακός as 'bad' and 'dishonourable' rather than 'evil' refer to my commentary on Poemandres 22 from which this is an extract:

"The usual translation of κακός here, as often elsewhere, is 'evil'. However, I regard such a translation as unhelpful, given that the English word 'evil' is (1) now often interpreted and understood in a moralistic, preconceived, way according to some theological

dogma/criteria and/or according to some political/social doctrine, and (2) that it does not denote what the classical and the Hellenic term κακός does. Classically understood κακός is what is bad in the sense of some-thing rotten or unhealthy, or – the opposite of κάλος – what is displeasing to see. κακός is also what is unlucky, a misfortune, and/or injurious [...] When applied to a person, the sense is of a 'rotten' person; someone with bad, harmful, physis; a bad - dishonourable, weak, cowardly - personal character."

theos blameless in this. In respect of ἀναίτιος, compare Agamemnon 1505:

ὥς μὲν ἀναίτιος εἶ
τοῦδε φόνου τίς ὁ μαρτυρήσων

Is there anyone who will bear witness
That you are blameless in this killing?

celestial body. By σῶμα (body) here is meant the celestial body, the 'harmonious structure', which is described in terms of seven spheres in the Poemandres tractate and which mortals must ascend through in sequence in order to attain immortality and thus be in the company of theos. This ascension through the spheres is there described as an anados - ἔτι δέ μοι εἶπε περὶ τῆς ἀνόδου τῆς γυνομένης - with Poemandres (in section 25) describing the journey in detail, with each sphere represented by one of the seven classical planets:

καὶ τῇ πρώτῃ ζώνῃ δίδωσι τὴν αὐξητικὴν ἐνέργειαν καὶ τὴν
μειωτικὴν, καὶ τῇ δευτέρᾳ τὴν μηχανὴν τῶν κακῶν, δόλον
ἀνενέργητον [...]

Thus does the mortal hasten through the harmonious structure,
offering up, in the first realm, that vigour which grows and which
fades, and - in the second one - those dishonourable machinations, no
longer functioning [...]

Plato, in Timaeus 32c, uses σῶμα to refer to the substance - the body - of the cosmos as being formed from fire, water, air and earth:

ὄν ἀριθμὸν τεττάρων τὸ τοῦ κόσμου σῶμα ἐγεννήθη δι' ἀναλογίας
ὁμολογήσαν

sequential constellations. In context, συνέχειαν καὶ δρόμους ἀστέρω suggests a type of movement, a path, through certain stars or constellations. That is, a particular or ordered sequence: the anados through the septenary system, with it being possible that the use here of ἀστήρ (star) - rather than κύκλος (sphere,

orb) as in Poemandres - implied an aural esoteric tradition associating each sphere with a corresponding star or constellation, an ancient tradition found in Renaissance alchemical and magical texts.

the honourable is unpassable. Reading ἀδιάβατον, which implies that what is honourable is always there, always around, always noticeable when it is presenced by someone. In other words - given the following καὶ ἀπέραντον καὶ ἀτελές - there are always some mortals who will (qv. sections 5 and 8) select honour rather than dishonour: who will (as described in section 4) "receive the perceiviation," having won that prize gifted by theos.

9.

Even though to us its origin appears to be the knowledge. The expression ἡμῖν δὲ δοκοῦν ἀρχὴν ἔχειν τὴν γνῶσιν is interesting given that it refers to 'the knowledge', which some have construed to refer to the gnosis of certain pagan weltanschauungen. However, since what this particular knowledge is, is not specified, to translate as 'the Gnosis' would be to impose a particular and modern interpretation on the text given what the term gnosticism now denotes. All that can be adduced from the text is that this particular knowledge may refer to and be the knowledge imparted in the text itself: the knowledge that Hermes is here imparting to Thoth.

The word translated here as origin is ἀρχή and which Greek term has various philosophical connotations in Anaximander, Plato, et al. What it here denotes, as evident in the text that follows (sections 10 and 11), is origin, beginning, source.

not the origin of it. Referring to what is honourable and its origin/beginning.

hasten upon our journey. While the text - λαβώμεθα οὖν τῆς ἀρχῆς καὶ ὁδεύσωμεν τάχει ἅπαντα - is somewhat obscure it seems reasonable to assume that what is meant or implied is the necessity of beginning - of hastening upon - the complete, the entire, journey toward the Monas with all that implies in terms of everything encountered along the way.

not easy. The sense of σκολιόν here - in the context of leaving what one has become accustomed to and is comfortable with - suggests 'tangled', indirect, 'not straightforward', 'tortuous', and thus 'not easy'.

elden. A rather obscure English word meaning 'belonging to earlier times', and used to avoid the negative connotations that words such as 'ancient' can imply.

What is apparent can please [...] neither pattern nor guise. τὰ μὲν γὰρ φαινόμενα τέρπει, τὰ δὲ ἀφανῆ δυσπιστεῖν ποιεῖ. φανερώτερα δὲ ἐστὶ τὰ κακά, τὸ δὲ ἀγαθὸν ἀφανὲς τοῖς φανεροῖς

This is an interesting passage, often interpreted in terms of moral abstractions, of 'good' and 'evil'. However, as previously mentioned, I incline toward the somewhat iconoclastic view that there is a more Greek, a more Hellenic, and an essentially pagan, interpretation of ἀγαθός consistent with the Greek mystery traditions, with Homer, with the tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles, and with how theos was generally understood in ancient Greece and in Greco-Roman, Hellenistic, times. Which is of ἀγαθός - and of κακός - (i) when referring to mortals as referring to personal character, of character being most often revealed by deeds, by what has been observed because done visibly, or to outward appearance in terms of τὸ καλόν, of what is considered beautiful or not beautiful; and (ii) when used of things - living or dead - as referring to the difference between 'rotten', 'bad', and what is not rotten, as in a rotten tree or a piece of food.

What is expressed here is of how outward appearances can please, how we can be suspicious - doubtful - about what is concealed, what has not yet been revealed; with what is bad often outwardly obvious (as in the case of a rotten tree or a rotten person) but with what is good, honourable, often being concealed because it has no particular pattern or guise until it has been revealed, for example by noble, honourable deeds. Thus the suggestion seems to be that there is or can be a revealing of what is good when mortals seek the theos-gifted prize of perceiviation, which seeking of that prize, and winning it, is of itself a good, a necessary, an honourable, thing to do, leading at it does to a hastening toward the Monas.

The passage also invites comparison with one in Plato's Republic and one in Aristotle's Metaphysics.

In Book XII, 1074b, Aristotle wrote:

τὰ δὲ περὶ τὸν νοῦν ἔχει τινὰς ἀπορίας: δοκεῖ μὲν γὰρ εἶναι τῶν
φαινομένων θειότατον, πῶς δ' ἔχων τοιοῦτος ἂν εἴη, ἔχει τινὰς
δυσκολίας

The expression δοκεῖ μὲν γὰρ εἶναι τῶν φαινομένων θειότατον has led to disputations among some scholars with some considering the passage corrupt and in need of emendation, for their difficulty lies in Aristotle apparently stating that 'Mind' is, like other phenomena, perceptible to our senses. However, if one does not translate νοῦς as 'Mind' - with all the preconceptions, philosophical and otherwise, that have over centuries become attached to that term - and one also appreciates that φαίνω here as sometimes elsewhere is not a simple 'observing' - of seeing, of observing, phenomena - but rather a revealing, then there is little if any difficulty. For instance, does the following interpretation of part of that passage make sense with respect to phenomena? "Perceiviation, of all revealing, appears to be the most numinous."

Indeed so, because perceiviation is a perception involving a certain

awareness, a revealing to us, of what is observed; that is, an apprehension, and Aristotle's reasoning (insofar as I understand it) is that this awareness - νοῦς - is the most numinous, 'the most divine', revealing because we mortals can apprehended, be or become aware of, and thus have knowledge of, theos. Which is basically what Hermes has in this tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum imparted to Thoth.

In Book VII, 517β - 517ξ, of the Republic, Plato wrote:

τὰ δ' οὖν ἐμοὶ φαινόμενα οὕτω φαίνεται, ἐν τῷ γνωστῷ τελευταία ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα καὶ μόγις ὁρᾶσθαι

Which brings us, again, to ἀγαθός invariably translated as it hitherto has been - in respect of the Corpus Hermeticum, and many of the writings of Aristotle and Plato - as an abstraction termed 'good', as well it might be in respect of Plato given that he posits an abstract (a true, ideal) beauty and an abstract (true, ideal) being, as in Phaedo 78b where he writes about αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν and about αὐτὸ ἕκαστον ὃ ἔστιν, and why in Symposium 210e - 211a he states regarding his ideal, his form, his ἰδέα/εἶδος, which he sometimes and confusingly uses interchangeably, that:

πρῶτον μὲν αἰεὶ ὄν καὶ οὔτε γιγνόμενον οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον, οὔτε αὐξανόμενον οὔτε φθίνον

Firstly, it always exists, and has no genesis. It does not die, does not grow, does not decay.

What, therefore, seems to have occurred, in respect of this and other tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum, is the assumption that ἀγαθός always refers back to Plato's ἰδέα/εἶδος (and to those influenced by him or are assumed to be his precursors) leading to moralistic interpretations such as that of Mead where ἀγαθός is divorced from the physis (φύσις), the character, the individuality, of mortals: "evils are the more apparent things, whereas the Good can never show Itself unto the eyes, for It hath neither form nor figure." Thus, that in respect of mortals, ἀγαθός, rather than having its genesis, its origin, its very being, in some individual mortals - and attainable by others because of the prize of perceivance offered by theos - is considered as something external which could be attained by, which has its being in, is embodied by, such abstractions (the 'politics') as Plato delineates in his theorized Republic and in such abstractions as were posited by the early Christian Church.

For it is not possible for what is disembodied to be overtly embodied. ἀδύνατον γὰρ ἀσώματον σώματι φανῆναι. That is, it is not possible to discern who is honourable from their outward appearance, for what is honourable is manifest, revealed, through personal deeds.

enfolds every arithmos [...] begetting every arithmos but not begotten by any. This passage, with its mention of ἀριθμός, is often assumed to refer to the Pythagorean doctrine regarding numbers since ἀριθμός is invariably translated as 'number' - thus implying what the English word implies, especially in mathematical terms - even though Aristotle, in discussing ἀριθμός, wrote: ἄλλος δέ τις τὸν πρῶτον ἀριθμὸν τὸν τῶν εἰδῶν ἓνα εἶναι, ἔνιοι δὲ καὶ τὸν μαθηματικὸν τὸν αὐτὸν τοῦτον εἶναι (Metaphysics, Book XIII, 1080b.20).

Given such a necessary distinction - and the discussion regarding ἀριθμός and Pythagoras in Book XIII, 1083b.10 et seq - as well as the fact that what ἀριθμός means here, in this tractate, and what it implies - such as the mathematical numbers 2 and 3 developing from the One - is not mentioned, I have transliterated ἀριθμός thus leaving open what it may or may not mean in relation to the particular weltanschauung being described. However, the context seems to suggest a metaphysical rather than an abstract mathematical notion, especially given what follows at the beginning of section 11: πᾶν δὲ τὸ γεννώμενον ἀτελές καὶ διαιρετόν.

begetting/begotten. It is interesting to compare the use here of γεννάω (beget/engender) with the use of γέννημα in Poemandres 8 (the birth of Psyche) and 30 (of Logos breeding nobility).

11.

resurgence [...] decline. The sense here, in context, is not as abstract, as impersonal, as a translation such as "increase and decrease" implies. Rather it suggests "resurgence and decline", as happens with living things.

what is complete. The reference is to the Monas.

eikon of theos. I have transliterated εἰκὼν as eikon since - for reasons mentioned in my commentary on Poemandres 31 - it implies more, in some ancient mystical tractates, than what the word 'image' now denotes.

eyes of your heart. A similar expression occurs in Paul's Letter to the Ephesians - πεφωτισμένους τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς τῆς καρδίας <ὕμῶν> (1.18) - although, as some scholars have noted (qv. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, Baker Academic, 2002. p.260f) the Greek syntax there is problematic.

the path to what is above. That is, the anados (ἄνοδος) mentioned in the Poemandres tractate, composed as the word ἄνοδος is from ἀνά (above) and ὁδός (path), the two Greek words used here.

the seeing of it is uniquely your own. What is being conveyed is that the eikon is of itself mystical - not an ordinary image or painting - and can impart to the

person, who "with the eyes of their heart" views it, something unique, personal, numinous.

lodestone. μαγνητις λίθος. Lodestone, and not a 'magnet' in the modern sense.

Ὅτι ἐν μόνῳ θεῷ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐστὶν ἀλλαχόθι δὲ οὐδαμοῦ.

That In The Theos Alone Is Nobility And Not Anywhere Else

Tractate VI

ooo

Introduction

The sixth tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, concentrating as it does on τὸ ἀγαθὸν in relation to theos and mortals, is - in respect of the milieu of ancient Greco-Roman culture - metaphysically interesting even though existing translations, given that they invariably translate τὸ ἀγαθὸν as 'the good' and θεός as 'god', impart "the sense of reading somewhat declamatory sermons about god/God and 'the good' familiar from over a thousand years of persons preaching about Christianity." [1]

Since, for reasons explained elsewhere [1], I translate τὸ ἀγαθὸν as 'the noble' - implying nobility, honour, as expressed for example by Seneca, summum bonum est quod honestum est; et quod magis admireris: unum bonum est, quod honestum est, cetera falsa et adulterina bona sunt [2] - and also transliterate θεός as theos, then what emerges from this tractate is something redolent of Greco-Roman mysticism and thus of how τὸ ἀγαθὸν was understood by learned men such as Cicero: in terms of personal character [3] rather than as an impersonal moral abstraction leading as such an abstraction invariably does to dogmatic interpretations and thence to disputations and dissent and thence to the accusations of religious 'heresy' that bedevilled Christian churches for centuries, redolent as such moral abstractions, such dogmatism and accusations, are of an ethos that is rather un-Hellenic.

Such an understanding of τὸ ἀγαθὸν is evident in a passage in section nine of the fourth tractate:

τὰ μὲν γὰρ φαινόμενα τέρπει, τὰ δὲ ἀφανῆ δυσπιστεῖν ποιεῖ.
φανερώτερα δέ ἐστι τὰ κακά, τὸ δὲ ἀγαθὸν ἀφανὲς τοῖς φανεροῖς.

What is apparent can please us while what is concealed can cause doubt with what is bad often overt while the honourable is often concealed having as it has neither pattern nor guise.

For what is expressed in that fourth tractate is that while what is bad is often outwardly obvious (as in the case of a rotten tree or a bad person) what is good, honourable, is often being concealed because it has no guise, no particular, discernable, pattern - no outward sign or appearance - becoming revealed only though noble, honourable, personal, deeds.

In respect of tractate six, the choice of τὸ ἀγαθὸν as 'the noble' (instead of the conventional 'the good') and κακός as 'bad' (instead of the conventional 'evil') elevates the text from a type of pious sermon to a metaphysical weltanschauung, something especially evident at the beginning of section three:

In mortals, the noble are arrayed to compare with the bad, for in this place those not especially bad are the noble given that in this place nobility has the smallest portion of the bad.

ἐν δὲ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ κατὰ σύγκρισιν τὸ ἀγαθὸν τοῦ κακοῦ τέτακται τὸ γὰρ μὴ λίαν κακὸν ἐνθάδε τὸ ἀγαθόν ἐστι τὸ δὲ ἐνθάδε ἀγαθόν μόνιον τοῦ κακοῦ τὸ ἐλάχιστον

Also, while the language of this sixth tractate is on occasions somewhat convoluted and apparently contradictory - as for example in the description in section two of Kosmos having nobility (τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον ἀγαθὸς ὁ κόσμος καθὰ καὶ αὐτὸς πάντα ποιεῖ) and yet being not noble in other ways (ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις πᾶσιν οὐκ ἀγαθός) what is expressed metaphysically differs somewhat from some other tractates, revealing just how diverse the pagan mystical traditions represented in the Corpus Hermeticum are.

Despite the differences, most obvious when this tractate - with its rather negative portrayal of mortals and the insistence that beauty and nobility cannot be found in this world - is compared to the Poemandres tractate and the third (Ἱερός Λόγος) tractate, what emerges is a hermetic weltanschauung and one that can best be summarized by the following lines from the last two sections:

"[an] apprehension of theos [is] an apprehension of the beautiful and of the noble... [and] a quest for theos is a quest for the beautiful, and there is only one path there: an awareness of the numinous combined with knowledge [...]"

Yet those who do not apprehend, who do not follow the path of awareness of the numinous, have the effrontery to declare that mortals are beautiful and noble even though they have not observed, and have no semblance of, what the noble is."

This goes some way toward resolving the apparently contradictory nature of the text, asserting as it does at the beginning that "the noble exists in no-thing: only in theos alone" and yet also asserting toward the end not only that "if you are able to apprehend theos you can apprehend the beautiful and the noble." This is the ethos of a contemplative pagan, and a cultured, mysticism that seems to have been much neglected.

Notes

[1] Myatt, David. *Concerning ἀγαθός and νοῦς in the Corpus Hermeticum*.

[2] Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales, LXXI, 4.

[3] In *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*, Marcus Tullius Cicero, in criticizing Epicurus and others, presents his view of Summum Bonum: that honestum (honourable conduct) is its foundation and that it can be discerned by careful consideration (ratio) in conjunction with that knowing (scientia) of what is divine and what is mortal that has been described as wisdom (sapientia).

aequam igitur pronuntiabit sententiam ratio adhibita primum divinarum humanarumque rerum scientia, quae potest appellari rite sapientia, deinde adiunctis virtutibus, quas ratio rerum omnium dominas, tu voluptatum satellites et ministras esse voluisti. (II, 37)

He then writes that honestum does not depend on any personal benefit (omni utilitate) that may result or be expected but instead can be discerned by means of consensus among the whole community in combination with the example afforded by the honourable actions and motives of the finest of individuals.

Honestum igitur id intellegimus, quod tale est, ut detracta omni utilitate sine ullis praemiis fructibusve per se ipsum possit iure laudari. quod quale sit, non tam definitione, qua sum usus, intellegi potest, quamquam aliquantum potest, quam communi omnium iudicio et optimi cuiusque studiis atque factis, qui permulta ob eam unam causam faciunt, quia decet, quia rectum, quia honestum est, etsi nullum consecuturum emolumentum vident. (II, 45f)

In effect, Summum Bonum - what the Greeks termed τὸ ἀγαθόν - depends on certain personal qualities such as a careful consideration of a matter; on a personal knowing of what is divine and what is mortal; on the example of personal noble deeds and motives, and on a communal consensus.

There is therefore nothing morally abstract or dogmatic about Cicero's understanding of Summum Bonum which so well expresses, as does Seneca, the

Greco-Roman view, with a perhaps more apt translation of the term Summum Bonum thus being "the highest nobility."

Translation

[1] Asclepius, the noble exists in no-thing: only in theos alone; indeed, theos is, of himself and always, what is noble. If so, then it can only be the quidditas of all changement and of geniture since nothing is deserted by it but has about itself a stability of vigour, neither excessive nor lacking, a replenishable provider, there at the origin of all things. When saying the provider to all-things is noble, that nobility always exists, an attribute of theos alone and of no one else.

He is not in need of anything since for him to desire something would be bad. Nothing that has come into being is lost to him, for such loss would be vexing with vexation a division of badness. Nothing is superior to him so as to be an enemy, nor is there a partner who might harm him through him having a passionate desire. Nor any-thing so unheeding of him that he becomes enraged; nor anyone of better judgement to be jealous of.

[2] Because none of those have being in his quidditas then only nobility is left, and since nothing of what is bad is in that quidditas then nothing of what is noble will be found in those other things, since, in all others be they big or small, those things exist, in each of them and also in that living being which is bigger and mightier than them all. For what is begotten is replete with physicality with breeding itself being physical. Yet where physicality is, nobility is not, and where nobility is there is no physicality just as when there is night there is no day. It is impracticable regarding breeding for nobility to be there for that is only of what is not begotten.

But as substance has been assigned to partake of all being so it does of nobility which is how Kosmos has nobility because of the construction done regarding all things, even though not noble in other ways since there is physicality, and changement: the construction of the physical.

[3] In mortals, the noble are arrayed to compare with the bad, for in this place those not especially bad are the noble given that in this place nobility has the smallest portion of the bad. But it is impractical in this place to refine the noble from the bad, for in this place the noble deteriorate and, deteriorating, become

rotten and no longer noble. Thus the noble is of theos alone or rather it is theos who is the noble one.

Thus it is, Asclepius, that among mortals they are noble in name only and not in the matter itself for that would be impracticable since the physical body cannot hold on to it, restrained on all sides as it is by badness, by toil, by grief, by desire, by rage, by dishonesty, and by unreasonable opinions; and, Asclepius, most ignoble of all, in this place each such thing is believed to be most noble even though unsurpassably bad.

The mistake, the patron of all things rotten, is the absence in this place of nobility.

[4] For myself, I am beholden to theos who has directed my perceivation toward a knowing of nobility; that it is impracticable for it to be in this world replete as it is with badness just as it is with the nobility of theos or as theos is with nobility.

For the eminence of the beautiful is around that quidditas so perhaps revealing that quiddity as certainly unmixed and most refined, and I venture to say, Asclepius, that the quidditas of theos - if he has quidditas - is the beautiful and yet the beautiful and the noble cannot be discerned in the things of the world for everything exposed to the eye are as tenuous depictions, and what is not exposed to it, particularly the beautiful and the noble <...> and since the eye is unable to perceive theos so it is with the beautiful and the noble. For they are intrinsically part of theos, of him alone, belonging to him, unseverable, most fair; loved by theos or by those who love theos.

[5] If you are able to apprehend theos you can apprehend the beautiful and the noble, the exceptionally radiant, but a radiance surpassed by theos, and with that beauty unequalled with the noble defying imitation, as it is with theos. Such is the apprehension of theos, and thus is there an apprehension of the beautiful and of the noble, and since they are inseparable from theos they cannot be shared among other living beings. Thus a quest for theos is a quest for the beautiful, and there is only one path there: an awareness of the numinous combined with knowledge.

[6] Yet those who do not apprehend, who do not follow the path of awareness of the numinous, have the effrontery to declare that mortals are beautiful and noble even though they have not observed, and have no semblance of, what the noble is. Believing that what is bad is noble, they are subsumed by every badness and, thus glutted with it, are fearful of being robbed of it so that they in whatever way fight to not only keep it but to increase it.

Such are, Asclepius, for mortals the beautiful and the noble and from which we are unable to flee or despise. But what is most grievous to bear is that we are unable to live without them.

Commentary

Title.

Ὅτι ἐν μόνῳ θεῷ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐστὶν ἀλλαχόθι δὲ οὐδαμοῦ. That In The Theos Alone Is Nobility And Not Anywhere Else.

The consensus is that the title is not original and was added by some scribe.

1.

The noble. τὸ ἀγαθὸν. As mentioned in the Introduction, I translate ἀγαθός not as some abstract (impersonal) and disputable 'good' but as, and according to context, nobility, noble, honourable.

no-thing. In respect of ἐν οὐδενί ἐστιν I have here (and occasionally elsewhere) used 'no-thing' - "no entity of any kind" - instead of 'nothing' or 'naught' to emphasize the ontological nature of what is expressed. In addition, as often in the Corpus Hermeticum, what is transliterated here as 'theos' - and by others translated as 'god' - can be taken literally to refer to 'the theos', 'the deity'.

...theos is, of himself and always, what is noble. The suggestion of the first sentence seems to be that 'the theos' is the origin of what is noble, and thus the origin of nobility, and that only through and because of theos can what is noble be presenced and recognized for what it is, and often recognized by those who are, or that which is, an eikon of theos. Hence why in tractate IV it is said that "the eikon will guide you,"; why in tractate XI that "Kosmos is the eikon of theos, Kosmos [the eikon] of Aion, the Sun [the eikon] of Aion, and the Sun [the eikon] of mortals," and why in the same tractate it is said that "there is nothing that cannot be an eikon of theos," and why in Poemandres 31 theos is said to "engender all physis as eikon."

then it... Referring to "what is noble".

quidditas. οὐσία. Here, a more appropriate translation of οὐσία - instead of 'essence' or 'substance' - is quidditas, as in tractate XI:2: "it is as if the quidditas of theos is actuality, honour, the beautiful..."

As I noted in my commentary on XI:2,

Quidditas – post-classical Latin, from whence the English word quiddity – is more appropriate here, in respect of οὐσία, than essence, especially as 'essence' now has so many non-philosophical and modern connotations. Quidditas is thus a philosophical term which requires contextual interpretation. In respect of οὐσία, qv. Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015a:

ἐκ δὴ τῶν εἰρημένων ἡ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἡ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὕλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικῇ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐνυπάρχουσά πως ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ.

Given the foregoing, then principally – and to be exact – physis denotes the quidditas of beings having changeament inherent within them; for substantia has been denoted by physis because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changeaments predicated on it. For physis is inherent changeament either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.

One interpretation of quidditas here is 'the being of that being/entity', with such quidditas often presenced in - and perceived via or as - physis.

changeament...geniture. κινήσεως καὶ γενέσεως. cf. tractate XI:2 and my note above regarding οὐσία. As mentioned in my commentary on XI:2, "the unusual English word geniture expresses the meaning of γένεσις here: that which or those whom have their genesis (and their subsequent development) from or because of something else or because of someone else."

nothing that has come into being. In respect of τῶν ὄντων οὐδέν, cf. Aristotle, Metaphysics, 191a27f: φασιν οὔτε γίνεσθαι τῶν ὄντων οὐδέν οὔτε φθείρεσθαι, διὰ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον μὲν εἶναι γίνεσθαι τὸ γιγνόμενον ἢ ἐξ ὄντος ἢ ἐκ μὴ ὄντος.

lost. ἀπόλλυμι. qv. the title of tractate VIII, and my note regarding it.

bad...badness. κακός, κακίας. As with ἀγαθός not some moral impersonal disputable abstraction - in this case 'evil' - but the personal sense of some-thing or someone being bad, rotten, ignoble.

a partner who might harm him. Literally, "a partner to be harmed by." The exact nature of this partnership is not specified, although the following καὶ διὰ τοῦτο αὐτοῦ ἐρασθήσεται indicates a certain scenario. I have omitted the editorial emendation of οὔτε κάλλιον - "nothing is as beautiful."

nothing of what is bad. Reading κακῶν with the MSS and not the emendation ἄλλων.

physicality. Given the context - ἐν τοῖς καθ' ἐν καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ ζῶντι τῷ πάντων μείζονι καὶ δυνατωτάτῳ - here πάθος, παθῶν, παθητῆς suggest a physicality, a physical actuality/occurrence, which the English word 'passion', with its often implicit anthropomorphism, does not quite express.

The author, in these first two sections, is making a distinction between their hermetic concept of theos and other living beings, especially mortals; of theos as detached from all those things - such as physicality, jealousy, anger - which mortals are subject to and with theos as described here is thus not only very different from the vengeful, angry, Jehovah of the Old Testament but also quite similar to, if not in perhaps some manner based on, the Hellenic concept as mentioned by Aristotle:

ὥστε ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐνέργεια, μακαριότητι διαφέρουσα, θεωρητικὴ ἂν εἴη:
καὶ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων δὴ ἡ ταύτη συγγενεστάτη εὐδαιμονικωτάτη.
σημεῖον δὲ καὶ τὸ μὴ μετέχειν τὰ λοιπὰ ζῶα εὐδαιμονίας.
Nicomachean Ethics (Book X) 1178b.22

Therefore the activity of theos, excelling others in bliss, is wordless-awareness [θεωρέω] and the nearest thing to that among mortals arises from good-fortune [εὐδαιμονία].

construction. cf. tractate II, ὁ οὖν θεὸς <τὸ> ἀγαθόν, καὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ὁ θεός. ἡ δὲ ἑτέρα προσηγορία ἐστὶν ἡ τοῦ πατρός, πάλιν διὰ τὸ ποιητικὸν πάντων. πατρὸς γὰρ τὸ ποιεῖν. (Thus theos is the noble and the noble is theos, although another title is that of father because the artifex of all being. For it is of a father to construct.)

not noble in other ways. That is, while Kosmos - qv. tractate XI for what or who this Kosmos may be - has nobility by the act of construction, of forming substance into beings, because some of those beings possess physicality then Kosmos unlike theos is not completely noble.

3.

in this place. I incline toward the view that ἐνθάδε here does not refer, as some have conjectured, to "here below" (qv. Plato, Gorgias, 525b: ὅμως δὲ δι' ἀλγηδόνων καὶ ὀδυνῶν γίνεται αὐτοῖς ἡ ὠφελία καὶ ἐνθάδε καὶ ἐν Ἄιδου) but rather just to "this place, here."

refine. καθαροῖς. cf. Poemandres 10, and 22. As I noted in my commentary on Poemandres 22:

Literally [καθαροῖς] means 'physically clean', often in the sense of being in a state of ritual purification: qv. the inscription on one of the ancient tablets (totenpasse) found in Thurii - ἔρχομαι ἐκ καθαρῶν καθαρὰ χθονίων βασίλεια ("in arrivance, purified from the purified, mistress of the chthonic"). Since the English word 'pure' is unsuitable given its connotations - religious, sanctimonious, political, and otherwise - I have opted for the not altogether satisfactory 'refined'.

Here however, the choice of refine seems apposite, given the text:

ἀδύνατον οὖν τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐνθάδε καθαρεύειν τῆς κακίας

It is impractical in this place to refine the noble from the bad

This makes perfect (and practical) sense, in contrast to the fairly recent, conventional, and somewhat moralistic translation of Copenhaver: "the good cannot be cleansed of vice here below."

Interestingly, the Greek word καθαροῖς formed the basis for the relatively modern (c.1803) English term 'catharsis'.

physical body. cf. Poemandres 24: ἐν τῇ ἀναλύσει τοῦ σώματος τοῦ ὑλικοῦ παραδίδως αὐτὸ τὸ σῶμα εἰς ἀλλοίωσιν (the dissolution of the physical body allows that body to be transformed).

restrained on all sides. παντόθεν ἐσφιγμένον.

each such thing. This might well be a reference to "restrained on all sides as it is by badness" - to bad things in general - and not to the immediately preceding "toil, grief, desire, rage, dishonesty, and unreasonable opinion."

the patron of all things rotten. I have omitted the very odd reference to "gluttony" - ἡ γαστριμαργία - which follows τὸ μᾶλλον ἀνυπερβλήτον κακόν, as in all probability it is a gloss. Nock, in his text, indicates a lacuna between the following χορηγὸς and ἡ πλάνη.

If the reference to gluttony is not omitted then a possible interpretation of the text would be: "Gluttony is the patron of all things rotten <...> the mistake in this place is the absence of nobility."

4.

or as theos is with nobility. In order to try and express in English something of the meaning of the Greek - and to avoid repeating "replete" (πλήρωμά), which repetition is not in the Greek text - I have slightly amended the word order. Nock indicates a lacuna between ἀγαθὸν τοῦ θεοῦ and αἱ γὰρ ἔξοχαί. The

transition between "replete with" and "the beautiful" is certainly abrupt.

For the eminence of the beautiful is around that quidditas. Although the Greek text here is rather obscure and various emendations have been proposed - none of which are entirely satisfactory - the general sense, of the beautiful surrounding or being near to the quidditas (οὐσία) of theos, seems clear.

tenuous depictions. The Greek words εἶδωλον and σκιαγραφία require careful consideration if one is not to read into the text philosophical meanings from other ancient authors which may not be relevant here, as might be the case in respect of εἶδωλον if one chose the word 'image'. In addition, if the English word chosen has other, perhaps more modern, associations then there may well be a 'retrospective re-interpretation' of the text, reading into it a meaning or meanings which also might not be relevant, as might be the case in respect of εἶδωλον if one chose 'phantom' given what that word now often imputes. Hence I have chosen 'tenuous' and 'depiction' respectively.

particularly the beautiful and the noble. Some text is missing in the MSS so that what follows οὐδὲ τὸ καλὸν καὶ τὸ ἀγαθόν unfortunately remains unknown.

5.

quest. The sense of ζητέω here is more than that of a simple 'inquiry' or an 'asking'. It is to 'seek after' something with an earnest purpose, as in Matthew 2:13 where there is a desire by Herod to seek out and kill the infant Jesus:

Ἀναχωρησάντων δὲ αὐτῶν ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος κυρίου φαίνεται κατ' ὄναρ
τῷ Ἰωσήφ λέγων· ἐγερθεὶς παράλαβε τὸ παιδίον καὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ
καὶ φεῦγε εἰς Αἴγυπτον καὶ ἴσθι ἐκεῖ ἕως ἄν εἴπω σοι· μέλλει γὰρ
Ἡρώδης ζητεῖν τὸ παιδίον τοῦ ἀπολέσαι αὐτό.

awareness of the numinous. As I noted in my commentary on Poemandres 22:

As with ὁσίους, εὐσεβέω is a difficult word to translate, given that most of the English alternatives - such as reverent, pious - have acquired, over centuries, particular religious meanings, often associated with Christianity or types of asceticism. The correct sense is 'aware of the numinous', and thus imbued with that sense of duty, that sense of humility - or rather, an awareness of their human limitations - which makes them appreciate and respect the numinous in whatever form, way, or manner they appreciate, feel, intuit, apprehend, or understand, the numinous, be it in terms of the gods, the god, Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες, God, or whatever. It is this awareness which inclines a person toward 'respectful deeds'.

6.

semblance. Here, ὄναρ suggests 'semblance' rather than 'dream'.

ooo

Appendix

Concerning Personal Pronouns

Regarding the interpretation of ancient texts - of translating an ancient language into English - there is the matter of personal pronouns with the convention being to default to the masculine singular (Man, his, he) even when the gender is not specified but only assumed, as in the matter of θεός in the sixth tractate where unlike some other tractates (such as Poemandres and tractate VIII) the term πατήρ does not occur.

Thus, conventionally defaulting to the masculine singular in sections 12 and 13 of tractate XI of the Corpus Hermeticum - based on the assumption that the MS reading ἄρχων καὶ ἡγέμων [1] and the title πρόδρομος refer to a man - one translates as:

He creates all things [...] If it is demonstrated that no one really exists without producing something how much more so for theos? If there is anything he has not created then - although it is not the custom to say this - he is incomplete, while if theos is complete and not otiose then he creates all things. [2]

πάντα οὖν αὐτὸς ποιεῖ [...] εἰ γὰρ ἀποδέδεικται μηδὲν δυνάμενον εἶναι, πόσω μᾶλλον ὁ θεός; εἰ γὰρ τί ἐστὶν ὃ μὴ ποιεῖ, ὃ μὴ θέμις εἰπεῖν, ἀτελής ἐστίν· εἰ δὲ μήτε ἀργός ἐστι, τέλειος δέ, ἄρα πάντα ποιεῖ.

However, if one uses the plural - non-gender specific - "they" as a personal pronoun then one has:

"They create all things [...] If it is demonstrated that no one really exists without producing something how much more so for theos? If there is anything they have not created then - although it is not the custom to say this - they are incomplete, while if theos is complete and not otiose then they create all things."

Which somewhat changes the meaning and is perhaps confusing for some, although the non-literal alternatives of "the theos" or "the divinity" are rather cumbersome:

"The divinity creates all things [...] If it is demonstrated that no one really exists without producing something how much more so for the divinity? If there is anything the divinity has not created then - although it is not the custom to say this - the divinity is incomplete, while if the divinity is complete and not otiose then the divinity creates all things."

An alternative would be the neutral if even more cumbersome phrase "that Being":

"That Being creates all things [...] If it is demonstrated that no one really exists without producing something how much more so for that Being? If there is anything that Being has not created then - although it is not the custom to say this - that Being is incomplete, while if that Being is complete and not otiose then that Being creates all things."

As I noted in my commentary on the phrase ἀναγνωρίσας ἑαυτὸν in the Poemandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, given that in that tractate theos is not only referred to using the ancient honorific πατήρ [3] but also described as ἀρρενόθηλος, as both male and female:

"here, as often elsewhere, I have gone against convention (grammatical and otherwise) by, where possible, choosing neutral personal pronouns, thus avoiding sentences such as "And he who has self-knowledge..." This sometimes results in using third person plural pronouns - such as 'their' and 'they' - as if they were personal pronouns, or using constructs such as "the one of self-knowledge" or "whoever has self-knowledge". [2]

While I have in my translation here of tractate six used the conventional default of the masculine singular pronoun it might be an interesting exercise for those interested to provide a version using, where appropriate, gender-neutral personal pronouns, which undoubtedly would result in an interpretation of the text quite different from other translations available, my own included.

ooo

[1] Nock - *Corpus Hermeticum*, Third Edition, 1972 - has the emendation ἄρχοντος καὶ ἡγεμόνος.

[2] Myatt, *Corpus Hermeticum I, III, IV, VIII, XI*. 2017.

[3] cf. τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν φώτων (Epistle of James, I, 17), "the father of phaos". In respect of phaos, qv. Poemandres 4-6; tractate III, 1 (φῶς ἅγιον), and tractate XI, 7.

**Ὅτι οὐδὲν τῶν ὄντων ἀπόλλυται
ἀλλὰ τὰς μεταβολὰς ἀπωλείας καὶ θανάτους πλανώμενοι λέγουσιν**

That no beings are lost,
despite mortals mistakenly claiming that such transformations are death and a loss.

Tractate VIII

ooo

Introduction

The eighth tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, concise as it is, provides an interesting summary of some of the tenets of the Hermetic weltanschauung. As, for example, in the mention of a first being (the primary theos) and of a second being (a theos) who is an eikon (εἰκὼν) of the first, and which first being - theos - is the artisan of all beings; and as, for example, in the mention of mortals having a natural empathy (συμπάθεια) with this eikon, this second being, who is identified as κόσμος, with κόσμος understood here, as in tractate XI, either as a personification, as a divinity, the theos - a deathless living being, ζῶον ἄθνατον - who is the living cosmic order, or, as in the Poemandres tractate as simply referring in an impersonal manner to 'the cosmic order' itself.

While most other translators have opted here, as in other tractates, to translate κόσμος as cosmos (which English term suggests that the physical universe is meant) I incline toward the view that here - as in tractate XI - a divinity is meant, especially given how κόσμος is described: as "a second theos and a deathless living being," and as an eikon of the primary theos.

There are certain parallels with tractate XI and in which tractate it is stated that "Kosmos is the eikon of theos, Kosmos that of Aion, the Sun that of Aion, and mortals that of the Sun. It is said that changement is death since the body disintegrates with life departing to the unperceptible," (section 15) and, in section 14, that "Life is the enosis of perceiverance and psyche, while death is not the loss of what was joined but the end of enosis."

What therefore emerges from this, the eighth, tractate are two things: how we mortals are part of, and connected to, Kosmos and thence - since Kosmos is an eikon - to the first, the primary, theos, and how diverse the Hermetic weltanschauung is in respect of some details while nevertheless retaining an

underlying ethos.

ooo

Translation

[1] It is regarding psyche and the corporeal that, my son, we now must speak: of why psyche is deathless and how its vigour assembles and separates the corporeal. For there is no death of what-is, only an apprehension grounded in the denotatum 'deathless', either through unavailing toil or, by discarding the important part, that what is called deathless is deathful. That is, for the deathful there is a loss. But nothing of the Kosmos is ever lost, for if Kosmos is a second theos and a deathless living being then it is not possible for any portion of such a deathless living being to be lost since all beings of Kosmos are part of Kosmos, as most certainly are mortals, the noetic living being.

[2] In truth, the first is theos; the eternal, unborn. The second was engendered from, nurtured by, that being and rendered deathless and eikon of that being, as by an everlasting father, never-dying because deathless.

For never-dying is unlike everlasting. For that one was not a bringing-into-being by another although if there was a bringing-into-being it was his own bringing-into-being since he is always a bringing-into-being. For the everlasting - because it is everlasting - is all that is, with the father everlasting because of himself while Kosmos became everlasting and deathless because of the father.

[3] And the father endowed such substance as he gathered, extending it all to create something spherical, conferring upon it a particular quality, deathless and of substance everlasting. Having seeded such qualities and replete with semblances, the father enclosed them in the sphere as if in a cavern. His deliberation was to equip with each quality what would follow; to encompass with deathlessness everything corporeal so that substance would not by thesis be separated from that bringing-together to thereby dissolve into its own disorder.

For when, my son, substance was incorporeal it was disordered even though that was restricted to other smaller qualities, to the kind of increase and decrease that mortals name death.

[4] For such disorder occurs with earthly-living beings, with celestial beings having one order allotted to them by the father from the beginning and maintained from disintegration by the periodicity of each of them, while the periodicity of earthly living beings is of a separation of their bringing together

and of the indissoluble corporeal; that is, of the deathless. Thus there is the loss of those influencing impressions and not the destruction of what is embodied.

[5] Now, as to the third living being, mortals, brought-into-being as eikon of Kosmos and who, because of the deliberations of the father and beyond the other living beings on Earth, have perceivance and also empathy with the second theos and perception of the first.

For of the one there is apprehension as of the corporeal, while of the other there is an influencing impression as of the incorporeal and as of a noble perceivance.

Then this life is not lost?

Speak softly, my son, and apprehend who theos is, who Kosmos is, what a deathless living being is, what a dissoluble living being is, and apprehend also that Kosmos is of theos and within theos and that mortals are of Kosmos and within Kosmos and thus that theos is the origin of, encompasses, and constitutes, everything.

ooo

Commentary

Title.

lost. ἀπόλλυμι. Lost, rather than 'destroyed' or 'perished'. They are not 'lost' because beings - entities/things - once brought-into-being - are still emanations of Being, of theos, even if their presencing, their form, is changed, transformed, morphed, as happens for example with those mortals who, via the anados mentioned in the Poemandres tractate, go beyond the seven spheres to, and then beyond, the ogdoadic physis.

1.

corporeal. σῶμα. Here, the context - qv. for example the following τῶν γὰρ οὐρανίων τὰ σώματα μίαν τάξιν ἔχει in section 4 and τοῦ δὲ ἔννοιαν λαμβάνει ὡς ἀσωμάτου καὶ νοῦ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ in section 5 - suggests corporeal rather than a literal body. A subtle distinction, between "of the nature of matter" and a specific type of "physical body". Compare also the fourth tractate: ἀεὶ ὄντος καὶ

πάντα ποιήσαντος καὶ ἐνὸς μόνου, τῇ δὲ αὐτοῦ θελήσει δημιουργήσαντος τὰ ὄντα· τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστὶ τὸ σῶμα ἐκείνου, οὐχ ἄπτόν, οὐδὲ ὁρατόν, οὐδὲ μετρητόν, οὐδὲ διαστατόν, οὐδὲ ἄλλω τινὶ σώματι ὅμοιον.

vigour. ἐνέργεια. qv. Poemandres 14, tractate XI: 2, etcetera.

assembles. σύστασις. cf. Euripides, *Andromache*, 1088: τοῦθ' ὑποπτον ἦν ἄρ' ἐς δὲ συστάσεις κύκλους τ' ἐχώρει λαὸς οἰκίτωρ θεοῦ.

In Poemandres 10 it is mentioned how "the logos of theos bounded to the fine artisements of Physis and joined with the perceiviation of that artisan." Thus a theme shared by several tractates is how the various 'artisans' of theos - and theos - skillfully craft beings from Being, as in tractate IV, Chaldron or Monas:

Ἐπειδὴ τὸν πάντα κόσμον ἐποίησεν ὁ δημιουργός οὐ χερσὶν ἀλλὰ λόγῳ ὥστε οὕτως ὑπολάμβανε ὡς τοῦ παρόντος καὶ αἰεὶ ὄντος καὶ πάντα ποιήσαντος καὶ ἐνὸς μόνου τῇ δὲ αὐτοῦ θελήσει δημιουργήσαντος τὰ ὄντα

Because the artisan crafted the complete cosmic order not by hand but through Logos, you should understand that Being as presential, as eternal, as having crafted all being, as One only, who by theosis formed all that is.

apprehension. νόημα. cf. Poemandres 3, "I seek to learn what is real, to apprehend the physis of beings."

denotatum. For προσηγορία. In this case, the denotatum - the naming - is the word 'deathless'.

or by discarding the important part [...] what is called deathless is deathful. ἢ κατὰ στέρησιν τοῦ πρώτου γράμματος λεγόμενος θάνατος ἀντὶ τοῦ ἀθάνατος. Literally, "by discarding the first letter it is called θάνατος [deathful] instead of ἀθάνατος [deathless].

Regarding τοῦ πρώτου γράμματος, what seems to be implied is that the mortal apprehension of 'deathless' does not include the most important - the correct - apprehension regarding death, which correct apprehension is explained by what follows.

Kosmos. κόσμος. As at Poemandres 7, κόσμος carries with it the suggestion that the cosmos is an ordered structure. However, here I construe κόσμος, as in tractate XI, as a divinity, the theos who is the living, deathless, cosmic order.

the noetic living being. τὸ λογικὸν ζῶον. The word λογικός imputes the sense of both the faculty of speech and the faculty of thought, something well-expressed by Sophocles: φθέγμα καὶ ἀνεμόεν φρόνημα καὶ ἀστυνόμους ὀργὰς ἐδιδάξατο

καὶ δυσαύλων πάγων ὑπαίθρεια καὶ δύσομβρα φεύγειν βέλη παντοπόρος,
(Antigone, 355f).

2.

artisan of all beings. In respect of artisan (δημιουργόν) cf. Poemandres 9, and tractate IV: 1. Regarding "of all beings", cf. Poemandres 31, ὁ πατήρ τῶν ὅλων.

eikon. εἰκὼν, qv. Poemandres 21 and 31, and tractate XI:15. Thus the suggestion is that is this eikon represents - presences, manifests - theos, the artisan.

never-dying...everlasting. In order to try and express the dissimilarity between ἀείζωος and αἰδῖος I have translated the former as never-dying (a sense suggested by ἀείζων ὡς ἀθάνατος) and the latter as everlasting, a dissimilarity that is not immediately apparent from translations such as "the everliving is different from the eternal."

That one. Referring to 'the first' who engendered Kosmos as eikon.

not a bringing-into-being by another ... always a bringing-into-being. The text - with its repetition of ἐγένετο - is somewhat obscure, and various emendations have been proposed, none of which are entirely satisfactory. The sense seems to be of "that one" - the first - always having been, and is, and always will be, "a coming-into-being".

3.

such substance ... particular quality. The text is quite obscure and several emendations have been suggested, with Nock indicating that some text may be missing after τῷ ἑαυτοῦ, although ὑπ' αὐτόν seems reasonable. Any translation - whatever emendation is accepted - is conjectural.

The sphere may refer to Kosmos, cf. Poemandres 9,

"Theos, the perceivation, male-and-female, being Life and phaos, whose logos brought forth another perceivation, an artisan, who - theos of Fire and pneuma - fashioned seven viziers to surround the perceptible cosmic order in spheres and whose administration is described as fate."

The suggestion might thus be that these seven spheres are themselves enclosed within a sphere, which might explain Poemandres 13-14, "Having fully learned their essence, and having partaken of their physis, he was determined to burst out past the limit of those spheres [and] with full authority over the ordered

cosmos of humans and of beings devoid of logos, he burst through the strength of the spheres to thus reveal to those of downward physis the beautiful image of theos."

substance. ὕλη, qv. Poemandres 19, tractate III:1, tractate XI:3.

create. ποιέω, qv. tractate XI:5

semblances. Does ἰδέα here equate with the concept of 'form' as described by Plato? The consensus is that it does, even though such an assumption imposes a specific philosophical meaning on the text and even though the cosmogonic context - of the living Kosmos as eikon, of Kosmos made deathless by the father, and of theos, the father, conferring upon the sphere a particular quality - does not seem to support such an abstract, definite, concept. Thus, to avoid imposing a very particular meaning on the text, and given that the hermeticism described in this and in the other tractates represent varied weltanschauungen (albeit having a similar underlying ethos) rather than one well-defined philosophy, I have translated not as 'forms' but as semblances.

as if in a cavern. Does this refer to Plato's allegory of the cave, as so many seem to have assumed? Probably not, since - to give just one example - in the Βιβλιοθήκη of Pseudo-Apollodorus - written around the same time as this tractate - ἐν ἄντρῳ refers to a cave, or cavern, in which Maia, one of the seven Pleiades, gave birth to Hermes: Μαῖα μὲν οὖν ἡ πρεσβυτάτη Διὶ συνελθοῦσα ἐν ἄντρῳ τῆς Κυλλήνης Ἑρμῆν τίκτει. οὗτος ἐν σπαργάνοις ἐπὶ τοῦ λίκνου κείμενος.

deliberation. qv. Poemandres 8. As with the preceding *such substance ... particular quality*, the text here is quite obscure, and any translation - whatever emendation is accepted - is conjectural.

thelesis. θέλησις, qv. tractate IV:1. As noted in the commentary there, a transliteration to suggest something more metaphysical than a human type wish or desire. Such as that the physis - the being - of substance (ὕλη) might be such that without the intervention of theos it might naturally dissolve into disorderliness (ἀταξία).

4.

one order allotted to them. That is, celestial beings - those resident in and of the heavens - have a particular order distinct from that of ordinary mortals, but which order mortals can, via an anados such as described in the Poemandres tractate, journey to, discover, and become a part of.

the periodicity of earthly living beings is of a separation of their bringing together and of the indissoluble corporeal. While the periodicity of celestial beings is unchanging and is maintained from disintegration, the periodicity of

mortals is varied and involves the cycle, the separation, of life and death and yet also involves the reality of death not being an end - since what is deathless, the indissoluble part of what is corporeal, cannot suffer from disintegration.

influencing impressions. αἰσθήσεις. qv. Poemandres 22, and my commentary thereon, for what is meant is not simply 'the [bodily] senses' nor what is perceptible to or perceived by the senses but rather those particular impressions, conveyed by the senses, which may influence a person in a particular way.

what is embodied. The indissoluble part of what is apprehended as corporeal.

5.

perceiverance. νοῦς. Not 'mind', qv. Poemandres 2, tractate III:1, etcetera. As noted in my commentary on Poemandres 2:

I incline toward the view that the sense of the word νοῦς here, as often in classical literature, is perceiverance; that is, a particular type of astute awareness, as of one's surroundings, of one's self, and as in understanding ('reading') a situation often in an instinctive way. Thus, what is not meant is some-thing termed 'mind' (or some faculty thereof), distinguished as this abstract 'thing' termed 'mind' has often been from another entity termed 'the body'.

Perceiverance thus describes the ability to sense, to perceive, when something may be amiss; and hence also of the Greek word implying resolve, purpose, because one had decided on a particular course of action, or because one's awareness of a situation impels or directs one to a particular course of action.

empathy. συμπάθεια.

perception. cf. Poemandres 18. An apprehension of the numinous, and thus of theos, of Kosmos as eikon, and so on.

there is an influencing impression as of the incorporeal and of a noble perceiverance. This refers to 'the first', to theos, the father; with the preceding "apprehension as of the corporeal" referring to 'the second', that is, to Kosmos.

Regarding ἀγαθός as 'noble/nobility', qv. my commentary on Poemandres 22. and especially the commentary on φανερώτερα δέ ἐστι τὰ κακά τὸ δὲ ἀγαθὸν ἄφανές τοῖς φανεροῖς in tractate IV:9.

Thus theos is apprehended - understood, felt - in the same, mystical, numinous, way not only as the incorporeal is, but also as inherently noble.

Speak softly. εὐφήμησον. qv tractate XI:22.

(Kosmos is ...) within theos. ἐν τῷ θεῷ. Literally, 'within the theos'.

Νοῦς πρὸς Ἑρμῆν

From Perceivance To Hermes

Tractate XI

The eleventh tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum is particularly interesting for two reasons. First, the cosmogony in which Aion, Kronos, and Sophia feature. Second, possible links to the Poemandres tractate, given - for example - the mention of a septenary system and the supposition that Perceivance - νοῦς - who addresses Hermes Trismegistus may well be Poemandres himself.

As with my translations of tractates I, III, and IV of the Corpus Hermeticum, I here transliterate certain Greek words, such as theos, in order to avoid what I have described as 'retrospective re-interpretation'.

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Translation

[1] Take account of this discourse, Hermes Trismegistus, remembering what is said for I shall not refrain from mentioning what occurs to me.

Because there is much difference among the many who speak about theos and all other things, I have not uncovered the actuality. Therefore, my Lord, make it unambiguous for me, for you are the one I trust in this.

[2] Hear then, my son, of theos and of everything: theos, Aion, Kronos, Kosmos, geniture. Theos brought Aion into being; Aion: Kosmos; Kosmos, Kronos; Kronos, geniture. It is as if the quidditas of theos is actuality, honour, the beautiful, good fortune, Sophia. Of Aion, identity; of Kosmos, arrangement; of Kronos, variation; of geniture, Life and Death.

The vigour of theos is perceivration and Psyche; but of Aion: continuance and exemption from death; of Kosmos, a cyclic return and renewal; of Kronos, growth and abatement; of geniture, capability. Aion, thus, is of theos; Kosmos of Aion; Kronos of Kosmos; and geniture of Kronos.

[3] The foundation of all being is theos; of their quidditas, Aion; of their substance, Kosmos. The craft of theos: Aion; the work of Aion: Kosmos, which is not just a coming-into-being but always is, from Aion. Thus it cannot be destroyed since Aion is not destroyable nor will Kosmos cease to be since Aion surrounds it.

But the Sophia of theos is what?

The noble, the beautiful, good fortune, arête, and Aion. From Aion to Kosmos: exemption from death, and continuance of substance.

[4] For that geniture depends on Aion just as Aion does on theos. Geniture and Kronos - in the heavens and on Earth - are jumelle; in the heavens, unchanging and undecaying; yet on Earth, changeable and decayable.

Theos is the psyche of Aion; Aion that of Kosmos; the heavens that of the Earth. Theos is presenced in perceivration, with perceivration presenced in psyche, and psyche in substance, with all of this through Aion, with the whole body, in which are all the bodies, replete with psyche with psyche replete with perceivration and with theos. Above in the heavens the identity is unchanged while on Earth there is changement coming-into-being

[5] Aion maintains this, through necessitas or through foreseeing or through physis, or through whatever other assumption we assume, for all this is the activity of theos. For the activity of theos is an unsurpassable crafting that no one can liken to anything mortal or divine.

Therefore, Hermes, never presume that what is above or below is similar to theos since you will descend down from actuality. For nothing is similar to that which, as the one and only, has no similitude. Never presume that he would delegate his work to someone else, for who else is the cause of life, of exemption from death, of Changement? What else but create?

Theos is not inactive for otherwise everything would be inactive; instead they are replete with theos, and there is nowhere in the cosmos nor anywhere else where there is inaction. Inactive is thus a vacant nomen in regard to a creator and what is brought into being.

[6] For every being there is a coming-into-being, each one in balance with its place, with the creator in all that exists, not found in just some nor creating only some but everything. His craft is in what he creates so that their coming-into

being is not independent of him but rather comes-into-being because of him.

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Correctly consider and observe Kosmos as suggested by me and thus the beauty thereof, a body undecayable and nothing more eldern and yet always vigorous and fresh, even more now than before.

[7] Observe also the septenary cosmos ordered in arrangement by Aion with its separate aeonic orbits. Everything replete with phaos but with no Fire anywhere. For fellowship, and the melding of opposites and the dissimilar, produced phaos shining forth in the activity of theos, progenitor of all that is honourable, archon and hegemon of the septenary cosmos.

The Moon, prodomus of all of those, an instrument of Physis, of the changement of the substance below - with the Earth amid them all, a settled foundation of the beautiful Kosmos - and nourisher and nurturer of those on Earth.

Consider also the numerous deathless, and just how many, as well as deathful lives there are. And amid both the deathless and the deathful, the travelling Moon.

[8] All are replete with psyche, all in motion, some around the heavens with others around the Earth, with those on the right not toward to the left and those on the left not toward the right, not those above to below nor below to above. That all have come-into-being you do not, dear Hermes, have to learn from me, for they have bodies, psyche, motion, and to meld them into one is not possible without someone to bring them together. Such a one must exist and be, in every way, a unity.

[9] For, given dissimilar objects, motion is different and diverse with one hastiness appointed to them all, and thus it is not possible for there to be two or more creators for if there are many then such an arrangement cannot be kept. For the result of many is strifeful emulation of the stronger, and if one of two was the creator of changeable mortal living beings they would covet creating deathless ones even as the creator of the deathless would deathful ones.

If indeed there were two with one substance and the other psyche who would provide the creations? If both of them, which would have the larger part?

[10] Consider that every living being, deathful and deathless, and whether devoid of logos, is formed of substance and psyche, for all living beings presence life while the non-living are substance only. Similarly, psyche of itself from its creator is the cause of the living while the cause of all life is the creator of deathless beings.

What then of the living that die and the deathless ones? For why does the deathless one who creates deathless beings not create other living beings so?

[11] It is evident someone is so creating and that he is One; for Psyche is one, Life is one, Substance is one.

But who is it?

Who could it be if not One, the theos? To whom if not to theos alone would it belong to presence life in living beings?

Theos therefore is One, for having accepted the Kosmos is one, the Sun is one, the Moon is one, and divinity-presenced is one, could you maintain that theos is some other number?

[12] He creates all beings, and how supreme it is for the theos to create life and psyche and the deathless and changement, with you doing so many things, for you see, hear, speak, smell, touch, walk, perceive, and breathe. Yet it is not someone else who is seeing and another who is hearing and another who is speaking and another who is touching and another who is hearing and another who is smelling and another who is walking and another who is perceiving and another who is breathing, but one being doing all such things.

None of which are separate from theos. Just as you are not really living if you are otiose so would theos, if otiose - and it is not the custom to say this - no longer be theos.

[13] If it is demonstrated that no one really exists without producing something how much more so for theos? If there is anything he has not created then - although it is not the custom to say this - he is incomplete, while if theos is complete and not otiose then he creates all things.

For a little longer, Hermes, give way to me and you will more readily apprehend that the work of theos is one: of everything brought-into-being; what is coming-into-being, what has come-into-being, and what will come-into-being. This, my friend, is Life; this is the beautiful, this is the noble; this is the theos.

[14] If you maintain this should be apprehended in deeds, consider when you seek to procreate, for it not the same for him since there is no delight, no colleague. Instead, a working alone, and forever working for he is what he creates. If ever isolated from it, everything would - because of Necessitas - fall apart, with everything dying because there would be no Life. But if everything is alive, and Life is One, then theos is One. While if everything is alive, and Life is One, then theos is One. Also, if everything is alive both in the heavens and on Earth and Life is One for them all as brought-into-being by theos and theos is that, then all are brought-into-being by theos.

Life is the enosis of perceiverance and psyche, while death is not the loss of

what was joined but the end of enosis.

[15] Kosmos is the eikon of theos, Kosmos that of Aion, the Sun that of Aion, and mortals that of the Sun. It is said that changelement is death since the body disintegrates with life departing to the unperceptible. My dear Hermes, while I state there is changelement in Kosmos because every day portions of it come-into-being in the unperceptible, it never disintegrates. These are the occurrences of the Kosmos, cyclicity and occultations; the cyclic a turning and occultation renewal.

[16] The Kosmos is polymorphous and forms are not imposed on it but rather, within itself, it is such changelement. Since the Kosmos is polymorphous who created it and who would that be? Whomsoever cannot be without-form and yet if polymorphous would be akin to Kosmos and if only one form would be lower than Kosmos.

What therefore can be said without confusion given that there should be no confusion concerning apprehending theos? If there is a kind then it is a singular kind, incorporeal, and not subject to perception but revealed through the corporeal.

[17] And do not wonder about an incorporeal kind since it is akin to words, mountains which appear in depictions to be rugged but which when examined are flat and smooth. So heed these words of mine bold as they are but honest, for as mortals cannot be separate from Life, theos cannot be separate from creating nobility since for theos this creating is Life and motion, the movement of everything and the giving of life.

[18] Some of the matters spoken of require a certain apprehension, so consider what I say: everything is in the theos but not as if lying in a particular place - since the place is a body and also immovable and what is lain does not move - but an incorporeal representation apprehends what is lain otherwise.

Thus apprehend what embraces everything and apprehend that the incorporeal has no boundary, that nothing is swifter, nothing as mighty, since the incorporeal is boundless, the swiftest, the mightiest.

[19] And apprehend this about yourself and so urge your psyche to go to any land and, swifter than that urging, it will be there. Likewise, urge it to go to the Ocean and again it will be swiftly there without passing from place to place but as if already there.

Urge it to go up into the heavens and it will be there without the need of any wings. Indeed, nothing will impede it: not the fire of the Sun nor Aether, nor the vortex, nor the bodies of the other stars, but - carving through them all - it will go as far as the furthest body. Should you desire to burst through The Entirety and observe what is beyond - if indeed there be anything beyond that ordered

system - then it is possible for you.

[20] Thus see how much might and swiftness you have. If you can do all those things then cannot theos? In such a manner you should consider theos as having all - Kosmos, The Entirety - as purposes within himself. For until you compare yourself with theos you cannot apprehend theos because what is similar can understand the similar.

Extend yourself greatly, immeasurably; leap beyond every body, surpass Kronos, become Aion, and you can apprehend theos. Having supposed that for you there is nothing that is not possible, regard yourself as deathless, capable of apprehending everything: every craft, all learning, the nature of every living being. Become elevated above every elevation, deeper than every depth. Gather within yourself awareness of every creation; of Fire and Water; the Dry and the Moist; and jointly be at all places on land, at sea, in the heavens. Be not yet born; in the womb; young; old; having died; what is beyond death.

And if you apprehend all that together - durations, places, occurrences, quality, quantity - you will be capable of apprehending theos.

[21] But if you enclose your psyche in your body and lessen it, saying "I comprehend nothing; have no power; fear the sea; am unable to go up into the heavens; do not know who I was and cannot know what I will be," then what is there with you and also with the god?

For, indulging the body and rotten, you are unable to apprehend the beautiful, the noble. To be completely rotten is to be unaware of the numinous, while having the ability to discover, to have volition, to have expectations, is the direct, the better - its own - way to nobility, and which you will encounter everywhere and which will everywhere be perceived whether you anticipate it or not: awake, asleep, at sea; whether journeying by night, by day, when speaking or when silent. For there is nothing that cannot be an eikon of theos.

[22] Do you affirm that theos is unperceived?

Speak softly. Who is more clearly revealed? He created everything such that in them you might discern him, for such is the nobility, such is the arête, of the theos, that he is revealed in everything. For nothing is unperceivable, not even the incorporeal, with perceivability evident through apprehension, theos through creation.

So Trismegistus, let what has been revealed so far be apprehended by you, and if you consider other things in the same way you will not be deceived.

Commentary

Title.

perceiverance. νοῦς. qv. my commentary on the term in Poemandres where I wrote:

"The conventional interpretation [of νοῦς] is 'mind', as if in contrast to 'the body' and/or as if some fixed philosophical and abstract principle is meant or implied.

This conventional interpretation is in my view incorrect, being another example of not only retrospective reinterpretation but of using a word which has acquired, over the past thousand years or more, certain meanings which detract from an understanding of the original text. Retrospective reinterpretation because the assumption is that what is being described is an axiomatic, reasoned, philosophy centred on ideations such as Thought, Mind, and Logos, rather than what it is: an attempt to describe, in fallible words, a personal intuition about our existence, our human nature, and which intuition is said to emanate from a supernatural being named Poemandres [...]

I incline toward the view that the sense of the word νοῦς here, as often in classical literature, is *perceiverance*; that is, a particular type of astute awareness, as of one's surroundings, of one's self, and as in understanding ('reading') a situation often in an instinctive way. Thus, what is not meant is some-thing termed 'mind' (or some faculty thereof), distinguished as this abstract 'thing' termed 'mind' has often been from another entity termed 'the body'.

Perceiverance thus describes the ability to sense, to perceive, when something may be amiss; and hence also of the Greek word implying resolve, purpose, because one had decided on a particular course of action, or because one's awareness of a situation impels or directs one to a particular course of action."

1.

The first paragraph of this section is spoken by Perceiverance [Νοῦς], the second by Hermes Trismegistus.

theos. As with my translations of tractates I, III, and IV of the Corpus

Hermeticum, I here transliterate θεός rather than translate as God (as most others do) which translation in my opinion imposes a particular and Christian interpretation on the text given two thousand years of Christian exegesis regarding both God and the Old and New Testaments. A suitable alternative to 'theos' might be 'the god', which emphasizes that the theos described in this tractate is, like Zeus in classical times, the pre-eminent divinity. Occasionally, when the text warrants it - for example τῷ θεῷ and εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός - I have used 'the theos' instead of theos.

I have not uncovered the actuality. ἐγὼ τὸ ἀληθές οὐκ ἔμαθον. I incline toward the view that the sense of ἀληθής here is not some abstract (disputable) 'truth' but rather of the reality, the actuality, beyond the conflicting views, beyond appearance, and thus of uncovering - of learning - the reality of theos and other things.

2.

Aion. αἰών. A transliteration since the usual translation of 'eternity' imposes modern (cosmological and theological) meanings on the text, especially as αἰών can also imply a personification of a 'divine being', and 'an age or era' of long duration, or the lifespan of a mortal (as in Herodotus: πρὶν τελευτήσαντα καλῶς τὸν αἰῶνα πύθωμαι, Book 1, 32.5). In Aristotle, αἰών has specific meanings which the English term 'eternity' does not describe. For instance, in Περὶ Οὐρανοῦ where he writes: Ὅτι μὲν οὖν οὔτε γέγονεν ὁ πᾶς οὐρανὸς οὔτ' ἐνδέχεται φθαρῆναι, καθάπερ τινὲς φασιν αὐτόν, ἀλλ' ἔστιν εἷς καὶ αἰδῖος, ἀρχὴν μὲν καὶ τελευτὴν οὐκ ἔχων τοῦ παντὸς αἰῶνος, ἔχων δὲ καὶ περιέχων ἐν αὐτῷ τὸν ἄπειρον χρόνον (Book 2, 1).

Which is somewhat echoed in this tractate in respect of Kosmos which is not just a coming-into-being but always just *is*, from Aion (γενόμενος οὔποτε καὶ ἀεὶ γινόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος).

Interestingly, Jung used the term to describe a particular archetype, one which provides "intimations of a kind of enantiodromian reversal of dominants" as he writes in his *Aion: Researches Into The Phenomenology Of The Self*.

In addition, αἰών - as with the following χρόνος - might well be a personification, or an esoteric/philosophical term or principle which requires interpretation, as might κόσμος (Kosmos). Since κόσμος here does not necessarily imply what we now understand, via sciences such as astronomy, as the physical cosmos/universe it seems inappropriate to translate it as 'the cosmos', especially given expressions such as οὐδὲ ἀπολεῖται τι τῶν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τοῦ κόσμου ὑπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος ἐμπεριεχομένου.

Kronos. χρόνος. For reasons I have explained many times in my writings (for instance in Appendix I), I do not translate χρόνος as 'time', which translation seems to me to impose a particular modern meaning on the text given that for

centuries the term 'time' has denoted a certain regularity (hours, minutes) measured by a mechanism such as a clock and given that the term 'duration' is usually more appropriate in relation to ancient Greek texts where the duration between, for example, the season of Summer and the season of Autumn was determined by the observations (the appearance in the night sky) of certain constellations and stars.

geniture. γένεσις. The unusual English word geniture expresses the meaning of γένεσις here: that which or those whom have their genesis (and their subsequent development) from or because of something else or because of someone else. Alongside χρόνος, αἰών, and κόσμος, here γένεσις could well be a personification.

It is as if the quidditas of theos is [...] τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ ὡςπερ οὐσία ἐστὶ... Quidditas - post-classical Latin, from whence the English word quiddity - is more appropriate here, in respect of οὐσία, than essence, especially as 'essence' now has so many non-philosophical and modern connotations. Quidditas is thus a philosophical term which requires contextual interpretation. In respect of οὐσία, qv. Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015a: ἐκ δὴ τῶν εἰρημένων ἡ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἢ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὕλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικῇ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστὶν, ἐνυπάρχουσά πως ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ. [Given the foregoing, then principally - and to be exact - physis denotes the quidditas of beings having change inherent within them; for substantia has been denoted by physis because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changes predicated on it. For physis is inherent change either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.]

In addition, I follow the MSS, which have τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, ἢ εὐδαιμονία.

honour. ἀγαθός. That is, the substance of theos - in mortals - is manifest in the brave, in nobility of character, in what being noble means. Regarding ἀγαθός as honour rather than some abstract, disputable 'good', qv. my commentary (i) on Poemandres 22 and (ii) on τὰ μὲν γὰρ φαινόμενα τέρπει [...] φανεροῖς in section 9 of Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς (tractate IV), and (iii) Appendix II and III.

good fortune. εὐδαιμονία.

Sophia. σοφία. A transliteration, because - just like ἀληθής - it is not necessarily here something abstract, something disputable, such as 'wisdom' or 'good judgement'. Just as with Aion and Kronos, it might be a personification or used here as an esoteric term which thus requires contextual interpretation.

identity...arrangement. ταυτότης...τάξις. An alternative for 'identity' would be

'form' (but not necessarily in the sense used by Plato and Aristotle) for the meaning seems to be that Aion provides the form, the identity, of beings with Kosmos arranging these forms into a particular order.

of Kronos, variation. See the note on Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015α, above.

vigour. ἐνέργεια. As at Poemandres 14, not 'energy' given that the word energy has too many modern connotations and thus distracts from the meaning here. See also the note on 'activity' in section 5 where 'activity' is a more perspicacious translation.

cyclic return and renewal. ἀποκατάστασις καὶ ἀνταποκατάστασις. I take this expression as implying something metaphysical rather than astronomical; an astronomical meaning as described, for example, in the Greek fragments of a book on astrology by Dorotheus of Sidon (qv. *Dorothei Sidonii carmen astrologicum. Interpretationem Arabicam in linguam Anglicam versam una cum Dorothei fragmentis et Graecis et Latinis*, edited by Pingree, Teubner, Leipzig, 1976).

For there is a similar metaphysical theme in Poemandres 17 - μέχρι περιόδου τέλους (cyclic until its completion) - with apokatastasis becoming (possibly as an echo of Greek Stoicism) a part of early Christian exegesis as exemplified by Gregory of Nyssa who wrote ἀνάστασις ἐστὶν ἡ εἰς τὸ ἀρχαῖον τῆς φύσεως ἡμῶν ἀποκατάστασις (De Anima et Resurrectione, 156C) where apokatastasis implies a return to, a resurrection of, the former state of being (physis) of mortals lost through 'original sin' and in respect of which returning baptism is a beginning.

3.

substance. ὕλη. qv. Poemandres 10. Given that the ancient Greek term does not exactly mean 'matter' in the modern sense (as in the science of Physics) it is better to find an alternative. Hence substance, the materia of 'things' and living beings. Thus 'materia' would be another suitable translation here of ὕλη.

The craft of theos: Aion. δύναμις δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἰών. Aion as artisan who has, through theos, the power to not only craft Kosmos but also renew it, for Kosmos was/is not just a once occurring coming-into-being but is forever renewed: γενόμενος οὐποτε, καὶ ἀεὶ γινόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος.

On δύναμις as implying an 'artisan-creator' rather than just the 'power/strength' of a divinity, qv. the doxology in Poemandres 31.

From Aion to Kosmos. The suggestion is that 'the cosmic order' - Kosmos - is the work of Aion who/which is the source of, provides, 'the exemption from death' and the continuance of materia/substantia, the cyclic return and renewal.

4.

jumelle. διπλοῦς. As noted in my commentary on Poemandres 14, "The much underused and descriptive English word *jumelle* - from the Latin *gemellus* - describes some-thing made in, or composed of, two parts, and is therefore most suitable here, more so than common words such as 'double' or twofold."

psyche. ψυχή. Avoiding the usual translation of 'soul' which imposes various, disputable, religious and philosophical meanings (including modern ones) on the text. A useful summary of the use of ψυχή from classical to Greco-Roman times is given in DeWitt Burton: *Spirit, Soul, and Flesh: The Usage of Πνεῦμα, Ψυχή, and Σάρξ in Greek Writings and Translated Works from the Earliest Period to 225 AD* (University of Chicago Press, 1918).

Theos is presenced in perceivration... The term 'presenced' expresses the esoteric meaning of the text better than something such as "theos is in perceivration", especially given what follows: a description of the layers of being, of the whole, complete, cosmic, Body having within it other bodies, other layers or types of being, such as Kronos.

Within, it is filled; outside, it is enclosed ... a vast, fully-formed, life. The suggestion is that it - the cosmic Body - is enclosed, encircled, by psyche which fills the cosmos with Life.

It is possible to understand this mystically as an allusion to the difference between what is esoteric and what is exoteric, with 'within' referring to an inner/esoteric perception and understanding, and 'outer' as referring to the exoteric. That is, the exoteric understanding is of something vast, fully-formed, complete, and living (μέγα καὶ τέλειον ζῶον) while the inner understanding is of living beings who, "replete with psyche", are connected to theos through perceivration. The exoteric perception is also described in the preceding "unchanging and undecaying" aspect of the heavens, with the esoteric referring to the "changeable and decayable" nature of living things on Earth.

5.

Necessitas. Although the Latin 'Necessitas' is a suitable alternative for the Greek, a transliteration (Ananke) is perhaps preferable (although less readable), because even if what is meant is not 'wyrd' - qv. Ἀνάγκης, the primordial goddess of incumbency, of wyrd, of that which is beyond, and the origin of, what we often describe as our Fate as a mortal being [cf. Empedocles, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, Diels-Kranz, 31, B115] - English terms such as 'necessity' and 'constraint' are somewhat inadequate, vague, especially given what follows: εἴτε

πρόνοιαν εἴτε φύσιν καὶ εἴ τι ἄλλο οἶεται ἢ οἰήσεται τις.

Thus the term requires contextual interpretation.

physis. φύσις. An important theme/principle in the Poemandres tractate and in Aristotle, and a term which suggests more than what the English terms Nature - and the 'nature' or 'character' of a thing or person - denote. In respect of Aristotle, qv. Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015α, quoted above in respect of my use of the term quidditas.

What physis denotes is something ontological: a revealing, a manifestation, of not only the true nature of beings but also of the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being.

activity. For ἐνέργεια here since the term 'energy' is - given its modern and scientific connotations - inappropriate and misleading.

crafting. See the note on δύναμις δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἰὼν above.

descend down. In respect of ἐκπεσῆ, cf. Basil of Caesarea, Epistulae, Γλυκερίω: ἐκπεσῆ δὲ καὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ μετὰ τῶν μελῶν σου καὶ τῆς στολῆς.

change. μεταβολή. I have here chosen 'change' in preference to 'change' since change (coming into English use around 1584) is more specific than 'change', suggesting variation, alteration, development, unfolding, transmutation.

Inactive is thus a vacant nomen. ἀργία γὰρ ὄνομα κενόν ἐστὶ. The unusual English word nomen - a direct borrowing from the Latin - is more appropriate than 'word' since nomen can mean a name and also a designation, for what is suggested is that in respect of someone who crafts, creates, things - theos - and what is created, brought-into-being, the designation and the name 'inactive' are not there. A suitable simile might be that of the second personal name (nomen) of a Roman citizen which designated their *gens* and, later, their status. Thus theos has no gens because theos is unique, and the status of theos cannot be compared to that of any other being because the status of theos is also unique.

In respect of ποιέω, I prefer 'create' rather than the somewhat prosaic 'make'.

6.

I am inclined to agree with Scott - *Hermetica*, Volume I, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1924, p.210 - that after the end of the first paragraph of section 6 [For every being there is a coming-into-being ... not independent of him but rather comes-into-being because of him] the tractate should be divided. Indeed, there might even have been a melding of two different tractates (or two different authors) given the contrast between the first and the second part.

undecayable. ἀκήρατος. That is, a privation of κηραίνω: decay, spoiled, perish. Undecayable is more apt here than 'undefiled' or 'pure' especially as Thomas More, in 1534 in his A Treatise On The Passion, wrote of "the infinite perfection of their undecayable glory."

eldern. For παλαιός. The Middle English forms of eldern include elldern and eldrin, and the etymology is 'elder' plus the suffix 'en'. In comparison to this rather evocative English word, alternatives such as 'ancient' seem somewhat prosaic.

7.

Observe also the septenary cosmos ... separate aeonic orbits. Nock - who as Copenhaver et al - renders αἰών as 'eternity' translates this passage as: Vois aussi la hiérarchie des sept cieux, formés en bon ordre suivant une disposition éternelle, remplissant, chacun par une différente, l'éternité.

phaos. As in my Poemandres - and for reasons explained there - a transliteration of φῶς, using the Homeric φάος. To translate simply as 'light' obscures the elemental nature of phaos.

no fire anywhere. As in the Poemandres tractate (qv. sections 4, 5, et seq.) not 'fire' in the literal sense but fire as an elemental principle. In the Poemandres tractate - which describes the origins of beings - Fire plays an important role, as at section 17,

"those seven came into being in this way. Earth was muliebral, Water was lustful, and Fire maturing. From Æther, the pneuma, and with Physis bringing forth human-shaped bodies. Of Life and phaos, the human came to be of psyche and perceiviation; from Life - psyche; from phaos - perceiviation; and with everything in the observable cosmic order cyclic until its completion."

fellowship. The meaning of φιλία here is debatable, as usual renderings such as 'love' and 'friendship' seem somewhat inappropriate given the context. It is possible it refers to a principle such as the one suggested by Empedocles where it is the apparent opposite of νεῖκος, qv. the mention of Empedocles by Isocrates (Antidosis, 15.268) - Ἐμπεδοκλῆς δὲ τέτταρα, καὶ νεῖκος καὶ φιλίαν ἐν αὐτοῖς - and fragments such as 31, B35 and 31, B115 (Diels-Kranz: Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker) with νεῖκος implying 'disagreement' and φιλότης something akin to 'fellowship'.

The contrast between νεῖκος and φιλότης is also mentioned - interestingly in regard to the source of motion - by Aristotle in Metaphysics, Book 12, 1072a:

Ἐμπεδοκλῆς φιλίαν καὶ τὸ νεῖκος.

archon and hegemon. I follow the MSS which have ἄρχων καὶ ἡγέμων. Since both ἄρχων and ἡγέμων have been assimilated into the English language (ἄρχων c. 1755 and ἡγέμων c. 1829) and retain their original meaning it seemed unnecessary to translate them.

prodromus. πρόδρομος. Another Greek word assimilated into the English language (c. 1602 and appearing in a translation of Ovid's Salmacis and Hermaphroditus) and which retains the meaning of the Greek here: a forerunner, a precursor; a moving ahead and in front of.

the Earth amid them all. I incline toward the view that τήν τε γῆν μέσσην τοῦ παντός does not mean that 'the Earth is at the centre of the universe' (or something similar) - since κόσμος is not directly mentioned - but rather that the Earth is in the midst of - among - all, the whole, (παντός) that exists.

foundation. I take the sense of ὑποστάθμη here to be 'foundation' rather than implying some sort of 'sediment', gross or otherwise.

nurturer. τιθήνη.

deathless, deathful. γν. Poemandres 14: θνητὸς μὲν διὰ τὸ σῶμα, ἀθάνατος δὲ διὰ τὸν οὐσιώδη ἄνθρωπον. As there, I take the English words from Chapman's *Hymn to Venus* from the Homeric Hymns: "That with a deathless goddess lay a deathful man."

travelling. ὑποστάθμη. The context suggests 'travelling', and 'going around or about' in a general sense, rather than 'circling' in some defined astronomical sense.

8.

all in motion. In a passage critical of Plato and in respect of motion, psyche and the heavens, Aristotle in his *Metaphysics* wrote: τὸ αὐτὸ ἑαυτὸ κινεῖν: ὕστερον γὰρ καὶ ἅμα τῷ οὐρανῷ ἢ ψυχῇ, ὥς φησί. (Book 12, 1072a)

in every way, a unity. cf. sections 10 and 11 of the Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς tractate (IV) with their mention of μονάς.

hastiness. ταχυτής. To translate as either 'speed' or 'velocity' is to leave the text open to misinterpretation, since the concept of speed/velocity as a measure (precise or otherwise) of the time taken to travel a certain distance was unknown in the ancient world.

10.

devoid of logos. γν. Poemander 10. As there, ἄλογος is simply 'without/devoid of or lacking in logos'. It does not necessarily here, or there, imply 'irrational' or 'unreasoning'. It might, for example, be referring to how logos is explained in texts such as Poemandres where distinctions are made between logoi, such as pneuma logos and phasma logos.

In addition, I follow the MSS which have only καὶ τοῦ ἀλόγου.

presence life. ἔμψυχος. That is, are living; have life; embody, are animated by, life; and thus are not lifelessly cold.

psyche of itself [...] the creator of deathless being. Although the Greek wording is somewhat convoluted the meaning is that while psyche is the "cause of the life" of beings which are animated with life, it is the creator of deathless life who is the cause of all life.

What then of the living that die and the deathless ones? I follow the emendation of Tiedemann who has ἀθάνατων in place of θνητῶν.

11.

if not One, the theos. The phrase εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός occurs in Mark 10.18 and Luke 18.19. I have translated literally in an attempt to preserve the meaning, lost if one translates as The One God.

Theos therefore is One. I have omitted the following γελοιότατον - "most absurd" - as a gloss. In respect of 'One' here - εἷς - what is implied is not the numeral one but rather "not composed of separate parts", complete of itself, the opposite of 'many', and so on. That is, an undivided unity.

divinity-presenced. θεϊότης. This word imputes the sense of 'the divine (made) manifest' or less literally 'divine-ness' whence the usual translation of 'divinity'. I have opted for divinity-presenced to express something of its original meaning and its uncommonality.

12.

He creates all things. I have omitted the following ἐν πολλῷ γελοιότατον as an untranslatable gloss.

otiose. καταργέω. Since otiose implies more than being 'idle' or 'unoccupied' it is apt, implying as it does "having no practical function; redundant; superfluous".

13.

no one really exists without producing... Following the emendations of Nock, who has σε μηδὲν ποιοῦντα μὴ δυνάμενον εἶναι.

apprehend. νοέω. To apprehend also in the sense of 'discover'.

this is Life; this is the beautiful, this is the noble; this is the theos. ἔστι δὲ τοῦτο [...] ζωή, τοῦτο δέ ἐστι τὸ καλόν, τοῦτο δέ ἐστι τὸ ἀγαθόν, τοῦτό ἐστιν ὁ θεός. A succinct expression of the main theme of the tractate and of one of the main themes of the hermetic weltanschauung.

14.

enosis. ἔνωσις. A transliteration given that it is a mystical term with a particular meaning and describes something more than is denoted by the ordinary English word 'union'. It was, for example used by Plotinus, by Maximus of Constantinople, and was part of the mystic philosophy attributed to Pseudo-Dionysius, The Areopagite - qv. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, Series Graeca. vol IV, 396A. 1857 - and denoted, for Plotinus, a desirable ascent (ἄνοδος) and a 'merging with The One', and for both the Areopagite and Maximus of Constantinople a self-less mystical experience of God.

15.

eikon. εἰκὼν. Another mystical term requiring contextual interpretation, cf. Poemandres 31, regarding which I wrote in my commentary: "I have transliterated εἰκὼν as here it does not only mean what the English words 'image' or 'likeness' suggest or imply, but rather it is similar to what Maximus of Constantinople in his Mystagogia [Patrologiae Graeca, 91, c.0658] explains. Which is of we humans, and the cosmos, and Nature, and psyche, as eikons, although according to Maximus it is the Christian church itself (as manifest and embodied in Jesus of Nazareth and the Apostles and their successors and in scripture) which, being the eikon of God, enables we humans to recognize this, recognize God, be in communion with God, return to God, and thus find and fulfil the meaning of our being, our existence."

My dear Hermes. Omitting the following δεισιδαίμων ὥς ἀκούεις as a gloss.

occurrences. πάθη. I interpret this not in some anthropomorphic way - as 'passions' - but metaphysically (as akin to πάθημα), and thus as occurrences, events, happenings, that here regularly occur to Kosmos and which change and renew it despite (or perhaps because of) the change it undergoes. cf. Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 1, 982b: οἷον περί τε τῶν τῆς σελήνης παθημάτων καὶ τῶν περὶ τὸν ἥλιον καὶ ἄστρα καὶ περὶ τῆς τοῦ παντὸς γενέσεως.

the cyclic a turning. The meaning here of στροφή is problematic. Given the context, my suggestion is 'turning' in the sense of a change that is positive and

possibility evolutionary, as πάθη can lead to positive change, in humans, in Nature, and in things.

16.

polymorphous. παντόμορφος. As for the rest of the sentence, vis-a-vis 'form', there is no adequate, unambiguous, word to re-present μορφή given how, for example, the English term 'morph' has acquired various meanings irrelevant here and given that the English term 'form' has associations with Plato when used to translate ἰδέα.

without-form. ἄμορφος.

kind. For ἰδέα. To avoid confusion with 'form' and because it is apposite here.

17.

incorporeal kind. In respect of ἀσώματος, cf. the comment about Socrates and Plato in Placita Philosophorum by Pseudo-Plutarch: τὸν θεὸν τὴν ὕλην τὴν ἰδέαν. ὁ δὲ θεὸς νοῦς ἐστὶ τοῦ κόσμου, ὕλη δὲ τὸ ὑποκείμενον πρῶτον γενέσκει καὶ φθορᾷ, ἰδέα δ' οὐσία ἀσώματος ἐν τοῖς νοήμασι καὶ ταῖς φαντασίαις τοῦ θεοῦ. (1.3)

mountains which appear in depictions. I have chosen 'depictions' because depiction could refer to paintings on vases or to wall-paintings or to some other medium or art-form where mountains might be depicted, and it is not clear from the context which is meant.

18.

φαντασία. Not here simply 'appearance' in the ordinary sense of the term but a 'making visible' such that it is apprehended by us in a particular way, as a re-presentation of what it actually is. Hence: "an incorporeal representation apprehends what is lain otherwise."

19.

urge your psyche to go to... The whole passage is interesting and evocative, with psyche here signifying 'spirit' as in "let your spirit wander to other places" and thus invoking something akin to what we now might describe as conscious imagination.

go to any land. Following the MSS rather than the emendation Nock accepts which is εἰς Ἰνδικήν. There seems to me no justification for jarringly introducing India here.

Ocean. Ὠκεανός. That is, a sea beyond the Mediterranean, such as the Atlantic.

Aether. cf. Poemandres 17, ἐκ δὲ αἰθέρος τὸ πνεῦμα ἔλαβε, where I noted in my commentary: "It is best to transliterate αἰθήρ - as Æther - given that it, like Earth, Air, Fire, Water, and pneuma, is an elemental principle, or a type of (or a particular) being, or some-thing archetypal."

nor the vortex. οὐχ ἡ δίνη. Presumably δίνη here refers to the celestial movement of the planets and stars as observed from Earth.

burst through. cf. Poemandres 14: ἀναρρήξας τὸ κράτος τῶν κύκλων, "burst through the strength of the spheres."

The Entirety. Even though 'universe' is implied, I have refrained from using that English word given its modern astronomical and cosmological connotations, and have instead opted for a literal translation of ὅλος.

ordered system. κόσμος here as 'the ordered system' just described: the land, ocean, Sun, the heavens, the bodies of the stars.

20.

purposes. νοήματα.

21.

enclose your psyche in your body. cf. section I of tractate VII where enclosing the psyche in the body is also mentioned.

indulging the body and rotten. φιλοσώματος here implies 'indulging the body' rather than 'loving the body' just as κακός implies 'rotten', 'base', rather than some abstract, disputable 'evil' or (vide Nock) "le vice suprême."

the numinous. τὸ θεῖον. In other words, 'the divine'.

its own (way). Following the MSS which have ἰδία, omitted by Nock.

eikon. Tentatively reading οὐδὲν γάρ ἐστιν ὃ οὐκ εἰκὼν θείου, which is not altogether satisfactory. The MSS have εἰκόνι. Nock emends to οὐδὲν γάρ ἐστιν ὃ οὐκ ἔστιν (there is nothing that it is not) which seems somewhat at odds with the preceding "to be completely rotten is..." and with theos/the numinous being evident, presenced, in τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, ἡ εὐδαιμονία.

Regarding eikon, qv. the note in the commentary on section 15.

22.

Speak softly. εὐφήμησον is a formulaic phrase (cf. Tractate XIII:8, ὦ τέκνον, καὶ εὐφήμησον καὶ διὰ τοῦτο οὐ καταπαύσει τὸ ἔλεος εἰς ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ) suggesting "speak softly" and with reverence.

Περὶ νοῦ κοινοῦ πρὸς Τάτ

To Thoth, Concerning Mutual Perceivation

Tractate XII

ο ο ο

Introduction

While the first few sentences of the twelfth tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum have some similarity to what Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, wrote in a polemic a century or two later [1], the rest of the twelfth tractate - with its mention of the Ἀγαθὸς Δαίμων (the Noble Daimon), with its echo of Heraclitus, with its mention that "some mortals are deities with their mortal nature close to divinity," and with its themes of ψυχή (psyche) and ἀνάγκη (wyrð, 'necessity', 'fate') - is ineluctably part of Greco-Roman paganism, where by the term paganism I personally - following Cicero [3] - mean "an apprehension of the complete unity (a cosmic order, κόσμος, mundus) beyond the apparent parts of that unity, together with the perceivation that we mortals - albeit a mere and fallible part of the unity - have been gifted with our existence so that we may perceive and understand this unity, and, having so perceived, may ourselves seek to be whole, and thus become as balanced (perfectus), as harmonious, as the unity itself." [3] Furthermore, this unity derives from 'the theos', the primary divinity, who gifted we mortals with life, and is manifest in - presenced by - other divinities, by daimons [4], and by what we have come to describe as Nature, that is, as the natural world existing on Earth with its diversity of living beings.

Furthermore, although, as with several other tractates, the name of Τάτ (Thoth) appears in the title, there is nothing in the text, or in the other texts of the Corpus, which points to native Egyptian influence; a lack of influence supported

by the recent scholarly edition of the ancient *Book of Thoth* edited by Jasnow and Zauzich [5], and by the earlier work of A-J. Festugiere [6].

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[1] *Epistula de Decretis Nycaenae Synodi*, II, 3f, and IV, 22ff.

[2] "Neque enim est quicquam aliud praeter mundum quoi nihil absit quodque undique aptum atque perfectum expletumque sit omnibus suis numeris et partibus [...] ipse autem homo ortus est ad mundum contemplandum et imitandum - nullo modo perfectus, sed est quaedam particula perfecti." M. Tullius Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, Liber Secundus, xiii, xiv, 37

[3] The quotation is from my 2014 essay *Education And the Culture of Patheismathos*, and paraphrases what Cicero wrote in Book II (xiii and xiv) of his *De Natura Deorum*.

As I noted in the aforementioned essay,

"it is my considered opinion that the English term 'balanced' (a natural completeness, a natural equilibrium) is often a better translation of the classical Latin *perfectus* than the commonly accepted translation of 'perfect', given what the English word 'perfect' now imputes (as in, for example, 'cannot be improved upon'), and given the association of the word 'perfect' with Christian theology and exegesis (as, for example, in suggesting a moral perfection)."

[4] A δαίμων was considered to be a divinity who undertook to protect places 'sacred to the gods' or who - following the deliberations of a particular deity or of various deities - undertook to intercede in the lives of mortals by, for example, bringing them good fortune or misfortune. It was thus a tradition in ancient Greece and Rome to, at a meal, toast with wine the Ἀγαθὸς Δαίμων in the hope that he would bring them good fortune. Similarly, the Romans especially would offer a toast to the Ἄγνωστος Θεός (the Unknown Theos) and/or to the Ἄγνωστος Δαίμων (the Unknown Daemon) in the hope of not offending a deity or daimon whose name they did not know.

To translate δαίμων as 'demon' - as some do - is misleading, and can lead to a retrospective reinterpretation of the text given what the English term 'demon' now imputes as a result of over a thousand years of Christianity.

[5] Richard Jasnow & Karl-Theodore Zauzich, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of Thoth: A Demotic Discourse on Knowledge and Pendant to the Classical Hermetica*. Volume 1: Text. Harrassowitz, 2005.

[6] A.J. Festugière, *La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*, 4 volumes. J. Gabalda, 1944-1954

Translation

[1] Perceiveration, Thoth, is of the quidditas of theos, if there is a quidditas of theos, and if so then only theos completely understands what that quidditas is. Perceiveration is thus not separated from the quiddity of theos but rather expands forth, as does the light of the Sun, with this perceiveration, in mortals, theos so that some mortals are deities with their mortal nature close to divinity.

For the noble daimon spoke of deities as deathless mortals and of mortals as deathful deities, while in living beings deprived of logos perceiverance is their physis.

[2] Where psyche is, there also is perceiveration just as where Life is there also is psyche. But in living beings deprived of logos, psyche is Life empty of perceiverance while perceiveration is the patron of the psyche of mortals labouring for their nobility. For those deprived of logos it co-operates with the physis of each, while for mortals it works against that.

Every psyche presented in a body is naturally rotted by pleasure and pain for in that mixtion of a body the pleasure and the pain boil as profluvia into which the psyche is immersed.

[3] Whatever psyches perceiveration governs it manifests its own resplendence, working as it does against their predispositions. Just as an honourable physician painfully uses cautery or a knife on a body seized by sickness so does perceiveration distress psyche, extracting from it that pleasure which is the genesis of all psyche's sickness.

A serious sickness of psyche is neglect of the divine from whence prognostications and thence all rottenness and nothing noble. Yet perceiveration can work against this to secure nobility for psyche as the physician does for soundness of body.

[4] But the psyche of mortals who do not have perceiveration as their guide suffer the same as living beings deprived of logos, for when there is co-operation with them and a letting-loose of yearnings they are dragged along

by their cravings to be voided of logos, and - akin to living beings deprived of logos - they cannot stop their anger nor their emotive yearnings nor become disgusted by rottenness.

For such yearnings and anger are overwhelmingly bad. And on those ones, the theos - avenger, confutant - will impose what custom demands.

[5] Father, if that is so, then your previous discourse regarding Meiros seems at risk of being altered. For if it is indeed Meiros-decreed for someone to be unfaithful or desecrate what is sacred or be otherwise bad, then why is that person punished when they have been constrained by Meiros to do the deed?

My son, all that is done is Meiros-decreed with nothing corporeal independent of that. For neither nobility nor rottenness are produced by accident. It is Meiros-decreed that they having done what is bad are afflicted which is why it was done: to be afflicted by what afflicts them.

[6] But for now let the discourse not be about badness or Meiros; they are spoken about elsewhere. Instead, let us discourse about perceiviation; what it is able to do and how it varies. For mortals, it is a particular thing while for living beings deprived of logos it is something else. Also, in those other living beings it does not produce benefits. But because it can control the irritable, the covetous, it is not the same for everyone with it being appreciated that some of those persons are reasonable while others are unreasonable.

All mortals are subjected to Meiros as well as to geniture and changement, which are the origin and the consummation of Meiros,

[7] with all mortals afflicted by what is Meiros-decreed, although those gifted with sentience who - as mentioned - are governed by perceiviation are not afflicted in the same way as others. Because they are distanced from rottenness, they are not afflicted by the rotten.

What, father, are you then saying? That the unfaithful one, that the killer, and all other such ones, are not bad?

My son, the one gifted with sentience will, though not unfaithful, be afflicted as if they had been unfaithful just as, though not a killer, they will as if they had killed. It is not possible to avoid geniture nor the disposition of changement although the one of perceiviation can avoid rottenness.

[8] I heard that from of old the noble daimon spoke of - and would that he had written it for that would have greatly benefited the race of mortals since he alone, my son, as first-born divinity beholding everything, certainly gave voice to divine logoi - but, whatever, I heard him to say that all that exists is one, particularly conceptible things.

We have our being in potentiality, in activity, in Aion, whose perceivance is noble as is his psyche, and with this as it is, there is nothing separable among what is conceptible. Thus perceivance, Archon of everything and also the psyche of theos, can do whatever it desires.

[9] Therefore you should understand, relating these words to your previous question when you asked about Meiros. For if, my son, you diligently eliminate disputatious argument you will discover that perceivance - psyche of theos - does in truth rule over Meiros and Custom and everything else. There is nothing he is unable to do: not placing a mortal psyche over Meiros, nor, if negligent of what comes to pass, placing it under Meiros. And of what the noble daimon said, these were the most excellent about all this.

How numinous, father; and how true, how beneficial.

[10] And now, can you explain this to me. You said that perceivance in living beings deprived of logos is in accordance with their physis and in consort with their cravings. Yet the cravings of living beings deprived of logos are, I assume, somatic, and if perceivance co-operates with the cravings and if the cravings of those deprived of logos are somatic then is not perceivance also somatic, in alliance with the somatic?

Excellent, my son. A good question which I have to answer.

[11] Everything incorporeal when corporified is somatical, although it is properly of the somatic. For all that changes is incorporeal with all that is changed corporeal. The incorporeal is changed by perceivance, with changeability somatic. Both the changing and the changed are affected, with one leading, the other following. If released from the corporeal, there is release from the somatic. In particular, my son, there is nothing that is asomatic with everything somatic with the somatic being different from the somatical. For one is vigorous, the other non-active. The corporeal, in itself, is vigorous, either when changed or when not changing, and whichever it is, it is somatic, However, the incorporeal is always acted upon which is why it is somatical.

But do not allow such denotata to vex you, for vigour and the somatic are the same, although there is nothing wrong in using the better-sounding denotatum.

[12] Father, that was a clear answer that you gave.

Take note, my son, of the two things that theos has favoured mortals with, over and above all other deathful living beings: perceivance and logos, equal in value to deathlessness, and if they use those as required then there is no difference between them and the deathless. And when they depart from the corporeal they will be escorted by both to the assembly of the gods and the fortunate ones.

[13] And yet, father, do other living beings not have language?

No, my son, they have sounds, and language is quite different from sounds. Language is shared among all mortals while each kind of living being has its own sounds.

And also, father, among mortals for each folk have a different language.

Yes, my son, different but since mortal nature is One then language is also One, for when interpreted they are found to be the same whether in Egypt or in Persia or in Hellas. Thus it seems, my child, that you are unaware of the significance and the merit of language.

That hallowed divinity, the noble daimon, spoke of psyche in corporeality, of perceivation in psyche, of logos in perceivation, of perceivation in the theos, and of the theos as the father of those.

[14] For logos is eikon of perceivation, perceivation that of theos, with corporeality that of outward form, and outward form that of psyche. The finest part of Substance is Air. Of Air, psyche. Of psyche, perceivation. Of perceivation, theos, with theos encompassing all things and within all things; with perceivation encompassing psyche, psyche encompassing Air, and Air encompassing Substance.

Necessitas, forseeing, and physis, are implements of Kosmos, and of the arrangement of Substance, and whatever is apprehended is essence with that essence of each their ipseity. Of the corpora that exist, each is a multiplicity, and since the ipseity of combined corpora is the changement of one corpus to another they always retain the imputrescence of ipseity.

[15] Yet in other combined corpora there is for each of them an arithmos, for without arithmos it is not possible for such a bringing together, such a melding, such a dissolution, to come-into-being. Henads beget and grow arithmos and, on its dissolution, receive it into themselves.

Substance is One, and the complete cosmic order - a mighty theos and eikon of and in unison with a mightier one - is, in maintaining the arrangements and the purpose of the father, replete with Life. And through the paternally given cyclic return of Aion there is nothing within it - in whole or in part - which is not alive.

For nothing of the cosmic order that has come-into-being is - or is now or will be - necrotic since the father has determined that Life shall be there while it exists. And thus, because of Necessitas, it is divine.

[16] Thus, how - my son - in that eikon of all things with its repletion of Life can there be necrosis? For necrosis is putritude and putritude is perishment. How then is it possible for any portion of what is not putrid be be putrid or for

anything of theos to perish?

Therefore, father, do not the living beings - who have their being there - not perish?

Speak wisely, my son, and do not be led away by the denotata of being-becoming. For, my son, they do not perish but as combined corpora are dissolved with such a dissolving not death but the dissolution of the melding, and dissolved not so as to perish but for a new coming-into-being. For what is the vigour of Life if not change?

What then, of Kosmos, does not change? Nothing, my child.

[17] Does the Earth seem to you, father, to not change?

No, my son. But she is alone in that there are many changes but also stasis. For would it not be illogical if the nourisher - she who brings-forth everything - never changed? It is not possible for she, the bringer-forth, to bring-forth without being changed. It is illogical for you to enquire if the fourth parsement is inactive, since an unchanging corpus is indicative of inactivity.

[18] You should therefore understand that what exists of Kosmos is everywhere changing, either growing or declining, and that what is changing is living with all that lives not, because of Necessitas, the same. For Kosmos, in the entirety of its being, is not changeable even though its parts can be changeable, with nothing putrefiable or perishable, although such denotata can confuse we mortals. For geniture is not Life but rather alertness, nor is changement death but rather a forgetting.

Since this is so, Substance, Life, Pneuma, Psyche, Perceivation, are all deathless, with every living being some combination of them.

[19] Because of perceivation all living beings are deathless, and most certain of all is that mortals are, for they - receptive to theos - can interact with theos. For only with this living being does theos commune in nightful dreams and daylight auguration, forewarning what is possible through birds, through entrails, through the movements of air, and through trees of Oak. And thus do mortals profess to know what was past, what is now, what will be.

[20] Observe, my son, that every other living being inhabits a certain part of the world; in water for those of the water, on dry land for those on land, and above the ground for those of the air. But mortals employ them all; land, water, air, fire. They observe the heavens, and touch it through their senses, and theos encompasses and is within all such things, for he is Change and Capability.

Thus, my son, it is not difficult to apprehend theos.

[21] If you are disposed to consider him, then perceive the arrangement of Kosmos and how that arrangement is well-ordered. Perceive Necessitas in what is apparent and the foreseeing in what has come-into-being and what is coming-into-being. Perceive Substance replete with Life, and the great, the influentive, theos together with all the noble and the beautiful divinities, daimons, and mortals.

But those, father, are actuosities.

Yet, my son, if they are only actuosities then by whom - other than theos - are they actuose? Or do you not know that just as aspects of the world are the heavens, the land, the Water, and the Air, then in the same way his aspects are deathlessness, blood, Necessitas, Foreseeing, Physis, Psyche, Perceivation, and that the continuance of all these is what is called nobility? And that there is not anything that has come-into-being or which is coming-into-being that is or will be without theos?

[22] He is within Substance, then, father?

If, my son, Substance was separate from theos then where, to what place, would you assign it? To some heap that is not actuose? But if it is actuose, then by whom is it actuose? And we spoke of actuosities as aspects of theos.

So who then brings life to living beings? Who deathlessness to the deathless? Who change to those changed? And if you say Substance or corpus or essence, then understand that they also are actuosities of theos, so that the substantiality is the actusosity of Substance, corporeality the actusosity of corpora, and essentiality the actusosity of essence. And this is theos, All That Exists.

[23] For in all that exists there is no-thing that he is not. Therefore, neither size, nor location nor disposition, nor appearance, nor age, are about theos. For he is all that exists; encompassing everything and within everything.

This, my son, is the Logos, to be respected and followed. And if there is one way to follow theos, it is not to be bad.

ooo

Commentary

Title.

Περὶ νοῦ κοινοῦ πρὸς Τάτ. To Thoth, Concerning Mutual Perceivation.

1.

perceivation. As with my other translations of Corpus Hermeticum texts I translate νοῦς not as 'mind' but as perceivation/perceiverance, qv. my commentary on Poemandres, 2.

quidditas. οὐσία. Here, as with tractates VI and XI, 'essence' in respect of theos is not an entirely satisfactory translation given what the English term essence often now imputes. Quidditas is post-classical Latin, from whence the English word quiddity, and requires contextual interpretation. As in tractate VI, one interpretation of quidditas is ontological, as 'the being of that being/entity', with such quidditas often presenced in - and perceived by we mortals via or as - φύσις (physis). Which interpretation has the virtue of avoiding assumptions as to whether the author is here presenting something similar to the Stoic weltanschauung or to other ancient weltanschauungen.

understands. In respect of οἶδεν as 'understand' rather than 'know' qv. 1 Corinthians 14:16, ἐπειδὴ τί λέγεις οὐκ οἶδεν: "since he does not understand what you say." Furthermore, in Plato, Meno, 80e 'understanding' and 'understand' make more sense than the conventional 'knowing' and 'know':

ὁρᾷς τοῦτον ὡς ἐριστικὸν λόγον κατάγεις ὡς οὐκ ἄρα ἔστιν ζητεῖν ἄνθρωπῳ οὔτε ὃ οἶδε οὔτε ὃ μὴ οἶδε; οὔτε γὰρ ἂν ὃ γε οἶδεν ζητοῖ οἶδεν γὰρ καὶ οὐδὲν δεῖ τῷ γε τοιούτῳ ζητήσεως οὔτε ὃ μὴ οἶδεν οὐδὲ γὰρ οἶδεν ὅτι ζητήσει.

Do you realize what a contestable argument you introduce? That a mortal cannot inquire either about what he understands or about what he does not understand? That he cannot inquire about what he understands because he understands it with an inquiry thus not necessary; and that he cannot inquire about what he does not understand because he does not understand what he should inquire about.

quiddity of theos. οὐσιότητος τοῦ θεοῦ. Using the word quiddity here not as a

synonym of quidditas but as a synonym of 'quidditiveness', where quidditative is "of or relating to the essential quidditas of some-thing", in this case theos.

mortal nature. ἀνθρωπότης. I incline toward the view that the neutral term 'mortal nature' is appropriate here, given what the English word 'humanity' now so often implies; a neutral term suggested not only by the scholia to the first verses of Orestes by Euripides:

κατασκευὴν ποιούμενος ὁ ποιητὴς τῆς ἰδίας προτάσεως τῆς ὅτι πάντα φέρει τὰ δεινὰ ἢ ἀνθρωπότης, ἐπιφέρει ὅτι καὶ αὐτοὶ οἱ μακάριοι καὶ ὀλβιοὶ δόξαντες ἄνθρωποι οὐκ ἄμοιροι συμφορῶν καὶ παθῶν γεγόνασιν· ἐξ ἐνὸς δὲ τοῦ Ταντάλου καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους παραδηλοῖ. τὸν Τάνταλον δὲ καὶ οὐκ ἄλλον τῇ ὑποθέσει προσείληφε διὰ τὸ ἐξ ἐκείνου τοῦ γένους καὶ τὸν Ὀρέστην κατὰγεσθαι

but also by *De Sancta Trinitate Dialogus* of Athanasius (Migne, *Patrologiæ Græcæ*, 28, 1115), with the first verse of the Orestes expressing what is meant and implied:

Οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν δεινὸν ὧδ' εἰπεῖν ἔπος οὐδὲ πάθος οὐδὲ ξυμφορὰ θεήλατος, ἧς οὐκ ἂν ἄραιτ' ἄχθος ἀνθρώπου φύσις.

There is nothing that can be described, no suffering, and nothing sent by the gods, which is so terrifyingly strange that mortal nature cannot endure it.

the noble daimon. Ἀγαθὸς Δαίμων. The daimon who can bring good fortune (health, wealth, happiness, honour) and other benefits to mortals and who thus is considered to be noble. As mentioned in the Introduction, a daimon is not a 'demon'.

deathless...deathful. For these in respect of ἀθάνατος and θνητὸς qv. my commentary on Poemandres 14, tractate VIII:1, and tractate XI:7ff.

The phrase spoken by the Ἀγαθὸς Δαίμων is similar to one attributed to Heraclitus:

ἀθάνατοι θνητοί, θνητοὶ ἀθάνατοι, ζῶντες τὸν ἐκείνων θάνατον, τὸν δὲ ἐκείνων βίον τεθνεῶτες. (Fragment 62, Diels-Krantz)

The deathless are deathful, the deathful deathless, with one living the other's dying with the other dying in that other's life.

deprived of logos. ἄλογος. As at Poemandres 10 and tractate XI:10, a literal translation suggested by the context which thus avoids rather awkward expressions such as "animals without reason" and "irrational animals", and

which might also suggest not only various other meanings of logos such as "lacking (the faculty of) speech, lacking in sentience," but also that such living beings have not been gifted by theos with logos:

τὸ ἐν σοὶ βλέπον καὶ ἀκοῦον, λόγος κυρίου, ὁ δὲ νοῦς πατὴρ θεός. οὐ γὰρ διίστανται ἀπ' ἀλλήλων· ἔνωσις γὰρ τούτων ἐστὶν ἡ ζωή

Then know that within you - who hears and sees - is logos kyrios, although perceivance is theos the father. They are not separated, one from the other, because their union is Life. (Poemandres 6)

perceivance is their physis. Reading ὁ νοῦς ἡ φύσις. Here φύσις implies their being - the type of being (the 'character') they have, and are - and thus means their quidditas, which quidditas is in contrast to that of theos, deities, and mortals.

2.

psyche. A transliteration, as in my translations of other tractates. It is possible to read the line as referring to personifications: "Where Psyche is, there also is Perceivance just as where Life is there also is Psyche." Classically understood, psyche is the anima mundi, the power that animates - gives life to and which orders - the world.

in living beings deprived of logos, psyche is Life. On first reading there seems to be a contradiction between what follows - ἡ ψυχὴ ζωὴ ἐστὶ κενὴ τοῦ νοῦ, [in living beings deprived of logos] psyche is Life empty of perceivance - and the preceding ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἀλόγοις ζώοις ὁ νοῦς ἡ φύσις ἐστὶν, which states that "in living beings deprived of logos perceivance is their physis." The sense of the Greek therefore seems to suggest that the perceivance of living beings deprived of logos is a vacuous, empty, one: they perceive but it does not benefit them in the same manner as perceivance benefits mortals because there is no understanding of, no rational apprehension of, what is perceived.

mixtion. σύνθετος. Mixtion is more appropriate here in such a metaphysical text than either 'composite' or 'compound', meaning as mixtion does compounded, combined; the condition or state of being mixed, melded, or composed of various parts.

profluvia. χυμός. That is, the bodily 'humours', anciently named as blood, phlegm, choler (χολέρα), and bile. Since the English word 'humour' now often suggests an entirely different meaning, I have chosen profluvia - from the Latin profluvium - in order to try and convey something of the meaning of the Greek, qv. Coleridge: "The same deadly sweats - the same frightful Profluvium of burning Dregs, like melted Lead - with quantities of bloody mucus from the Coats of the Intestines." *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1956. Volume II, 911: Letter dated 8th Jan.

immersed. βαπτίζω. Cf. tractate IV:3: καὶ ἐβαπτίσαντο τοῦ νοός, "and were immersive with perceivation."

3.

cautery or a knife. καίων ἢ τέμνων. Qv. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 848-850,

ὅτω δὲ καὶ δεῖ φαρμάκων παιωνίων,
ἥτοι κέαντες ἢ τεμόντες εὐφρόνως
πειρασόμεσθα πῆμ' ἀποστρέψαι νόσου

Whomsoever needs a healing potion
By a burning-out or a well-judged cutting-away
I shall seek to defeat the sickness of that injury.

neglect of the divine. ἀθεότης. The usual translation, atheism, seems to me to impose a particular and rigid meaning on the text given the association the word atheism now has with Christianity and in modern philosophy. The phrase 'neglect of the divine' expresses a more Hellenistic view, qv. the term ἀθεράπεντος and also Plutarch, who wrote:

Οὐκοῦν καὶ περὶ ὧν ὁ λόγος, ἡ μὲν ἀθεότης κρίσις οὔσα φαύλη τοῦ
μηδὲν εἶναι μακάριον καὶ ἄφθαρτον εἰς ἀπάθειάν τινα δοκεῖ τῇ
ἀπιστίᾳ τοῦ θείου περιφέρειν, καὶ τέλος ἐστὶν αὐτῇ τοῦ μὴ νομίζειν
θεοὺς τὸ μὴ φοβεῖσθαι, *De Superstitione*, 165b

Thus we return to our topic, neglect of the divine, which is the bad decision that nothing is hallowed or everlasting, which with its disbelief in the divine seems to lead to a type of apathy with the result that there is no fear of divinity since it does not exist.

4.

for when there is co-operation with them...voided of logos. The Greek here is somewhat obscure, although the meaning seems to be along the following lines: when perceivation co-operates with a serious sickness such as neglect of the divine then yearnings, desires, are given free reign so that those mortals, haplessly carried away by their cravings, become just like animals, voided of what makes them human.

what custom demands. In respect of νομός the term 'law' - with all its modern and Old Testament associations (as in 'the law of God') - is inappropriate since the Greek term implies what it is the customary thing to do. Hence, "what custom demands."

5.

Meiros. While μείρομαι here is conventionally understood as referring to 'fate', given the variety of meanings attributed to that term - a useful summary of classical usage is given in Book I, chapter XXVII of *Placita Philosophorum* attributed to the Pseudo-Plutarch - it seems apposite to suggest an alternative, especially as the text apparently does not provide a satisfactory answer to the question which Thoth goes on to ask: if 'fate' does compel someone to do something bad then why are they punished?

The mention of ἀνάγκης - 'Necessity', Ananke - in what follows (section 14: ἀνάγκη δὲ καὶ ἡ πρόνοια καὶ ἡ φύσις ὄργανά ἐστι τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τῆς τάξεως τῆς ὕλης) might indicate the Heraclitean sense of μείρομαι, as summarized by the Pseudo-Plutarch,

Ἡράκλειτος πάντα καθ' εἰμαρμένην, τὴν δ' αὐτὴν ὑπάρχειν καὶ ἀνάγκην.

Yet the immediate context - ἔλεγχον ὁ θεὸς ἐπέστησε τὸν νόμον - might seem to suggest θέσφατον (divine decree), as for example in Sophocles:

"εἴ τι θέσφατον πατρὶ χρησιμοῖσιν ἱκνεῖθ' ὥστε πρὸς παίδων θανεῖν."
Oedipus at Colonus, 969-970

However, given that what follows - Εἰμαρμένης γὰρ πάντα τὰ ἔργα [...] καὶ χωρὶς ἐκείνης οὐδὲν ἐστι τῶν σωματικῶν - I have chosen to use a transliteration, *Meiros*, based on the personification *Moros* in Hesiod's *Theogony*:

νύξ δ' ἔτεκεν στυγερόν τε Μόρον καὶ Κῆρα μέλαιναν καὶ Θάνατον,
τέκε δ' Ὕπνον, ἔτικτε δὲ φῶλον Ὀνειρώων (211-212)

And Night gave birth to odious *Moros*, to darksome *Kir* and to Death,
and also brought-into-being *Hypnos* and the folk of Dreams.

While the transliteration *Meiros* has the undoubted advantage - as with *logos*, *theos*, *physis*, καὶ τὰ λοιπά - of requiring contextual interpretation and thus avoiding whatever presumptions the reader might have in respect of the meaning of the English term 'fate', it has the disadvantage of not having, in English, an appropriate suffix such as, in respect of fate, -ed allowing as that does εἰμαρτός to be translated by 'fated'. The only solution - somewhat awkward as it is - is to translate such a word by a term such as 'Meiros-decreed' (or *Meiros-appointed*) so that the phrase εἰ δ' ἄρα τις οὗτος εἰμαρτός ἥκει χρόνος (Plutarch, Alexander, 30.6) would approximate to "if indeed a *Meiros* appointed moment has now arrived."

unfaithful. The sense of μοιχεύω is not stridently moralistic, as the English term adultery - with all its Old Testament associations - now often still denotes and

has for centuries denoted with its implication of 'sin'. Rather, the sense is more anciently pagan: of marital unfaithfulness, of a personal (and thus dishonourable) betrayal, as in Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1374a, συγγενέσθαι ἄλλ' οὐ μοιχεῦσαι (not unfaithful in the matter of [sexual] intercourse). Similarly in Aristophanes:

ὁ δ' ἄλους γε μοιχὸς διὰ σέ που παρατίλλεται. (*Plutus*, 170)

it will be because of you if the unfaithful one is caught, and their head shaved.

In addition, in origin the Anglo-Norman word *adulterie* - derived as it was from the Latin *adulterium* (adulteration, contaminating or debasing something) - simply meant marital unfaithfulness without the later religious associations such as voiced by Thomas More in his 1532 work *The Confutacyon of Tyndales Answer*: "wedlokke [...] whyche god hym selfe bothe blessed and commaunded in paradyse and whyche holy scripture commendeth where it sayth that wedlokke is honorable where the bedde is vndefyled wyth auowtry." (ccliii)

what is bad. Reading τὸ κακὸν and not τὸ καλόν.

6.

geniture and changement. γενέσει καὶ μεταβολῇ. In respect of *geniture*, qv. my commentary on tractate XI:2, that "the unusual English word *geniture* expresses the meaning of γένεσις here: that which or those whom have their genesis (and their subsequent development) from or because of something else or because of someone else."

In respect of *changement*, as I noted in a comment on tractate XI:4, "I have here chosen 'changement' in preference to 'change' since *changement* (coming into English use around 1584) is more specific than 'change', suggesting variation, alteration, development, unfolding, transmutation."

7.

gifted with sentience. ἔλλογος. The Greek term occurs in the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle where he discusses the views of Eudoxus:

εὐδοξος μὲν οὖν τὴν ἡδονὴν τὰγαθὸν ᾤετ' εἶναι διὰ τὸ πάνθ' ὁρᾶν ἐφιέμενα αὐτῆς καὶ ἔλλογα καὶ ἄλογα (1172b.10)

Eudoxus considered that delight was the beneficent since his perception was that all, sentient or not sentient, sought it.

In a comment on this passage from Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas wrote:

quod Eudoxus existimabat delectationem esse de genere bonorum,

quia videbat quod omnia desiderant ipsam, tam rationalia scilicet homines, quam irrationalia, scilicet bruta animalia. (*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, Book X, l. 2 n. 2)

where the contrast, as in Aristotle, is between those gifted with sentience and those lacking sentience, but with Aquinas adding that the latter are 'dumb' animals (*brutis animalibus*), a difference between humans and animals that he considers in detail in his *Summa Theologiae* (*Prima Secundae, Quaestiones 6-17*).

killer. φονεὺς. To use the English word 'murderer' as a translation of the Greek carries with it relatively modern connotations that in my opinion are inappropriate, given that the word 'murder' can impute the sense of "the deliberate and unlawful killing of a human being" and "the action of killing or causing destruction of life, regarded as wicked and morally reprehensible irrespective of its legality."

The classical sense is evident, for example, in Sophocles:

φονέα σε φημι τάνδρὸς οὗ ζητεῖς κυρεῖν (*Oedipus Tyrannus*, 362)

I said you are the killer and thus the man you seek

κάνταῦθ' Ἀπόλλων οὔτ' ἐκεῖνον ἤνυσεν
φονέα γενέσθαι πατρὸς οὔτε Λαῖον
τὸ δεινὸν οὐφοβεῖτο πρὸς παιδὸς θανεῖν (*Oedipus Tyrannus*, 720-702)

So, in those days, Apollo did not bring about, for him,
That he slay the father who begot him - nor, for Laius,
That horror which he feared - being killed by his son.

Thus the choice is between two relatively neutral terms: killer, and slayer. Neither of which imputes the moralistic or legal sense of "unlawful killing" or of the act being "wicked and morally reprehensible." Instead, it is a statement of fact.

the one gifted with sentience will, though not unfaithful, be afflicted... just as, though not a killer, they will as if they had killed. An interesting passage which might be taken to mean that those gifted with sentience - who presumably are also, as the tractate states, "governed/guided by their perceiversion" - have the ability because of such things to know, understand, to intuit, what killing and unfaithfulness mean and imply (especially in terms of affliction) as if they themselves had done such things. That is, they have empathy, and thus can avoid doing what is bad.

disposition. See the note regarding ποιότης in section 23 below.

the noble daimon spoke of...would that he had written it. This seems to allude to an aural tradition, perhaps (qv. my introduction to tractate III) an ἱερός Λόγος, which was never written down, with the suggestion that what is being recounted in this tractate is such a tradition.

first-born divinity. πρωτόγονος θεός. While some assume that this refers to something Egyptian - for example, to the deity Khnum - I incline toward the view that it may be (i) a reference to an Orphic tradition, given that there is an Orphic poem which beings Πρωτόγονον καλέω διφυῆ μέγαν αἰθερόπλαγκτον, or (ii) more probably a term still in general use in Hellenic culture given it that was, for example, an epithet of the goddess Persephone, and given that it occurs in the commentary on Plato's Timaeus by Proclus.

divine logoi. θείους λόγους. Cf. τοὺς λόγους διδάσκων and σοφίας λόγους in Poemandres 29. There, the logoi are the various forms (or emanations) of the logos, and include the pneumal logos, the phaomal logos, and the logos kyrios.

I [...] thus became a guide to those of my kind, informing them of the logoi - of the way and the means of rescue - and engendered in them the logoi of sapientia, with the celestial elixir to nurture them. (Poemandres 29)

conceptible things. νοητὰ σώματα. That is, objects - things, materia, 'bodies' - which can be conceived of, which are conceptible, rather than having been physically seen, qv. the 'atoms' of Democritus: ἔτερι δὲ ἄτομα καὶ κενόν. See also Sextus Empiricus: οἱ γὰρ ἀτόμους εἰπόντες ἢ ὁμοιομερείας ἢ ὄγκους ἢ κοινῶς νοητὰ σώματα πάντων τῶν ὄντων κατώρθωσαν πῇ δὲ διέπεσον (Adversus Mathematicos, X, 252).

We have our being in potentiality, in activity, in Aion. ζῶμεν δὲ δυνάμει καὶ ἐνεργείᾳ καὶ Αἰῶνι. In respect of Aion, qv. tractate XI:3,

πηγὴ μὲν οὖν πάντων ὁ θεός, οὐσία δὲ ὁ αἰών, ὕλη δὲ ὁ κόσμος,
δύναμις δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἰών, ἔργον δὲ τοῦ αἰῶνος ὁ κόσμος, γενόμενος
οὐποτε, καὶ ἀεὶ γινόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος.

The foundation of all being is theos; of their quidditas, Aion; of their substance, Kosmos. The craft of theos: Aion; the work of Aion: Kosmos, which is not just a coming-into-being but always is, from Aion.

nothing separable. οὐδὲν διαστατόν. As noted in respect of διαστατός in the commentary on tractate IV:1, "what is not meant is 'dimension', given what the term 'dimension' now imputes scientifically and otherwise."

Archon. Cf. the MS reading ἄρχων καὶ ἡγέμων (archon and hegemon) in tractate XI:7. Since ἄρχων has been assimilated into the English language and

retained (c. 1755) its original meaning (ruler, governor, regent) it seems unnecessary to translate the term.

perceivration...whatever it desires. Cf Poemandres 12: ὁ δὲ πάντων πατὴρ ὁ Νοῦς ὦν ζωὴ καὶ φῶς... Perceivration, as Life and phaos, father of all...

9.

Numinous. θεῖος. As at tractate IV:6 I have opted for the English word numinous - which dates from 1647, derived from the classical Latin *numen* - to express the meaning of θεῖος here.

10.

somatic. πάθος. The English word somatic - from the Greek σῶμα - means "of or relating to the body; physical, corporeal". As in tractate VI:2 the sense of πάθος here is one of physicality, as in being physically afflicted or affected such that a 'living being deprived of logos' cannot control or affect the affliction, in this instance their cravings. As such, the English word 'passion' is inappropriate here as a translation of πάθος because it implies strong or deep feelings or emotions generally in human beings and thus is somewhat anthropomorphic, especially as a distinction is being made, as in sections 2 and 5, between mortals and those living beings, such as animals, who lack logos, which logos together with perceivration, are - as mentioned in section 12 - the two most precious gifts theos has given to mortals: ὅτι δύο ταῦτα τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ὁ θεὸς παρὰ πάντα τὰ θνητὰ ζῶια ἔχαρίσατο τὸν τε νοῦν καὶ τὸν λόγον, σότιμα τῇ ἀθανασίᾳ.

in alliance with the somatic. Reading συγχρηματίζων with the MSS and not the emendation συγχρωτίζων.

11.

corporeal, incorporeal. σῶμα, ἀσώματος. To try and express at least something of the meaning of the Greek here - which is somewhat metaphysically obscure - I have occasionally resorted to obsolete forms of those two English terms, such as 'corporified' (from corporify) implying "having a material or a bodily form".

In respect of the corporeal and the incorporeal, see tractates VIII and XI. In VIII one of the main themes is the corporeal: "It is regarding psyche and the corporeal that we now must speak..." In XI:22 it is stated that

οὐδὲν γὰρ ἀόρατον, οὐδὲ τῶν ἀσωμάτων· νοῦς ὁρᾶται ἐν τῷ νοεῖν, ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῷ ποιεῖν

nothing is unperceivable, not even the incorporeal, with
perceivration evident through apprehension, theos through creation.

somatical. παθητά. The sense is of being affected by, or subject to, what is somatic. As what follows - καὶ κυρίως αὐτὰ ἐστὶ πάθη - attempts to explain, and as is made clear later on in this section (διαφέρει δὲ πάθος παθητοῦ) somatical should not be confused with somatic.

changes, changed. Given the context, the various senses of κίνησις here are change, not motion - moving, move - in the physical sense as at tractate XI:8, πάντα δὲ πλήρη ψυχῆς καὶ πάντα κινούμενα, τὰ μὲν περὶ τὸν οὐρανόν, τὰ δὲ περὶ τὴν γῆν, all are replete with psyche, all in motion, some around the heavens with others around the Earth.

vigour. ἐνέργεια. Qv. Poemandres 14 and 15. The English terms energy and energize have too many modern, irrelevant, connotations, in respect of the science of physics and otherwise.

12.

perceiviation and logos. Omitting - with Patrizi - the following τὸν δὲ προφορικὸν λόγον ἔχει as a gloss.

deathlessness. In respect of this unusual English word, qv. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *The Soul's Travelling* (IX),

"And as they touch your soul, they borrow
Both of its grandeur and its sorrow,
That deathly odour with which the clay
Leaves on its deathlessness away."

denotata, denotatum. προσηγορία here implies more than 'name'. That is, a terminology; a specialized vocabulary, in this case one related to metaphysics (qv. πλανώμενος τῇ προσηγορίᾳ τοῦ γινομένου in section 16). Hence the translations 'denotata' and denotatum (singular) to suggest this.

13.

And yet, do other livings not have language. τὰ γὰρ ἄλλα ζῶια λόγῳ οὐ χρᾶται. While λόγος here is generally taken to mean 'speech', given what follows with its mention of animals making 'sounds' and the exposition regarding the different languages spoken by mortals, the translation 'language' is more apt, as in being able to communicate, to say something specific the meaning of which can be explained and understood by diverse others. A usage of λόγος as for example in the following exchange between Oedipus and the Chorus:

Οἰδίπους:

οἷσθ' οὖν ἃ χρῆζεις.

Χορός:

οἶδα.

Οἰδίπους:

φράζε δὴ τί φής.

Χορός:

τὸν ἐναγῆ φίλον μήποτ' ἐν αἰτία σὺν ἀφανεῖ λόγῳ σ' ἄτιμον βαλεῖν.

Oedipus:

Do you know what it is that you so desire?

Chorus:

I do know.

Oedipus:

Then explain what you believe it to be.

Chorus:

When a comrade is under oath, you should never accuse him because of unproved rumours and brand him as being without honour.

(Oedipus Tyrannus, vv. 653-657)

folk. ἔθνος. Since the English term 'nation' now implies things which the Greek word does not - such as a modern political State - it is inappropriate here. A suitable alternative to folk would be 'people'.

mortal nature, Qv. section 1.

one. εἷς. It is probable that this refers to a metaphysical concept such as described in tractate XI:11,

καὶ ὅτι μὲν ἔστι τις ὁ ποιῶν ταῦτα δῆλον· ὅτι δὲ καὶ εἷς,
φανερῶτατον· καὶ γὰρ μία ψυχὴ καὶ μία ζωὴ καὶ μία ὕλη. τίς δὲ
οὗτος; τίς δὲ ἂν ἄλλος εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός; τίνι γὰρ ἄλλῳ ἂν καὶ πρέποι
ζῶια ἔμψυχα ποιεῖν, εἰ μὴ μόνῳ τῷ θεῷ; εἷς οὖν θεός καὶ τὸν μὲν
κόσμον ὠμολόγησας ἀεὶ εἶναι καὶ τὸν ἥλιον ἕνα καὶ τὴν σελήνην μίαν
καὶ θειότητα μίαν, αὐτὸν δὲ τὸν θεὸν πόστον εἶναι θέλεις

It is evident someone is so creating and that he is One; for Psyche is one, Life is one, Substance is one. But who is it? Who could it be if not One, the theos? To whom if

not to theos alone would it belong to presence life in living beings? Theos therefore is One, for having accepted the Kosmos is one, the Sun is one, the Moon is one, and divinity-presented is one, could you maintain that theos is some other number?

psyche in corporeality. The context is indicative of σώματι here referring to corporeality in general; that is, the quality or state of being corporeal; bodily form or nature; materiality.

14.

eikon. εἰκὼν, qv. my commentary on Poemandres 21 and 31, and also see tractate VIII:2 and tractate XI:15.

outward form. ἰδέα. To translate here simply as 'form' (or idea) may give the impression that the ἰδέα of Plato may be meant with the text thus interpreted in accord with his philosophy and especially with what has been termed his 'theory of forms'. However, since the reference here is to corporeality in the context of perceivization as εἰκὼν of theos, a more metaphysical sense is suggested. Hence, my interpretation as 'outward form', which thus leaves open the question as to whether or not there is any correlation with 'the theory of forms'.

substance. ὕλη. That is, the materia of 'things' and living beings. Qv. Poemandres 10 and tractate III:1.

Air. ἀήρ. Air as a fundamental element, hence the capitalization as with the preceding Substance.

necessitas. ἀνάγκη. In myth, Ananke was the ancient goddess of wyrd, thus having power over Meiros ('fate') and of what is considered necessary for mortals (such as death), hence the translation of 'necessity'. As mentioned in my commentary on tractate XII:5, although the Latin 'Necessitas' is a suitable alternative for the Greek, a transliteration (Ananke) is perhaps preferable although less readable.

Necessitas, foreseeing, and physis, are implements of Kosmos. Qv. tractate XII:5 where a similar expression occurs:

συνέχει δὲ τοῦτον ὁ αἰὼν, εἴτε δι' ἀνάγκην εἴτε πρόνοιαν εἴτε φύσιν
καὶ εἴ τι ἄλλο οἶται ἢ οἰήσεται τις

Aion maintains this through necessitas or through foreseeing or through physis, or through whatever other assumption we assume

foreseeing. πρόνοια. Foreseeing includes such arts as prophecy.

apprehended. Cf. Poemandres 3: νοῆσαι τὴν τοῦ των φύσιν, to apprehend the physis of beings; that is to discern, discover, their being, their relation to other beings, and to Being.

corpus, corpora. I have here used a Latin term for σῶμα (*corpus*, plural *corpora*) in order to try to give some intimation of the meaning of the text (the Greek is somewhat obscure), and to avoid using the rather prosaic terms 'body' and 'bodies', and to thus suggest technical terms which expound and befit a metaphysical *weltanschauung*, implying as they do here 'materia' in general; the stuff, the material, that exists in the Universe, and how such *corpora* including mortals relate to *theos*.

15.

arithmos. I have detailed the reasons for transliterating ἀριθμός in my commentary on tractate IV:10. In essence, the translation 'number' does not express the metaphysical meaning here, qv. Aristotle *Metaphysics*, Book XIII, 1080b.20 and 1083b.10 et seq.

In addition, Proclus (in his Στοιχείωσις θεολογική, propositions 113f) wrote of ἀριθμός and ἐνάδες (*henads*) as essential parts of a cosmogony involving the gods, with Proclus equating ἐνάδες with those gods (op.cit., propositions 114ff),

εἰ γὰρ τῶν ἐνάδων διττὸς ὁ ἀριθμός, ὡς δέδεικται πρότερον, καὶ αἱ μὲν αὐτοτελεῖς εἰσιν αἱ δὲ ἐλλάμπεις ἀπ' ἐκείνων, τῷ δὲ ἐνὶ καὶ τάγαθῷ συγγενῆς καὶ ὁμοφυῆς ὁ θεῖος ἀριθμός, ἐνάδες εἰσὶν αὐτοτελεῖς οἱ θεοί. (114)

There is also an interesting passage in a fragment of the commentary on Aristotle by Andronicus of Rhodes where *psyche* is said to have been described as ἀριθμός:

ἀριθμόν γὰρ ἐκάλουν φησὶ 'τὴν ψυχὴν ὅτι μηδὲν ζῶον ἐξ ἀπλοῦ σώματος ἀλλὰ κατὰ τινὰς λόγους καὶ ἀριθμοὺς κραθέντων τῶν πρώτων στοιχείων. (Themistii in libros Aristotelis De anima paraphrasis, XXXII, 23)

Regarding ἀριθμός in tractate IV:10, the relevant part is:

μονὰς οὗσα οὖν ἀρχὴ πάντα ἀριθμόν ἐμπεριέχει, ὑπὸ μηδενὸς ἐμπεριεχομένη, καὶ πάντα ἀριθμόν γεννᾷ ὑπὸ μηδενὸς γεννωμένη ἐτέρου ἀριθμοῦ.

The *Monas*, since it is the origin, enfolds every *arithmos* without itself being enfolded by any, begetting every *arithmos* but not begotten by any.

henads. ἐνάδες. A transliteration in common use since the concept of the ἐνός - the Unity, often equated with μονάς - is metaphysical and has various interpretations in Plato, Iamblichus, Proclus, and others.

cosmic order. κόσμος. Cf. Poemandres 7.

a mighty theos. In respect of the term μέγας θεός it is interesting to note that frescoes in a Minoan settlement in Akrotiri on the island of Santorini depict η μεγάλη θεά (the mighty goddess) among women holding bunches of flowers and a woman holding a net which, given the presence of birds in the fresco, is possibly for catching birds as gifts for the goddess.

The term μέγας θεός also occurs in Acts 19:17 in reference to the Temple of Artemis - μεγάλης θεᾶς Ἀρτέμιδος ἱερὸν - with Artemis mentioned again in v.28, Μεγάλη ἡ Ἀρτεμις Ἐφεσίων (Powerful is Artemis of the Ephesians).

cyclic return. Qv. tractate XI:2, ἀποκατάστασις καὶ ἀνταποκατάστασις, cyclic return and renewal.

while it exists. Referring to the 'cosmic order' and thus to Kosmos, eikon of a more mighty divinity.

16.

the denotata of being-becoming. Qv. the comment in section 11 regarding denotata and denotatum.

17.

nurturer. τιθήνη. Cf. tractate XI:7, τροφὸν καὶ τιθήνην, nourisher and nurturer.

fourth parsement. τέταρτον μέρος. By a parsement - partiment, from the Latin partimentum - is meant the fundamental (the basic, elemental, primal) component or principle of 'things' as understood or as posited in Hellenic times. Here Earth is described as the fourth part, the other three being Air, Water, and Fire. Cf. Poemandres 8.

18.

alertness. αἴσθησις. Alertness as in being perceptively aware of one's surroundings. Cf. Poemandres 5.

pnuema. πνεῦμα. A transliteration for reasons explained in my commentary on the text of Poemandres 5. In sum, the usual translation of 'spirit' is too restrictive and has too many modern and Christian associations. The various senses of πνεῦμα in classical times are summarized in DeWitt Burton, *Spirit, Soul, and Flesh: The Usage of Πνεῦμα, Ψυχή, and Σάρξ in Greek Writings and Translated Works from the Earliest Period to 225 AD* (University of Chicago Press, 1918).

19.

Therefore all living beings [...] perceiv[er]ation. Reading διὰ τὸν νοῦν and not δι' αὐτόν.

20.

capability. δύναμις. Not 'strength' or 'power' per se, but rather having the capacity, the capability, to do - to change, to craft, to bring-into-being - anything. Cf. δύναμις δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἰὼν in tractate XI: 3,

πηγὴ μὲν οὖν πάντων ὁ θεός, οὐσία δὲ ὁ αἰὼν, ὕλη δὲ ὁ κόσμος,
δύναμις δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἰὼν, ἔργον δὲ τοῦ αἰῶνος ὁ κόσμος, γενόμενος
οὐποτε, καὶ ἀεὶ γινόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος· διὸ οὐδὲ φθαρήσεται ποτε
αἰὼν γὰρ ἄφθαρτος οὐδὲ ἀπολεῖται τι τῶν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, τοῦ κόσμου
ὑπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος ἐμπεριεχομένου.

The foundation of all being is theos; of their quidditas, Aion; of their substance, Kosmos. The craft of theos: Aion; the work of Aion: Kosmos, which is not just a coming-into-being but always is, from Aion. Thus it cannot be destroyed since Aion is not destroyable nor will Kosmos cease to be since Aion surrounds it.

21.

influencive. κινέω. That is, to affect things, to set things in motion, to cause change.

actuosities. ἐνέργειαι. The sense of the Greek here is of (often vigorous) activity or occurrences either natural or which result from the actions of divinities or daimons. To try and convey something of this, I have chosen the English term 'actuosities' rather than 'energies' which - given what the English term 'energy' now often imputes - does not in my view express the metaphysical meaning here. The English word actusosity derives from the classical Latin actuosus, with the adjective actuose occurring in a 1677 book by Theophilus Gale: "Ἐνεργεῖν, as applied to God, notes his actuose, efficacious, and predeterminate concurse in and with althings." (The Court of The Gentiles. Part III, London, 1677).

A more recent usage was by Ferrarin in chapter 8 - Aristotle's De anima and Hegel's philosophy of subjective spirit - of his book *Hegel and Aristotle* (Cambridge University Press, 2001) where he wrote: "Hegel appropriates and transforms the meaning of *energeia* to define spirit. Spirit is actusosity..."

aspects. Reading μέρη ἐστὶ not μέλη ἐστὶ.

blood. Reading καὶ αἷμα with the MSS. In the metaphysical context of the tractate, blood as an 'aspect of theos' makes sense.

22.

All That Exists. τὸ πᾶν. Literally, 'the all', but metaphysically implying 'all that exists', that is, the Universe.

23.

disposition. ποιότης. As in section 7, not signifying here 'quality' but rather 'disposition,' qv. ποιός, what kind, nature, type, character.

What is being enumerated - οὔτε μέγεθος οὔτε τόπος οὔτε ποιότης οὔτε σχῆμα οὔτε χρόνος - are not abstractions (such as 'time') but rather mortal-type attributes and appellations that are irrelevant in respect of theos.

respected and followed. Given the metaphysical - not religious - tone and content of the tractate, I incline toward the view that προσκύνει καὶ θρήσκει here does not imply a Christian-type reverence or worship or even being religious, but rather respect and following, as various Hellenic weltanschauungen or philosophies were respected and followed.

Ερμού του τρισεγγίστου προς τον υιόν Τάτ
εν όρει λόγος απόκρυφος περί παλιγγενεσίας και σιγής επαγγελίας

On A Mountain:
Hermes Trismegistus To His Son Thoth,
An Esoteric Discourse Concerning Palingenesis
And The Requirement of Silence

Tractate XIII

ooo

Translation

[1] When, father, you in the Exoterica conversed about divinity your language was enigmatic and obscure. There was, from you, no disclosure; instead, you said no one can be rescued before the Palingenesis. Now, following our discussion as we were passing over the mountain I became your supplicant, inquiring into learning the discourse on Palingenesis since that, out of all of them, is the only one unknown to me, with you saying it would be imparted to me when I became separated from the world.

Thus I prepared myself, distancing my ethos from the treachery in the world. Therefore - by explaining it either aloud or in secret - rectify my insufficiencies since you said you would impart Palingenesis to me.

Trismegistus, I am unknowing of what source a mortal is begotten and from what sown.

[2] My son, noetic sapientia is in silence, with the sowing the genuinely noble.

Father, that is completely impenetrable. So, of whom dispersed?

Of, my son, the desire of theos.

Father, of what kind then the begotten? For I do not share in such a quidditas and such a perceivitation.

Those begotten of theos are other than theos: young but entirely whole, mixon of all abilities.

Father, you speak enigmatically to me, not in the language of a teacher to a pupil.

My son, this emanation is not taught; rather, it is presented by and when the theos desires.

[3] Father, while you speak of what is impractical and forced, I on my part seek what is straightforward. Was I produced as a foreign son of the paternal emanation? Do not repine me, father: I am a rightful son. Relate - plainly - the way of palingenesis.

My son, what is there to say? All that can be told is this: I saw an unshaped vista, brought-into-being through the generosity of theos, of me setting forth to a deathless body, and now I am not that before because engendered by perceivization.

This matter is not taught: not through that shaped part through which is seeing. Thus and for me there is no concern for the initial mixturous form. It is not as if I am biochrome and have tactility and definity: I am a stranger to them. You, my son, now observe me with your eyes and directly see my physicality and perceptible form. And yet, my son, I am now not understandable with those eyes.

[4] Father, you have stung the heart, causing no minor distraction, for I cannot now perceive myself.

Would that you, my son, would - while not asleep - go beyond yourself as those who sleepfully dream.

Inform me also of this: who is the essentiator of the Palingenesis?

Through the desire of theos: The Mortal One, child of theos.

[5] Father, what you have now presented has silenced me, with a forsaking of what was previously in my heart <...> since I perceive that your stature and your likeness are still the same.

In that you have been deceived, for the form of the deathful alters every day: changed by the seasons, it grows then withers and so deceives.

[6] What then - Trismegistus - is the actuality?

My son: the imperturbable, the indistinguishable, the un-complexioned, the figureless, the steadfast, the unadorned, the revealed, the self-perceiving, the unwaveringly noble, the immaterial.

Father, I am completely confused. Just when I considered you were engendering learning in me, the perceptibility of my apprehension was obstructed.

Thus it is, my son. It ascends, as Fire does, and descends, as Earth does, and

flows, as Water does, and is neumæos as is Air. But how can you apprehend through perception what is insubstantial, what is not flowing, what is unmixturous, what is undissolved; that which is only apprehensible through influence and actusity, requiring someone able to apprehend that bringing-into-being within theos?

[7] Father, am I then deficient?

Not so, my son. Go within: and an arriving. Intend: and an engendering. Let physical perceptibility rest, and divinity will be brought-into-being. Refine yourself, away from the brutish Alastoras of Materies.

Alastoras are within me, then, father?

Not just a few, my son, but many and terrifying.

I do not apprehend them, father.

My son, one Vengeress is Unknowing; the second, Grief. The third, Unrestraint; the fourth, Lascivity. The fifth, Unfairness; the sixth, Coveter. The seventh, Deceit; the eighth, Envy. The ninth, Treachery; the tenth, Wroth. The eleventh, Temerity; the twelfth, Putridity.

In number, these are twelve but below them are numerous others who, my son, compel the inner mortal - bodily incarcerated - to suffer because of perceptibility. But they absent themselves - although not all at once - from those to whom theos is generous, which is what the Way and Logos of Palingenesis consists of.

[8] Henceforward, speak quietly, my son, and keep this secret. For thus may the generosity of theos toward us continue.

Henceforward, my son, be pleased, having refinement through the cræfts of theos to thus comprehend the Logos.

My son, to us: arrivance of Knowledge of Theos. On arrival: Unknowing is banished. My son, to us: arrivance of Knowledge of Delightfulness: on arriving, Grief runs away to those who have the room.

[9] The influence invoked following Delightfulness is Self-Restraint: a most pleasant influence. Let us, my son, readily welcome her: arriving, she immediately pushes Unrestraint aside.

The fourth invoked is Perseverance who is influxious against Lascivity. Which Grade, my son, is the foundation of Ancestral Custom: observe how without any deliberation Unfairness was cast out. My son, we are vindicated since Unfairness has departed.

The sixth influence invoked for us - against Coveter - is community. With that departed, the next invocation: Actualis, and thus - with Actualis presenced - does Deceit run away. Observe, my son, how with Actualis presenced and Envy absent, the noble has been returned. For, following Actualis, there is the noble, together with Life and Phaos.

No more does the retribution of Skotos supervene, for, vanquished, they whirlingly rush away.

[10] Thus, my son, you know the Way of Palingenesis. By the Dekad brought-into-being, geniture of apprehension was produced, banishing those twelve; and by this geniture we are of theos.

Thus whomsoever because of that generosity obtains divine geniture, having gone beyond physical perceptibility, discovers that they consist of such, and are pleased.

[11] With a quietude, father, engendered by theos, the seeing is not of the sight from the eyes but that through the noetic actus of the cræft. I am in the Heavens; on Earth; in Water; in Air. I am in living beings, in plants; in the womb, before the womb, after the womb. Everywhere.

But speak to me about how the retributions of Skotos - which are twelve in number - are pushed aside by ten influences. What is that Way, Trismegistus?

[12] My son, this body which we have passed beyond is constituted from the circular Zodiac which is composed of beings, twelve in number and of the same physis, yet polymorphous in appearance so as to lead mortals astray. The difference between them, my son, becomes one when they act <...> Temerity united with Wroth, and indistinguishable.

It is probably correct to say that all of them withdraw when pushed away by those ten influences: that is, by the Dekad. For, my son, the Dekad is an effector of psyche, with Life and Phaos a unity there where the arithmos of the Henad is brought forth from the pneuma. Thus it is reasonable that the Henad contains the Dekad and the Dekad the Henad.

[13] Father, I observe All That Exists, and myself, in the perceivance.

My son, this is the Palingenesis: to no more present the body in three separations, through this disclosure regarding Palingenesis, which I have written about for you alone so as not to be rouners of all these things to the many but instead to whomsoever theos himself desires.

[14] Inform me, father, if this body - constituted of such cræfts - is liable to dissipation.

Speak quietly and do not talk of deficiencies or you shall be in error with the eye of your perceivation disrespectful. The perceptible body of physis is far away from the quidditas of geniture, for one is dissipative, the other is not-dissipative; one is deathful, the other deathless.

Do you not know that you are engendered of theos, as a child of The One, as am I?

[15] Father, my inclination is for the laudation of the song you said you heard from those influences when you reached the Ogdoad.

Just as, my son, Poemandres divined about the Ogdoad. It is noble of you to hasten to leave that dwelling for you are now refined. Poemandres, the perceivation of authority, did not impart to me anything other than what is written, understanding that I would apprehended the entirety; hearing what I was inclined to, observing the entirety, and entrusting me to presence the beautiful. Thus do all those influences within me chant.

Father, I desire to hear them so that I might apprehend.

[16] Be quiet my son: now hear that most fitting laudation, the song of Palingenesis which I had chosen not to openly divulge except to you at your completion and which is not taught but concealed through silence.

Thus, my son, on your feet in a place open to the air look respectfully to the Southwind as Helios descends, as at the ascending and toward the Eastwind.

Be quiet my son.

Logos Δ. The Esoteric Song

[17] Let every Physis of Kosmos favourably listen to this song.
Gaia: be open, so that every defence against the Abyss is opened for me;
Trees: do not incurvate;
For I now will sing for the Master Artisan,
For All That Exists, and for The One.

Open: you Celestial Ones; and you, The Winds, be calm.
Let the deathless clan of theos accept this, my logos.
For I shall sing of the maker of everything;
Of who established the Earth,
Of who affixed the Heavens,

Of who decreed that Oceanus should bring forth sweet water
To where was inhabited and where was uninhabited
To so sustain all mortals;
Of who decreed that Fire should bring light
To divinities and mortals for their every use.

Let us all join in fond celebration of who is far beyond the Heavens:
That artisan of every Physis.

May the one who is the eye of perceivration accept this fond celebration
From my Arts.

[18] Let those Arts within me sing for The One and for All That Exists
As I desire all those Arts within me to blend, together.

Numinous knowledge, from you a numinal understanding:
Through you, a song of apprehended phaos,
Delighted with delightful perceivrance.
Join me, all you Arts, in song.

You, mastery, sing; and you, respectful of custom,
Through me sing of such respect.
Sing, my companions, for All That Exists:
Honesty, through me, sing of being honest,
The noble, sing of nobility.

Phaos and Life: fond celebration spreads from us to you.

My gratitude, father: actusosity of those my Arts.
My gratitude, theos: Artisan of my actuosities;
Through me, the Logos is sung for you.
Through me, may Kosmos accept
Such respectful wordful offerings as this.

[19] Such is what the Arts within me loudly call out. They sing of All That Exists;
they accomplish your desire. From you: deliberations; then to you, from All That
Exists.

Accept from Kosmos - the Kosmos within us - respectful wordful offerings. Life,
recure! Phaos, reveal! Theos, spiritus! For - Breath-Giver, Artisan - it is your
Logos that Perceivration guides.

[20] You are theos. Your mortal loudly calls out: through Fire, through Air,
through Earth, through Water, through Pneuma, through your created beings.

To me, from your Aion, a laudation. And, through your deliberations, I
discovered the repose that I seek. Because of your desire, I perceived.

[21] Father, I also have assigned the laudation you spoke of to my Kosmos.

My son, speak of "in the apprehended."

In the apprehended I am able to do, father. For me, through your song and your laudation, a more numinal perceivance. And yet, there is a desire for me to convey from my own heart a laudation to theos.

My son, do not be incautious.

Father, what I behold in the perceivance, I say. It is to theos, to you - essentiator of engenderment - that I, Thoth, convey wordful offerings. Theos, you the Father; you the Kyrios, you the Perceivance, accept the respectful wordful offerings you desire. For, by your deliberations, all is accomplished.

My son, you convey an agreeable offering to theos, father of all. But you should add "through the Logos."

[22] My thanks to you, father, for your advice regarding the invocation.

My son, I am glad that the actuality has borne good fruit, the unrottable produce. Having learned of this from me, profess silence my son about this wonder, revealing to no one the tradition of the Palingenesis, for otherwise we will be regarded as rouners. Each of us has had a sufficiency of interest: I in speaking, you in listening. Through noesis you have obtained knowledge about yourself and our father

ooo

Commentary

Title.

Ερμού του τρισεγγίστου προς τον υιόν Τάτ εν όρει λόγος απόκρυφος περί παλιγγενεσίας και σιγής επαγγελίας. On A Mountain: Hermes Trismegistus To His Son Thoth, An Esoteric Discourse Concerning Palingenesis And The Requirement of Silence.

Thoth. As in other tractates I translate Τάτ by Thoth, avoiding the conventional *Tat* which, in English, has a colloquial meaning inappropriate here. As to which 'Thoth' is meant, the consensus is that in this and some other tractates it refers to the son (possibly biologically or more probably metaphorically) of Hermes

Trismegistus who himself was named by the Greeks as Thoth, with the Τάτ of some other tractates being a scribal corruption of the name Thoth.

Esoteric Discourse. λόγος απόκρυφος. While 'esoteric' is an apt translation in regard to απόκρυφος, 'discourse' is not entirely satisfactory in respect of λόγος since it could be here interpreted to mean 'disclosure' or 'explanation'. However, given what follows in section 1 - πυθομένου τὸν τῆς παλιγγενεσίας λόγον μαθεῖν...παραδιδόναι μοι - 'discourse' seems appropriate.

Palingenesis. Rather than ascribe a particular meaning to παλιγγενεσία - such as 'rebirth' or 'regeneration' - I have chosen the English word palingenesis (from the Latin palingenesia) with that term explained by what follows in this particular discourse, qv. vv. 12 and 13.

Requirement. The sense of ἐπαγγελία here, given what is discussed in this tractate, is 'requirement' rather than the strident 'command' or what is implied by the rather vague word 'promise'.

1.

Father. The Greek ὦ πάτερ - literally 'my father' - is a polite form of address, akin to the English 'sir'. Similarly, ὦ τέκνον - 'my son' - is a polite reply. Given the esoteric nature of the text, a possible interpretation here of ὦ πάτερ would be 'Master', and of ὦ τέκνον 'my pupil'.

in the Exoterica. Ἐν τοῖς γενικοῖς. Since the term γενικῶν λόγων occurs in tractate X it is reasonable to assume that γενικός here refers to the same thing although the meaning of the term is moot given that no details are provided in this tractate nor in tractate X, nor in Stobaeus (Excerpts, III, 1 and VI, 1) where the terms also occurs. While most translators have assumed that it refers to 'generic' things or 'generalities' and thus (by adding λόγοι) have opted for an expression such as 'General Discourses', and given that a transliteration - such as genikois or genikoi - is awkward, I have in respect of the γενικοὶ opted for exoterica (from the Latin via the Greek τὰ ἐξωτερικά) with the meaning of "exoteric treatises designed for or suitable to the generality of disciples or students," with the plausible suggestion thus being that there are exoteric Hermetic treatises and esoteric Hermetic treatises, with Reitzenstein describing these other treatises as διεξοδικοί λόγοι (R.A. Reitzenstein. *Poimandres*. Teubner, Leipzig. 1904. p.118) a distinction he also mentioned in his later work *Die Hellenistischen Mysterien Religionen*.

passing over the mountain. I follow the MSS and read μεταβάσεως rather than the emendation καταβάσεως, taking the sense of μεταβάσεως here as "passing over" - walking on and over - the mountain. There seems no need for the emendation - which implies a descent from the mountain - with its possible suggestion of something more symbolic, more religious or mystical, having

occurred, as for example might be implied in the Gospel of John with the juxtaposition of κατέβη and ἀνέβη in chapter one vv.12-13, with Thomas Aquinas writing:

"Sed non vacat a mysterio, quod in Capharnaum descendit, et postmodum Ierosolymam ascendit. Nisi enim descendisset primum, non competisset ei ascendere: quia, ut dicitur Eph. IV, 10, qui descendit, ipse est et qui ascendit." *Super Evangelium S. Ioannis lectura*, Caput II, Lectio 1

That he descended to Capernaum and then ascended to Jerusalem is not without its mystery since if he did not first descend he would not have been able to then ascend, for as has been related (Eph. IV, 10) "The one who descended is the same as the one who ascended."

the discourse on palingenesis. The Greek word translated here as 'discourse' is λόγος, as in the title.

imparted to me. παραδίδωμι carries the sense here of 'handing down' - of transmitting, disclosing - some ancestral teaching or wisdom; a disclosing from master to pupil.

separated from the world. In respect of ἀπαλλοτριόω what is implied is not 'alienated' from (which has too many modern connotations) the world (κόσμος), but rather 'separate' - distanced - from the world, from worldly things, as a mystic is often 'otherworldly' and may seem to be - to others, and to themselves - a stranger in the world.

distancing my ethos. Reading ἀπηλλοτριώσα (with Parthey, et al) not the emendation of Nock (ἀπηνδρείωσα) with φρόνημα here suggestive of one's character and especially of one's "way of thinking", one's weltanschauung: that is, the 'spirit' or ethos which guides one's way of life.

treachery. ἀπάτης. Personified in Hesiod's Theogony as a child of Night (Νύξ) along with "darksome Kir and Death" - Κῆρα μέλαιναν καὶ Θάνατον - and Nemesis, Νέμεσις.

rectify my insufficiencies. τὰ ὑστερήματα ἀναπλήρωσον. An alternative, literal, translation would be "supply what is needed."

since you said you would impart Palingenesis to me. Given the somewhat unusual phrasing here - οἷς ἔφης μοι παλιγγενεσίας παραδοῦναι, which led Nock to add γένεσιν after παλιγγενεσίας - it seems that παλιγγενεσίας is the title given to a particular doctrine or esoteric theory rather than just a term such as 'rebirth'. Hence my capitalization.

what source ... what sown. The metaphysical context - and the reply - suggests that both μήτρας and σπορᾶς are meant metaphorically rather than literally

(womb, seed).

mortal. As in other tractates I translate ἄνθρωπος as 'mortal' rather than as 'man'. Which here - as in other tractates - suits both the Hellenic context, of mortals contrasted with the immortal theos and the immortal theoi, and the metaphysical context of immortality being possibly attainable by select mortals.

2.

noetic sapientia. For a variety of reasons, I have used the term *noetic sapientia* to denote σοφία νοερὰ.

i) The metaphysical terms νοῦς νοερός, νοῦς οὐσιώδης, and νοῦς ζωτικός occur in Proclus, qv. *Procli Diadochi In Platonis Timaeum Commentari*, Volume 5, Book 4, 245-247; *Procli in Platonis Parmenidem Commentaria*, II 733 and IV 887. Interestingly, Proclus associates νοερός with the three 'septenary planets' Mercury, Venus, and the Sun.

Here, σοφία νοερὰ may well suggest a particular hermetic principle which requires contextual interpretation.

ii) As noted in my commentary on Poemandres 29 - where I used the Latin *sapientia* in respect of σοφία - in some contexts the English word 'wisdom' does not fully reflect the meaning (and the various shades) of σοφία, especially in a metaphysical (or esoteric) context given what the English term 'wisdom' now, in common usage and otherwise, often denotes. As in the Poemandres tractate *sapientia* (for σοφία) requires contextual - a philosophical - interpretation, as Sophia (for σοφία) does in tractate XI where it is there suggestive, as with Aion, Kronos, and Kosmos, of a personified metaphysical principle.

iii) In respect of νοερός, the English word 'intellectual' has too many irrelevant modern connotations, with phrases such as 'intellectual wisdom' and 'the wisdom that understands' - for σοφία νοερὰ - unhelpful regarding suggesting a relevant philosophical meaning. Hence the use of the term 'noetic' which suggests a particular type of apprehension - a perceivation - whereby certain knowledge and a particular understanding can be ascertained.

Thus, *noetic sapientia* implies that the knowledge and understanding that is noetically acquired transcends - or at least is different from - that acquired both (a) through observation of and deductions concerning phenomena and (b) through the use of denotatum whereby beings are given 'names' and assigned to abstractive categories with such naming and such categories assumed to provide knowledge and understanding of the physis of those beings. [In respect of physis, qv. the comment on φύσεως μιᾶς in section 12.]

In addition, given what follows - ἐν σιγῇ, 'in silence' - such knowledge and understanding does not require nor depend upon words whether they be spoken

or written or thought. Hence, the 'source' of mortals is in, can be known and understood through, the silence of noetic sapientia.

genuine. In respect of ἀληθινός as 'genuine', cf. Poemandres 30, ἀληθινὴ ὅρασις.

noble. Regarding ἀγαθός as 'noble/nobility/honour', qv. my commentary on Poemandres 22 and my essays *Concerning ἀγαθός and νοῦς in the Corpus Hermeticum* and *Cicero On Summum Bonum*.

of whom dispersed. To express the meaning of the Greek, to avoid gender bias and because of the following παῖς, I have here used the plural rather than the singular, those avoiding expressions such as "I do not share/he does not share" and "he that is begotten of theos." This also has the advantage of avoiding a misapprehension such as "the begotten one will be different, a god, a son of god."

the desire of theos. In respect of θέλημα here, qv. v.18, συνάσατε τῷ θελήματί μου πᾶσαι αἱ ἐν ἐμοὶ δυνάμεις.

quidditas. οὐσία. As at tractates XI:2 and VI:1, quidditas is a more appropriate translation of οὐσία rather than either 'essence' or 'substance'. Quidditas is post-classical Latin, from whence the English word quiddity, and here as in those tractates should be understood as a philosophical term requiring contextual interpretation. One possible interpretation of quidditas here as at VI:1 is 'the being of that being/entity', with such quidditas often presented in - and perceived via or as - φύσις (physis).

such a perceiviation. I have followed the MSS and translated καὶ τῆς νοητῆς, omitted by Nock et al. In respect of νοητῆς, cf. Plutarch on the views of Krantor of Soli regarding psyche: μιγνύντι τὴν ψυχὴν ἐκ τε τῆς νοητῆς καὶ τῆς περὶ τὰ αἰσθητὰ δοξαστῆς φύσεως (De Anima Procreatione in Timaeo, 1).

In respect of νοῦς as perceiviation/perceivance, qv. my commentary on the Poemandres tractate.

entirely whole. τὸ πᾶν ἐν παντί. A literal translation - "the all in all" - does not in its blandness (and the fact that "all in all" is a colloquialism) convey the meaning of the Greek, which considering what follows is suggestive of "entirely whole."

mixture of all abilities. ἐκ πασῶν δυνάμεων συνεστώς. Mixture - a variant spelling of mixtion, meaning melded, compounded, combined, composed of - is most suitable for συνεστώς given the metaphysical matters discussed.

a teacher to a pupil. ὃ τέκνον and ὃ πάτερ not here literally referring to how a father should converse with his son but rather to a teacher instructing a pupil,

with the pupil expecting the teacher to explain matters clearly rather than by means of riddles.

emanation. I incline toward the view that γένος (which is literally, 'kind', species, race, folk, breed) is used here as a technical term which - given what follows, ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀναμυμήσκεται, and the fact that it is not feasible for one mortal to impart knowledge about it to another mortal - here implies a particular 'emanation' of theos; a knowing of which one has to, as Hermes goes on to describe, experience for it to be properly understood. Such 'emanations of theos' are described in the Poemandres tractate where they are symbolized by a septenary system and the two "immortal" (acausal) realms which await for mortals beyond those seven spheres, with knowledge of these emanations being acquired by the ἀνοδος (anados, the upward journey) from the deathful realms to the realms of the deathless.

The term emanation also has the advantage of connotating the literal meaning of γένος since an 'emanation' is derived from a particular kind, breed, or lineage.

presenced. The term 'presenced' is from the noun 'presencing' (derived from the Latin praesentia) and means "the action or process of making some-thing manifest and/or present and/or established."

ἀναμυμήσκω is a very interesting word to use and one which has a variety of meanings depending on context, and thus does not always impute something to do with either 'mind' or with 'memory' as those English terms are now often understood with their implications of those 'things' having some sort of an existence 'somewhere' - in the case of 'memory' as a faculty of the 'mind' - and/or as quantifiable 'things'.

In the world of ancient heroes and warriors, as evoked by Homer, it is simply a 'mentioning' of something:

ὦ φίλ', ἐπεὶ δὴ ταῦτά μ' ἀνέμνησας καὶ ἔειπες,
φασὶ μνηστῆρας σῆς μητέρος εἶνεκα πολλοὺς
ἐν μεγάροις ἀέκητι σέθεν κακὰ μηχανάσθαι

My friend - since you have, in speaking to me, mentioned this,
There are indeed rumours of many suitors for your mother being in your home
Against your will who are plotting to do you harm.

(Homer, The Odyssey, Book III, 321-323)

In Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles it implies a 'seeing again' of things past:

ἀλλ' ἐγὼ σαφῶς
ἀγνώτ' ἀναμνήσω νιν. εὔ γὰρ οἶδ' ὅτι
κάτοιδεν, ἦμος τῷ Κιθαιρῶνος τόπῳ,

ὁ μὲν διπλοῖσι ποιμνίοις, ἐγὼ δ' ἐνί,
ἐπλησίαζον τῷδε τάνδρῃ τρεῖς ὅλους
ἔξ ἥρος εἰς ἀρκτοῦρον ἐκμήνους χρόνους

But I shall bring light
Upon those things which are now unknown. For well do I know
That he will see again that region of Cithaeron when he
With a double flock and I with one
Were neighbours and comrades for three entire six month
Durations from Spring to Arcturus.

(1131-1137)

In this tractate, the implication of ἀναμιμνήσκω is of theos - literally, given the definite article, τοῦ θεοῦ, *the* theos - presencing in the mortal (and thus gifting them with) the required understanding/knowledge of the emanation, just as theos has gifted mortals with sentience, cf. θεοῦ δωρεᾶς in IV:5, ἐλλόγιμος in tractate XI:7 and Asclepius 16, "Prouisum cautumque est, quantum rationabiliter potuisset a summo deo, tunc cum sensu, disciplina, intellegentia mentes hominum est munerare dignatus. Hisce enim rebus, quibus ceteris antestamus animalibus."

3.

unshaped. ἄπλαστον. A privation of πλάσσω, hence 'without invention, pretence, form; not manufactured, unadorned, unfashioned, without shape.' Cf. the irony of Lucian in *De Morte Peregrini* 10, πηλὸς γὰρ ἔτι ἄπλαστος ἦν καὶ οὐδέπω ἐντελὲς ἄγαλμα ἡμῖν δεδομιούργητο, for he was then formless clay with that glorious depiction not yet complete.

What is unshaped (form-less) is the vista - the view - seen, with there being no need, in my view, to impute that Hermes is here speaking of having had a 'vision', mystical, prophetic, or otherwise, given that a 'vision' is not by its nature of what is 'form-less' but of some-thing or some-things perceived and which therefore, being seen, have form or forms, qv. the mention of οὐδὲ τῷ πλαστῷ τούτῳ στοιχείῳ and of εἶδος which follow.

through the generosity of theos. ἐξ ἐλέου θεοῦ. Literally, "from the generosity of theos." Considering the metaphysical context, I incline toward the view that ἐλεός here is neither mercy - qv. Oedipus Tyrannus 672, ἐποικτίρω στόμα ἐλεινόν οὗτος δ' ἐνθ' ἂν ἡ στυγήσεται - nor 'pity' (cf. Oedipus Tyrannus 180, νηλέα δὲ γένεθλα πρὸς πέδῳ θαναταφόρα κεῖται ἀνοίκτως) but rather 'generosity' in the sense of Matthew 12:7, τί ἐστὶν Ἐλεος θέλω καὶ οὐ θυσίαν, "I seek generosity and not sacrifice" with such 'generosity' (of deed and spirit) not exactly the same as what the word 'compassion' now implies, given the post-Hellenic and especially the contemporary connotations of the word 'compassion'.

setting forth ... engendered by perceivation. καὶ ἐμαυτὸν ἐξελήλυθα εἰς ἀθάνατον σῶμα, καὶ εἰμι νῦν οὐχ ὁ πρίν, ἀλλ' ἐγεννήθην ἐν νῶ. This passage is usually interpreted in a way which suggests that Hermes is describing some kind of ancient 'astral travel' where he goes "out of himself" and thence "into" a deathless body, ἀθάνατον σῶμα (in respect of θάνατος and ἀθάνατος as deathful and deathless, qv. my commentary on Poemandres 14 and on vv. 1 and 2 of tractate XI).

However, I take the passage more literally, especially given the phrase εἰμι νῦν οὐχ ὁ πρίν, "now I am not the/that before," and the mention of having been produced/engendered/grown by perceivation. That is, Hermes has "seen" - intuitively perceived, had an insight into - what deathlessness means and implies and is not the person he was before, having acquired (or been given, by theos) the gift of understanding that perceivation engenders, for as mentioned in tractate IV:4

βάπτισον σεαυτὴν ἢ δυναμένη εἰς τοῦτον τὸν κρατῆρα, ἢ πιστεύουσα ὅτι ἀνελεύσῃ πρὸς τὸν καταπέμψαντα τὸν κρατῆρα, ἢ γνωρίζουσα ἐπὶ τί γέγονας. ὅσοι μὲν οὖν συνῆκαν τοῦ κηρύγματος καὶ ἐβάπτισαντο τοῦ νοός, οὗτοι μετέσχον τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τέλειοι ἐγένοντο ἄνθρωποι, τὸν νοῦν δεξάμενοι

If you have strength enough, immerse yourself in the chaldron
Should you accept you can ascend -
Having discovered how you came-into-being -
To the one who dispatched down that chaldron.
The many who understood that declaration and were immersive with perceivation
Gained a certain knowledge, becoming more complete mortals
Through having received the perceivation

shaped part. A direct contrast with the previous use of πλάσσω in respect of what was seen.

thus and for me there is no concern for the initial mixturous form. διὸ καὶ ἡμέληταί μοι τὸ πρῶτον σύνθετον εἶδος. What there is no concern for is the causal form (εἶδος) of the mortal body, mixturous and formful as it is (in respect of mixturous, qv. the note on *mixture* in v. 2) and given that such an initial form will, by palingenesis, be changed.

not as if. Reading οὐχ ὅτι with the MSS; literally, "not as though." Cf. John 6:46 οὐχ ὅτι τὸν πατέρα ἐώρακέν τις.

biochrome ... definity. I take κέχρωσμαι καὶ ἀφὴν ἔχω καὶ μέτρον, ἀλλότριος δὲ τούτων εἰμί metaphorically, not literally, with (i) κέχρωσμαι implying not colour per se but rather biochromy, the natural or the apparent (observed) colouration of living beings, and (ii) μέτρον suggestive not of "measure" but rather of 'definity' in reference to 'indefinity' (from the noun indefinitude) and thus implying, in this context, 'beyond being definable' by ordinary, causal, means

such as 'measure' and 'weight' and 'determinability' and 'definement'.

and directly see my physicality and perceptible form. While various emendations have been suggested for the readings of the MSS here, including δέ εἰμι between ὅ τι δέ and κατανοεῖς, the general meaning seems clear: to directly see or fix or to concentrate one's eyes, one's gaze on (ἀτενίζω) the outward form (εἶδος) which here is the body, the physical appearance, the physicality of the person.

But, as Hermes goes on to explain - οὐκ ὁφθαλμοῖς τούτοις θεωροῦμαι νῦν - what is so observed by the physical eyes does not provide an understanding - a perception, a seeing - of what he is now as a result of the "unshaped vista" that he, through the generosity of theos, saw of himself "setting forth to a deathless body." In respect of θεωρέω, cf. John 4:19, λέγει αὐτῷ ἡ γυνή, Κύριε, θεωρῶ ὅτι προφήτης εἶ σύ, "the woman said to him: Sir, I deem you are a prophet."

4.

Father, you have stung the heart, plunging me into no minor distraction, for I cannot now perceive myself. Εἰς μανίαν με οὐκ ὀλίγην καὶ οἴστρησιν φρενῶν ἐνέσεισας, ὦ πάτερ· ἐμαυτὸν γὰρ νῦν οὐχ ὁρῶ.

My translation is quite different from previous ones - such as Copenhaver's "you have driven me quite mad, father, and you have deranged my heart. Now I do not see myself" - for the following reasons.

i) Does μανία, in the context of this particular tractate, equate to what the English terms 'mania' and 'madness' now denote, as for example - in the case of mania - in 'obsessive need or enthusiasm', 'mood disorder', and - in the case of madness - 'mental illness', psychosis, lack of restraint, uncontrollable fury, uncontrollable mental turmoil, or even in the colloquial sense of 'cool' or quirkily interesting?

It is my considered opinion that it does not, but rather denotes what is suggested by Acts 26:24-25 especially given the use there of μαίνομαι,

Ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ ἀπολογουμένου ὁ Φῆστος μεγάλη τῇ φωνῇ φησὶν Μαίνῃ, Παῦλε· τὰ πολλὰ σε γράμματα εἰς μανίαν περιτρέπει. ὁ δὲ Παῦλος Οὐ μαίνομαι, φησὶν, κράτιστε Φῆστε, ἀλλὰ ἀληθείας καὶ σωφροσύνης ῥήματα ἀποφθέγγομαι.

Speaking up for himself, Festus, in a very loud voice, said: "Paul, you are distracted. Your extensive learning has brought you to distraction." But Paul replied: "Noble Festus, I am not beside myself for the words I have spoken are restrained and truthful."

ii) In respect of οἴστροισιν I am rather reminded of the usage of οἴστρομα in Oedipus Tyrannus, 1318,

οἶμοι μάλ' αὖθις: οἶον εἰσέδου μ' ἅμα κέντρων τε τῶνδ' οἴστρομα καὶ μνήμη κακῶν

as do the stings of those goads, and the recalling of those troubles, pierce me

where the transitive senses of *goad* include "to cause annoyance or discomfort; to spur someone on, or 'to sting' or to prod someone to provoke them into responding."

Thus, with φρήν taken as a metaphor for the heart, one has the contextually apposite *stung the heart*, rather than completely out of context phrases such as "mind frenzy" or "mad".

iii) ἔμαυτὸν γὰρ νῦν οὐχ ὁρῶ. Not a literal 'cannot see' but rather 'cannot comprehend who or what I - as a being - am,' as a consequence of what Hermes has just said about his own being. Hence, *I cannot now perceive myself*.

go beyond. In respect of διεξελήλυθας, not here implying to "pass through", or "come out" (of yourself) but "go - or pass - beyond" (yourself) as those sleepfully dreaming often in their dreams travel far beyond where they are sleeping.

essentiator. The entity, person, or divinity, who essentiate; that is, who is the genesis of, who is the essence of, and who gives being to - who 'authors' and who fashions - the Palingenesis. Which 16th century English word expresses the meaning here of the Greek term γενεσιουργός. Cf. δημιουργός - 'artisan' - in Poemandres 24.

The Mortal One, child of theos. Ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ παῖς, ἄνθρωπος εἷς, θελήματι θεοῦ. In respect of ἄνθρωπος εἷς, literally, *Essentialist Mortal*. That is, the primatial, or 'archetypal', human being. In respect of Ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ παῖς, cf. v. 2: τοῦ θελήματος τοῦ θεοῦ...ὁ γεννώμενος θεοῦ θεὸς παῖς, with παῖς not restricted to 'son' but implying the child - and hence the children, the youthful - of *the* theos, with the conventional translation here of 'son of god' imposing a particular meaning on the text and thus inviting as it may unwarranted comparisons with aspects of Christian theology.

5.

silenced. In regard to ἀφασίαν, qv. Euripides, Helen, 548-9,

ὥς δέμας δείξασα σὸν ἑκπληξιν ἡμῖν ἀφασίαν τε προστίθης

I am mortified, silenced, by you imposing such a bodily appearance upon me

in my heart <...> since I perceive. It is possible that Reitzenstein's assumption - in *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen*. Teubner, Leipzig, 1927 - of a lacuna here is correct, although it is perhaps more probable to interpret what Thoth has just said - that he perceives the stature and the features of Hermes are still the same - accounts for him "forsaking what was previously in his heart," because he now believes that Hermes was speaking metaphorically in regard to being a stranger to "tactility and definitivity." Which is why, after the reply from Hermes, Thoth goes on to ask τί οὖν ἀληθές ἐστιν (what, then, is the actuality) and then, after the reply from Hermes, says Μέμνηνα ὄντως.

the seasons. As elsewhere, χρόνος is not some abstract 'time' but rather the duration or durations between certain observable events or changes, often measured by such things as the phases of the moon or by the appearance or disappearance of constellations or certain stars in the night sky. Here, it refers to the seasons of Nature and how, over the seasons, mortals - and crops - grow then wither.

6.

What then - Trismegistus - is the actuality? Τί οὖν ἀληθές ἐστιν, ὦ Τρισμέγιστε. In respect of ἀλήθεια I have - as in translations of other Hermetic tractates, such as Poemandres 31 and XI:1 - eschewed the conventional translation of 'truth' (with its implication of some abstract, impersonal, and disputable, meaning) in favour of a contextual interpretation, mindful as I am of John 18:38 - τί ἐστιν ἀλήθεια, Quid est veritas? - which well expresses a Greco-Roman sentiment.

The English term is derived from the classical Latin *actualis* and, in this context, refers to what is real, what has actual being or is a demonstrable fact.

the un-complexioned...the unmaterial. There are two ways of construing what follows. As an impersonal list of philosophical attributes - such as formless, colourless - or metaphorically as personal qualities associated with or relevant to the quest for palingenesis, and while most translators have chosen the first option I incline toward the view that, given the personal context - of what Hermes has said, "directly see my physicality," and about how "the form of the deathful alters every day" - they signify personal qualities. These personal qualities, such as τὸ ἀσχημάτιστον and τὸ ἀσώματον are echoed in the *De Imaginibus Oratio* of Iohannes Damascenus (written c. 730 CE) when he enumerates the qualities of God.

Here, and for example,

i) *the un-complexioned.* τὸ ἀχρώματον, γν. ἄχρους, the opposite of εὐχρους, cf. Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, Book VIII, 1.41 ὡς εὐχρωώτεροι ὀρώντο ἢ πεφύκασιν. An alternative to 'un-complexioned' would be 'hueless'.

ii) *the figureless*. τὸ ἀσχημάτιστον. That is, of no particular physique. Qv. Iohannes Damascenus, *De Imaginibus Oratio* I: 4. (Migne, Patrologia Graeca, 94). Cf. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, Book VIII, 3.59, sunt inornata et haec: quod male dispositum est, id ἀνοικονόμητον, quod male figuratum, id ἀσχημάτιστον quod male collocatum.

iii) *the unadorned*. τὸ γυμνόν. Not literally 'naked' or unclothed, but a metaphor for 'unadorned'.

iv) *the revealed*. τὸ φαῖνον. While the literal sense here is problematic - cf. Herodotus, II, 71.1, χαυλιόδοντας φαῖνον, and Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus* 1229, τὰ δ' αὐτίκ' εἰς τὸ φῶς φανεῖ, "soon to be exposed to the light" - what seems to be suggested metaphorically is 'the visible', 'the (already) revealed', and thus someone who is conspicuously (luminously) open and honest and has nothing to hide that might, to their detriment, be exposed. Cf. τὸν ἐπιτάξαντα πῦρ φανῆναι in v. 17 and the quotation there from Plato, *Timaeus*, 39b.

v) *the self-perceiving*. τὸ αὐτῷ καταληπτόν. That is, the self-apprehended, the self-aware, person.

vi) *the unwaveringly noble*. τὸ ἀναλλοίωτον ἀγαθόν. Qv. τὸ ἀγαθόν, ἀγαθόν, ὕμναι in v. 18.

vii) *the unmaterial*. τὸ ἀσώματον. The personal sense is well-expressed in a 14th century translation of 'De Proprietatibus Rerum' in which the qualities of an angel are explained: "inasmuch as he is farre from the bondage of earthly matter, insomuch he is the more perfect in contemplation of spirituall and unmateriall thinges." (Book I, ii. ii. 60). In respect of the term as applied to God, qv. Iohannes Damascenus, *De Imaginibus Oratio* I: 4. Cf. Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, V, 15, 1-4,

Vetus atque perpetua quaestio inter nobilissimos philosophorum agitata est, corpusne sit vox an incorporeum. Hoc enim vocabulum quidam finxerunt proinde quod Graece dicitur ἀσώματον. Corpus autem est quod aut efficient est aut patiens; id Graece definitur τὸ ἦτοι ποιοῦν ἢ πάσχον. Quam definitionem significare volens, Lucretius poeta ita scripsit: Tangere enim aut tangi, nisi corpus, nulla potest res.

I am completely confused. Μέμνηνα ὄντως. Just as in v. 4, the context does not support Thoth saying - even rhetorically - something such as "I have gone mad" or "I am really deranged" considering what the English words "mad" and "deranged" now impute. The sense here - given what follows, ἐνεφράχθησαν αἱ αἰσθήσεις τούτου μου τοῦ νοήματος - is rather of being completely confused, befuddled, and thus lost because of what Hermes has just said. Cf. John 10:20, Δαιμόνιον ἔχει καὶ μαίνεται τί αὐτοῦ ἀκούετε - "why listen to him? He bears a

daemon and is not himself" - with its suggestion that not only is the person completely confused but also that it is not him who is speaking (or, more probably, not he who is ranting) but the daemon he carries around and thus is "possessed" by.

the perceptibility of my apprehension was obstructed. ἐνεφράχθησαν αἱ αἰσθήσεις τούτου μου τοῦ νοήματος. Although the Greek is somewhat obscure, the general sense is that his perception - his understanding - of what he thought Hermes was explaining is now gone, having been obstructed, lost, because of his confusion.

and flows, as Water does, and is neumæos as is Air. The meaning here of ὑγρός and σύμπνοος are uncertain, with the context, the mention of elemental Fire, Earth, Water, and Air, perhaps indicative of them being technical (esoteric) hermetic terms rather than having their normal (exoteric) meaning of 'moist/wet' and 'breathing together' respectively.

i) In regard to ὑγρός, qv. Poemandres 4, where the context - ἀφάτως τετραγμένην καὶ καπνὸν ἀποδι δοῦσαν - implies flowing, Cf. Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 314 - ταῦτ' ἄρ' ἐποίουν ὑγρᾶν Νεφελᾶν στρεπταιγλᾶν δάιον ὁρμάν - where clouds are described as flowing and in their flowing-moving obscure the brightness (of the day).

ii) In regard to σύμπνοος, qv. *Περὶ Εἰμαρμένης* attributed to Plutarch - τὸ φύσει διοικεῖσθαι τόνδε τὸν κόσμον σύμπνοον καὶ συμπαθῇ αὐτὸν αὐτῷ ὄντα (574e) - literally meaning that the Kosmos is συμπαθῇ with itself and mutually breathing (σύμπνοος), with the implication that it is a wholistic living being. Hence, here - given such a conjectured esoteric meaning as "breathfully connected" - a suitable interpretation of καὶ σύμπνοον ὡς ἀήρ would be *and is as breathfully connected as Air*, with 'breath' indicative of πνεῦμα as described in Poemandres 5 and XII:18.

However, a better alternative might be to provide a suitable technical term, open to interpretation, to express whatever esoteric meaning of σύμπνοος is conjectured, with my suggestion being neumæos, from the medieval Latin neumæ using the suffix -os derived from the Greek -ός, with one possible interpretation therefore being 'something' possibly pertaining to πνεῦμα', giving thus the translation *and is neumæos, as is Air*.

insubstantial. τὸ μὴ σκληρόν does not imply the literal what "is not hard" but rather the metaphorical what is 'insubstantial', whose form is thus not solid, not firm, but non-substantial and which therefore cannot be correctly known through touch and sight.

unmixturous. The meaning of ἀσφίγγωτος is unclear since it occurs only here, with suggestions ranging from 'not fastened', 'not bound', 'not tight', and 'loose'. However, I am inclined to accept Scott's emendation of ἀσύνητον - qv. τὸ

πρῶτον σύνθετον εἶδος (the initial mixturous/composed form) in v. 3 - giving thus unmixturous, not composite.

undissolved. Reading διαλυόμενον with Parthey et al.

actusosity. ἐνέργεια. Qv. tractate XII:21. The English term actusosity derives from the classical Latin actuosus and expresses the Greek here better than the word 'energy' given the modern connotations of that word. The meaning is of (often vigorous) activity or occurrences either natural or which result from the actions of divinities or daimons or mortals.

that bringing-into-being within theos. τὴν ἐν θεῷ γένεσιν. Cf. Poemandres 26, ἐν θεῷ γίνονται. Both imply a "uniting with theos" to thus 'become-of' what is no longer mortal but rather both deathless and 'of theos'.

7.

Refine yourself. As often in other hermetic tractates - qv. Poemandres 10, 22, and VI:3 - καθαρός signifies not just the literal 'physically clean' but being 'refined' in terms of appearance, behaviour, manners, cleanliness, speech, learning, and thought.

brutish. Given the metaphysical context, and the contrast with καθαρός, ἄλογος implies more than 'irrational' or 'unreasonable'. The sense is of the unrefined, the uncultured, the brutish.

alastoras. Since the Greek word τιμωρία is specific and personal, implying vengeance, retribution, and also a divine punishment, it seems apposite to try and keep, in English, the personal sense even though no specific deeds or deeds are mentioned in the text, but especially because of what follows: Τιμωροὺς γὰρ ἐν ἑμαυτῷ ἔχω, ὧ πάτερ. Hence my interpretation, "the brutish alastoras of Materies," using the English term alastoras - singular, *alastor*, from the Greek ἀλάστωρ, an avenging deity, and also a person who avenges certain deeds. Qv. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 1497-1508.

materies. ὕλη. A variant form of the Latin *materia*, thus avoiding the English word 'matter' which now has connotations, derived from sciences such as Physics, that are not or may not be relevant here. In addition, the term requires contextual, metaphysical, interpretation, for as used here it may or may not be equivalent to the ὕλη of Poemandres 10, of III:1, καὶ τὰ λοιπά. Hence why I have here chosen 'materies' rather than - as in those other tractates - 'substance'.

unknowing. In respect of ἀγνοέω here, 'unknowing' is a more suitable English word than 'ignorance', given its meaning, usage (past - as in the *Cloud of*

Unknowing - and present) and given the context. Cf. Poemandres 27, ἀγνωσίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ, and Poemandres 32, ἐν ἀγνοίᾳ τοῦ γένους.

Vengerisse. A personification here in respect of one of the alastoras, rather than impersonally assumptive words such as 'torment/punishment' which in my opinion do not fully express the ethos of the Greek. *Vengerisse* is an alternative spelling of *Vengeress*: a woman who exacts vengeance, who does deeds of retribution; from the Latin *vindicare* via the Anglo-Norman *venger* whence the word *vengeance*. The spelling *vengerisse* occurs in Chaucer's 1374 translation of *De Consolatione Philosophiae*.

The personifications which follow - ἄγνοια, ἀκρασία, κ.τ.λ. - designate (i) the particular deed or deeds that the alastor in question has arrived to avenge, and/or (ii) the character trait or traits which has or have drawn that particular alastor to a person in order to torment them and exact vengeance, retribution.

In the case of ἄγνοια, the suggestion therefore seems to be that this is wilful unknowing, born out of arrogance.

Unrestraint. ἀκρασία. In relation to a person, the Greek means 'lack of control' and thus implies someone who cannot restrain themselves and thus who is self-indulgent; and it is somewhat unfortunate that some translators have opted here to use the word 'incontinence' given what that English word imputes in medical terms.

Unfairness. In respect of δίκη as fairness, and personified as a goddess, cf. Hesiod, Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι, 213-218,

σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης, μὴδ' ὕβριν ὄφελλε:
ὕβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῶ βροτῶ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς
215 ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύναται, βαρύθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς
ἐγκύρσας ἄτησιν: ὁδὸς δ' ἐτέρηφι παρελθεῖν
κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει
ἐς τέλος ἐξελθοῦσα: παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω

You should listen to Fairness and not oblige Hubris
Since Hubris harms unfortunate mortals while even the more fortunate
Are not equal to carrying that heavy a burden, meeting as they do with Mischief.
The best path to take is the opposite one: that of honour
For, in the end, Fairness is above Hubris
Which is something the young come to learn from adversity.

Putridity. The Greco-Roman sense of κακία is personal, not abstract, imputing rottenness: a rotten, putrid, bad physis (character, nature, disposition). This bad physis is revealed by personal deeds, such as cowardice, malice, corruption, depravity, and hubris.

inner mortal. ἐνδιάθετον ἄνθρω. In respect of ἐνδιάθετος, an alternative to 'inner' would be 'enclosed', with the Greek word occurring in relation to Stoic philosophy where a distinction was sometimes made (qv. Theophilus of Antioch) between λόγος ἐνδιάθετος (the inner or 'esoteric' logos) and λόγος προφορικός (the outer or 'exoteric' logos).

incarcerated. The Greek word used, δεσμωτήριον, is interesting as it does not imply a 'prison' as the word prison is mostly conceived of today, a large building in which people are confined together. Composed as the Greek is from δεσμός (bonds, shackles) and τηρέω (watch, guard) it signifies a place where a person is guarded and shackled, as for example in medieval dungeons. Occurring as the word does in conjunction with σῶμα (body) and ἀναγκάζω (compel, using force including torture) the suggestion seems to be of the alastoras tormenting or torturing a person while that person is confined, incarcerated, within their mortal body. Cf. John 3:24, βεβλημένος εἰς τὴν φυλακὴν, which implies a forceful 'throwing' or a hurling into a guarded cage, not "cast into prison."

generous. Qv. the comment on ἐξ ἐλέου θεοῦ in v. 3.

which is what the way and logos of Palingenesis consists of. καὶ οὕτω συνίσταται ὁ τῆς παλιγγενεσίας τρόπος καὶ λόγος. Literally, "and thus consists the way and logos of the Palingenesis." Since the meaning of λόγος here is a matter of conjecture, I have transliterated it, although I incline toward the view that here it is used as a metaphysical term as in the Poemandres, as for example in v. 9, λόγῳ ἑτέρῳ Νοῦν δημιουργόν, "whose logos brought forth another perceiviation," and as in Cyrilli Epistula Tertia ad Nestorium:

μονογενὴς τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος ὁ ἐξ αὐτῆς γεννηθεὶς τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς ὁ ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ θεὸς ἀληθινός τὸ φῶς τὸ ἐκ τοῦ φωτός ὁ δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο τὰ τε ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ τὰ ἐν τῇ γῇ

only-offspring of the logos of theos, born from the essence [οὐσία] of the father, genuine theos from genuine theos, the phaos from the phaos, by whom all things in heaven and on Earth came into being

8.

Speak quietly...and keep this secret. σιώπησον...καὶ εὐφήμησον. Not a literal 'keep silent and do not say anything' since it is a formulaic phrase, with εὐφημέω suggestive of 'speak softly/quietly' due to either religious reverence (cf. VIII:5, XIII:8, κ.τ.λ.) or personal politeness/deference, and with σιωπάω suggestive of 'keep secret'.

Henceforward be pleased. The English word 'rejoice' - in respect of χαίρω - is

unsuitable here given the preceding εὐφημέω, and the association of the word with Christian worship past and present where it implies 'exult' and show/feel 'great joy'.

having refinement through the Cræfts of theos. ἀνακαθαίρο μενος ταῖς τοῦ θεοῦ δυνάμεσιν. Regarding καθαρός as implying 'refinement', qv. the comment on v. 7.

Cræft - the older spelling, meaning, and pronunciation of craft - is, when so spelled, appropriate in reference to the use of δύναμις in this tractate, implying as it does, in an exoteric context, what the terms strength/power/force denote, while implying in an esoteric context (as often in this tractate) a particular Arte, the application of particular abilities, skills, and knowledge, especially abilities, skills, and knowledge learned in the traditional manner from a master or from a mistress of the Arte or Arts in question. In this esoteric sense, theos is the Master Craftsman, with Palingenesis being a Cræft, an Arte, that can be taught and learned. A Cræft is thus - for an individual - an ability, a capability, while it can also be, in respect of others, influential.

Thus, in this and other tractates the context can suggest alternatives such as 'influence' - qv. v. 9 in respect of the Alastoras, and tractate III:3 - or 'capability', qv. XI:3 and XII:20.

The word cræft also has the advantage of implying the plural, such as in the expression "the Cræft of theos."

comprehend. Considering the preceding σιώπησον the sense of ἀρθρόω here is not the literal 'articulate' the logos (by means of words spoken) but rather to be able to articulate it interiorly, clearly, and thus comprehend it for oneself.

arrivance. In respect of the unusual - but metaphysically appropriate - English word 'arrivance', cf. Luke 19:10, ἦλθεν γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ζητῆσαι καὶ σῶσαι τὸ ἀπολωλός, "the arrivance of the Son of Man was to seek and to save what was lost."

knowledge. γνῶσις. Cf. Poemandres 26, τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ ἀγαθὸν τέλος τοῖς γνῶσιν ἐσχηκόσι, and also γνῶσις ἀγία in v. 18 here, where the Greek might usefully be transliterated as gnosis.

knowledge of Delightfulness. Cf. v. 18: διὰ σοῦ τὸ νοητὸν φῶς ὑμῶν χαίρω ἐν χαρᾷ νοῦ, through you, a song of apprehended phaos, delighted with delightful perceivance.

9.

influxious. Derived from 'influxion' - one of which meanings is 'influence' - and denoting a powerful influence, as in the 17th century book *England's Teares For*

The Present Warres by James Howell, "the Moon hath an influxious power."

Grade. βαθμός. It is possible that this is a technical - esoteric - term which could also be translated as 'degree' indicative as the term seems to be of some mystical progression by a supplicant or initiate. However, the tractate does not provide any evidence as to what such a progression was from and to, or what the other grades might have been.

Ancestral Custom. δικαιοσύνη. The meaning is not 'righteousness', which imposes abstract theological meanings (mostly derived from the Old and New Testaments) on the text, but rather 'respectful of custom', of dutifully doing one's duty toward both the gods and other mortals. This Hellenic - this personal - meaning derives from understanding δίκη personified as the goddess of both Fairness and of Tradition (Ancestral Custom) with 'fairness' a more apt description of the word δίκη, given that terms such as justice and judgement have acquired, over millennia, abstract (and often legalistic) meanings which are not relevant to either the culture of ancient Hellas or to the Hellenic milieu of the Corpus Hermeticum. The Tradition, the ancestral custom, of ancient Hellas - with the attendant mythology and legends - was recounted by Hesiod in Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι (Works and Days) and in Θεογονία (Theogony).

Qv. δικαιοσύνη μου, τὸ δίκαιον ὕμνει δι' ἐμοῦ in v. 18.

vindicated. In respect of ἐδικαιώθημεν (qv. δικαίω) what is not implied is 'made righteous' or 'made pure' - which are meanings derived from Christian exegesis, cf. ὁ δίκαιος δικαιοσύνην ποιησάτω ἔτι, Revelation 22:11 - but rather 'vindicated', justified, and in this case because Unfairness was *in absentia*, having fled with there thus being no need for any further deliberations.

community. κοινωνέω imputes the sense of 'sharing in common or in partnership', that is, a community of shared interests, which is the opposite of individual covetousness.

With that departed. Referring to the departure of Coveter, the personification here of covetousness.

Actualis. A borrowing from the Latin root to personify 'actuality', qv. the comment in v. 6 on τί οὖν ἀληθές ἐστιν ὧ Τρισμέγιστε.

the noble has been returned. However τὸ ἀγαθὸν is interpreted - whether as the conventional 'the good', or as I interpret depending on context, 'the noble', 'the highest nobility', 'the honourable' - the literal meaning of πεπλήρωται here - denoting "τὸ ἀγαθὸν is completed", "τὸ ἀγαθὸν has been fulfilled", "τὸ ἀγαθὸν is full" - is somewhat obscure, especially if one compares it to an apposite context such as John 3:29,

ὁ ἔχων τὴν νύμφην νυμφίος ἐστίν· ὁ δὲ φίλος τοῦ νυμφίου, ὁ ἐστηκώς

καὶ ἀκούων αὐτοῦ, χαρᾷ χαίρει διὰ τὴν φωνὴν τοῦ νυμφίου. αὕτη οὖν
ἢ χαρὰ ἢ ἐμὴ πεπλήρωται

He who has an espousess is the spouse, and the friend of the spouse - who stands by him and listens - is joyous with joy because of his words. Hence, my own joy is complete.

In tractate IV:4, πληρώω is also apposite,

Καὶ ποῦ αὐτὸν ἰδρύσατο.
Κρατῆρα μέγαν πληρώσας τούτου κατέπεμψε δοῦς κήρυκα καὶ
ἐκέλευσεν αὐτῷ κηρύξαι ταῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων καρδίαις τάδε...

Where, then, was it placed?

In that large repleteful chaldron which was dispatched down with an envoy assigned to declaim to the hearts of mortals...

Thus, I am inclined to consider that here the usage is metaphorical, suggestive of τὸ ἀγαθὸν having been completed (i) as in restored, returned to the person before the intervention of "the brutish Alastoras of Materies", who undermined, replaced, or who sought to replace τὸ ἀγαθὸν with such things as Grief, Unrestraint, Lascivity, and Putridity; or (ii) as in, as a gift from theos, completing - refining - the mortal by removing what was detrimental to τὸ ἀγαθὸν and thus to Palingenesis, with this completing - refining - returning them to the necessary state of being, as does the ἄνοδος described in the Poemandres tractate.

phaos. φάος. As with φῶς - qv. Poemandres, κ.τ.λ. - a transliteration since I am inclined to avoid the vague English word 'light' which word now implies many things which the Greek does not or may not; as for instance in the matter of over a thousand years of New Testament exegesis, especially in reference to the gospel of John. A transliteration requires the reader to pause and consider what *phaos* may, or may not, mean, suggest or imply, especially as φάος metaphorically (qv. Iliad, Odyssey, Hesiod, etcetera) implies the being, the life, 'the spark', of mortals, and, generally, either (i) the illumination, the light, that arises because of the Sun and distinguishes the day from the night, or (ii) any brightness that provides illumination and thus enables things to be seen. In addition, as noted in Poemandres 21 and perhaps relevant here,

φῶς καὶ ζωὴ ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατήρ, ἐξ οὗ ἐγένετο ὁ Ἄνθρωπος

phaos and Life are the theos and the father from whence the human came into being

skotos. σκότος. Given the following τιμωρία and what has preceded, I have personified σκότος here (as Hesiod personified Darkness as Erebus) since it is implausible for 'darkness', understood as absence of light, to punish or seek vengeance.

they whirlingly rushed away. I incline toward the view that in respect of ἐκπέτομαι what is meant is not a literal 'flying away' but a metaphor for 'rushing away' or hastily fleeing. Similarly in respect of ροίζω which suggests a whirling about in confusion as they flee; cf. Poemandres 11, δινῶν ροίζω, spinning them around.

Thus concludes what is apparently the initiation into the secret mystery of Palingenesis which began in v. 6 with "thus it is, my son. It ascends, as Fire does, and descends, as Earth does..."

10.

the Dekad brought-into-being. τῆς δεκάδος παραγινομένης. Given that δεκάς is a metaphysical term of the Way of Palingenesis as that Way is explained in this tractate, I have used the transliteration Dekad rather than 'decad'.

geniture of apprehension. νοερά γενεσις. Literally, a birthing of apprehension, of the ability to apprehend beyond what the alastoras signify in respect of our mortal nature. As in tractates VI and XI, geniture expresses the contextual meaning of γενεσις here: that which or those whom have their genesis (and their subsequent development) from or because of something else or because of someone else. Here, this 'something else' is the Dekad which produces this particular birthing. In respect of geniture, XI:2 may provide some metaphysical context:

Ἄκουε, ὦ τέκνον, ὡς ἔχει ὁ θεὸς καὶ τὸ πᾶν. θεός, ὁ αἰὼν, ὁ κόσμος, ὁ χρόνος, ἡ γενεσις. ὁ θεὸς αἰῶνα ποιεῖ, ὁ αἰὼν δὲ τὸν κόσμον, ὁ κόσμος δὲ χρόνον, ὁ χρόνος δὲ γενεσιν. τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ ὡς περ οὐσία ἐστὶ [τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, ἡ εὐδαιμονία,] ἡ σοφία· τοῦ δὲ αἰῶνος ἡ ταυτότης· τοῦ δὲ κόσμου ἡ τάξις· τοῦ δὲ χρόνου ἡ μεταβολή· τῆς δὲ γενέσεως ἡ ζωὴ καὶ ὁ θάνατος

Hear then, my son, of theos and of everything: theos, Aion, Kronos, Kosmos, geniture. Theos brought Aion into being; Aion: Kosmos; Kosmos, Kronos; Kronos, geniture. It is as if the quidditas of theos is actuality, honour, the beautiful, good fortune, Sophia. Of Aion, identity; of Kosmos, arrangement; of Kronos, variation; of geniture, Life and Death.

banishing those twelve. The aforementioned alastoras, such as Grief and Lascivity.

by this geniture we are of theos. ἐθεώθημεν τῇ γενέσει. Cf. θεωθῆναι in Poemandres 26. As there, this does not mean or imply mortals become 'divinized' or 'deified' - "made into gods" - but rather it means θέωσις in the Hellenic, hermetic, sense of being mystically (re)united with theos but still being mortal, human, because there is and cannot be any partaking of, any participation in, the essence, the quidditas - οὐσία - of theos, a sense well

expressed centuries later by Maximus of Constantinople:

τῆς ἐπὶ τῷ θεωθῆναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον μυστικῆς ἐνεργείας λήψεται
πέρας κατὰ πάντα τρόπον χωρὶς μόνης δηλονότι τῆς πρὸς αὐτὸν κατ'
οὐσίαν ταυτότητος. Quæstiones ad Thalassium de Scriptura Sacra,
XXII [Migne, Patrologiae Graeca, 90, c.0318]

the end of the opus mysterium of human beings becoming of Theos can be in all
ways except one, namely that of having the identity of His Essence

That is, Palingenesis means that mortals become *of* theos, not that they become theos or theoi. This may well explain the reading of the MSS, ἐθεωρήθημεν, amended by Nock (after Reitzenstein) to ἐθεώθημεν. For it is possible that the hermetic θέωσις implied, in practice, a contemplative type of life; a style of life hinted at in v. 2 - "noetic sapientia is in silence" - and in v. 7 when Hermes says to Thoth, "Go within: and an arriving. Intend: and an engendering. Let physical perceptibility rest, and divinity will be brought-into-being." Cf. Ἀκλινῆς γενόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ in v. 11.

that generosity. The definite article - *the* generosity - points to the meaning: not ἔλεος per se but rather the generosity of theos who gifts this geniture.

they consist of such. The MSS have συνιστάμενος - Nock, συνιστάμενον - and although some emendations have been proposed, including the addition of νοητῶν (ἐκ νοητῶν) and Reitzenstein suggesting a lacuna between γνωρίζει and ἐκ τούτων, what is referred to seems obvious: they consist of, are composed from, such things that are of - are derived from - theos.

11.

quietude engendered by theos. Ἀκλινῆς γενόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ. With ἀκλινῆς understood metaphorically, cf. σοφία νοερά ἐν σιγῇ in v. 2.

the seeing is not of... In respect of φαντάζομαι, cf. XI:18, κεῖται γὰρ ἄλλως ἐν ἄσωμάτῳ φαντασίαι.

through the noetic actus of the cræft. τῇ διὰ δυνάμεων νοητικῇ ἐνεργείᾳ. In respect of 'cræft', cf. ἀνακαθαίρομενος ταῖς τοῦ θεοῦ δυνάμεσιν in v. 8. In regard to noetic, qv. the comment on σοφία νοερά in v. 2. In respect of actus, qv. the comment on ἐνέργεια in v. 6.

The metaphysical content of this statement, important both in respect of what immediately follows - which bears comparison with XI:18-19 (see below) - and in respect of understanding Palingenesis, has been somewhat lost in previous translations such as "with the mental energy that comes through the powers" and "with the energy the Mind gives me through the powers."

What is meant is that there is a specific type of apprehension which is vivifying, which does not depend on what is seen directly by the eyes, and which is a cræft, a capability, an ability, an influencing, arising from the generosity of theos and from that quietude engendered by theos. Thoth then goes on to describe what this apprehension involves: ἐν οὐρανῷ εἰμι, ἐν γῇ, ἐν ὕδατι, ἐν ἀέρι...

I am in the Heavens; on Earth; in Water... Everywhere. ἐν οὐρανῷ εἰμι, ἐν γῇ, ἐν ὕδατι, ἐν ἀέρι...πανταχοῦ. Regarding this, and the aforementioned type of apprehension, cf. tractate XI:18-19,

ἔνια δὲ τῶν λεγομένων ἰδίαν ἔννοιαν ἔχειν ὀφείλει· οἷον ὃ λέγω νόησον. πάντα ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ θεῷ. οὐχ ὥς ἐν τόπῳ κείμενα (ὁ μὲν γὰρ τόπος καὶ σῶμά ἐστι, καὶ σῶμα ἀκίνητον, καὶ τὰ κείμενα κίνησιν οὐκ ἔχει)· κεῖται γὰρ ἄλλως ἐν ἄσωμάτῳ φαντασίαι. νόησον τὸν περιέχοντα τὰ πάντα καὶ νόησον ὅτι τοῦ ἄσωμάτου οὐδὲν ἐστι περιοριστικόν, οὐδὲ ταχύτερον, οὐδὲ δυνατώτερον· αὐτὸ δὲ πάντων καὶ ἀπεριόριστον καὶ ταχύτατον καὶ δυνατώτατον.

καὶ οὕτω νόησον ἀπὸ σεαυτοῦ, καὶ κέλευσόν σου τῇ ψυχῇ εἰς Ἰνδικὴν πορευθῆναι, καὶ ταχύτερόν σου τῆς κελεύσεως ἐκεῖ ἔσται. μετελθεῖν δὲ αὐτῇ κέλευσον ἐπὶ τὸν ὠκεανόν, καὶ οὕτως ἐκεῖ πάλιν ταχέως ἔσται, οὐχ ὥς μεταβάσῃ ἀπὸ τόπου εἰς τόπον, ἀλλ' ὥς ἐκεῖ οὔσα. κέλευσον δὲ αὐτῇ καὶ εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀναπτῆναι, καὶ οὐδὲ πτερῶν δεηθήσεται. ἀλλ' οὐδὲ αὐτῇ οὐδὲν ἐμπόδιον, οὐ τοῦ ἡλίου πῦρ, οὐχ ὁ αἰθήρ, οὐχ ἡ δίνη, οὐχὶ τὰ τῶν ἄλλων ἀστέρων σώματα· πάντα δὲ διατεμοῦσα ἀναπτῆσεται μέχρι τοῦ ἐσχάτου σώματος. εἰ δὲ βουληθείης καὶ αὐτὸ ὅλον διαρρήξασθαι καὶ τὰ ἐκτός εἶ γέ τι ἐκτὸς τοῦ κόσμου θεάσασθαι, ἔξεστί σοι.

Some of the matters spoken of require a certain apprehension, so consider what I say: everything is in the theos but not as if lying in a particular place - since the place is a body and also immovable and what is lain does not move - but an incorporeal representation apprehends what is lain otherwise.

Thus apprehend what embraces everything and apprehend that the incorporeal has no boundary, that nothing is swifter, nothing as mighty, since the incorporeal is boundless, the swiftest, the mightiest.

And apprehend this about yourself and so urge your psyche to go to any land and, swifter than that urging, it will be there. Likewise, urge it to go to the Ocean and again it will be swiftly there without passing from place to place but as if already there.

Urge it to go up into the heavens and it will be there without the need of any wings. Indeed, nothing will impede it: not the fire of the Sun nor Aether, nor the vortex, nor the bodies of the other stars, but - carving through them all - it will go as far as the furthest body. Should you desire to burst through The Entirety and observe what is

beyond - if indeed there be anything beyond that ordered system - then it is possible for you.

What is that Way? As in vv. 7 and 10, an alternative here for τρόπος would be Art.

12.

dwelling. σκῆνος. The Greek word has been variously interpreted, as 'shelter', 'tent', and, in the New Testament, has been understood metaphorically to mean 'tabernacle' in reference to the body (2 Corinthians 5.1, 5.4). Here, what seems to be suggested, as Hermes later explains, is the deathful body as a temporary dwelling place for what is deathless.

passed beyond. διεξέρχομαι. Passed beyond as in the previous "I am in the Heavens; on Earth; in Water..." and as in the "go beyond yourself as those who sleepfully dream" of v. 4.

zodiac. ζωοφόρος. Literally, τοῦ ζωοφόρου κύκλου implies "the life-bearing circle", referring to the personifications of the zodiacal constellations with the heavens understood as an abode of various divinities, qv. *Hymn to King Helios Dedicated to Sallust*, Πολὺν δὲ πρὸς οἷς ἔφην πλῆθος ἔστι περὶ τὸν οὐρανὸν θεῶν, οὓς κατενόησαν οἱ τὸν οὐρανὸν μὴ παρέργως μηδὲ ὥσπερ τὰ βοσκήματα θεωροῦντες. τοὺς τρεῖς γὰρ τετραχῆ τέμνων διὰ τῆς τοῦ ζωοφόρου κύκλου πρὸς ἕκαστον αὐτῶν κοινωνίας τοῦτον αὐθις τὸν ζωοφόρον εἰς δώδεκα θεῶν δυνάμεις διαιρεῖ καὶ μέντοι τούτων ἕκαστον εἰς τρεῖς, ὥστε ποιεῖν ἕξ ἐπὶ τοῖς τριάκοντα. (IV, 148c).

Cf. *De Mundo*, ὧν μέσος ὁ ζωιοφόρος καλούμενος κύκλος ἐγκάρσιος διὰ τῶν τροπικῶν διέζωσται. (Bekker, Aristoteles Opera Omnia, I, 392a)

composed of beings, twelve in number. Omitting the redundant ἀριθμῶν.

same physis. φύσεως μιᾶς. As in other tractates I have transliterated φύσις since in the Hermetica physis is a metaphysical principle or attribute whose meaning goes beyond, but can include, what the English terms 'nature' or 'character' - of a thing or person - denote, as the Poemandres tractate makes clear and where physis is, several times, personified, as for example in v. 14,

ἅμα δὲ τῇ βουλῇ ἐγένετο ἐνέργεια καὶ ὥικησε τὴν ἄλογον μορφήν ἣ δὲ φύσις λαβοῦσα τὸν ἐρώμενον περιεπλάκη ὅλη καὶ ἐμίγησαν ἐρώμενοι γὰρ ἦσαν

Then, his want and his vigour realized, and he within that image devoid of logos, Physis grasped he whom she loved to entwine herself around him so that, as lovers,

they were intimately joined together.

polymorphous. παντόμορφος. Cf. XI:16, ἐπεὶ οὖν ὁ κόσμος παντόμορφος γέγονεν.

difference. διαζυγή. Literally, division, separation, cf. Euripides, Troades, 669 - ἄλλ' οὐδὲ πῶλος ἦτις ἂν διαζυγῇ τῆς συντραφείσης - and διάζευξις (disunion).

effector of psyche. ψυχογόνος. The 16th century English word *effector* (from the Latin word used by Cicero) is someone or some-thing who or which engenders or produces some-thing. As in other tractates, I have transliterated ψυχή as 'psyche' so as not to impose a particular meaning on the text. Whether what is meant is *anima mundi* - or some-thing else, such as the 'soul' of a human being, or a personification - is a question of contextual interpretation. However interpreted, it is an important, a primal, principle in this and other hermetic tractates, and might imply here the original, ancient Greek, sense of 'spark' (or breath) of life; of that 'thing' (or being) which (or who) animates beings making them 'alive'.

with Life and Phaos a unity there where the arithmos of the henad is brought forth from the pneuma. ζωὴ δὲ καὶ φῶς ἡνωμέναι εἰσὶν ἔνθα ὁ τῆς ἐνάδος ἀριθμὸς πέφυκε τοῦ πνεύματος. Since this expression is important to understanding the metaphysics described in the tractate it deserves some attention.

i) In respect of Life and Phaos, qv. v. 9.

ii) I have transliterated ἀριθμός here since the context suggests it implies more than the English word 'number' understood as a particular abstraction representing the quantity of 'things'; qv. Aristotle, ἄλλος δέ τις τὸν πρῶτον ἀριθμὸν τὸν τῶν εἰδῶν ἓνα εἶναι, ἔνιοι δὲ καὶ τὸν μαθηματικὸν τὸν αὐτὸν τοῦτον εἶναι (Metaphysics, Book XIII, 1080b.20). Given such a distinction - and the discussion regarding ἀριθμός and Pythagoras in Book XIII, 1083b.10 et seq, and given the occurrence of ἀριθμός with μονάς in tractate IV,

μονὰς οὕσα οὖν ἀρχὴ πάντα ἀριθμὸν ἐμπεριέχει, ὑπὸ μηδενὸς ἐμπεριεχομένη, καὶ πάντα ἀριθμὸν γεννᾷ ὑπὸ μηδενὸς γεννωμένη ἑτέρου ἀριθμοῦ...

Just as the Monas, since it is the origin, enfolds every arithmos without itself being enfolded by any, begetting every arithmos but not begotten by any...

ἀριθμός is suggestive of a metaphysical (and/or of an esoteric, hermetic) principle or attribute - such as being an effluvium, or an emanation, of theos/monas/The One - whose outward (esoteric) appearance or representation is often assumed to be a particular 'numerical' quantity. As to whether or not what is suggested in the tractate regarding ἀριθμός is indicative of the metaphysics of Pythagoras, or represents a similar but different mystical

tradition, is an interesting question.

In terms of mystical tradition, there is a subtle difference between effluvia and emanations, with emanation often understood in the sense of some-thing proceeding from, or having, a source; as for example in theological use where the source is considered to be theos or some aspect of a divinity or God. Effluvium, however, has (so far as I am aware) no theological connotations and accurately describes a particular perceivization: a flowing of what-is, sans the assumption of a primal cause, and sans a division or a distinction between 'us' – we mortals – and some-thing else, be this some-thing else theos, God, a divinity, the numinous, or some assumed, ideated, cause, essence, origin, or form. Effluvia presence, manifest - or can presence and manifest in sentient beings such as ourselves, via for example a Way such as Palingenesis - the divine, the numinous.

iii) I have translated ἐνός as 'henad' - avoiding the prosaic translation 'unit' - given the metaphysical context, the aforementioned comparison with IV:10, the equivalence of ἐνός and μονάς, and also the following, from tractate XII:15,

ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις συνθέτοις πᾶσι σώμασιν ἀριθμὸς ἐκάστου ἐστί.
χωρὶς γὰρ ἀριθμοῦ σύστασιν ἢ σύνθεσιν ἢ διάλυσιν ἀδύνατον
γενέσθαι· αἱ δὲ ἐνάδες τὸν ἀριθμὸν γεννῶσι καὶ αὖξουσιν καὶ πάλιν
διαλυόμενον εἰς ἑαυτὰς δέχονται, καὶ ἡ ὕλη μία.

Yet in other combined corpora there is for each of them an arithmos, for without arithmos it is not possible for such a bringing together, such a melding, such a dissolution, to come-into-being. Henads beget and grow arithmos and, on its dissolution, receive it into themselves.

iv) As in other tractates, I have transliterated πνεῦμα (as pneuma) since, as with ψυχή - κ.τ.λ. - it is suggestive here of a particular metaphysical (and/or of an esoteric, hermetic) attribute, requiring contextual interpretation consistent with what is currently understood of Greco-Roman mysticism and metaphysics. The usual translation of 'spirit' can impose Christian, modern philosophical and other contemporary, meanings on the text.

13.

All That Exists. τὸ πᾶν. Literally, 'the all', but metaphysically implying 'all that exists', that is, the Universe, the Kosmos. Qv. the Cantio Arcana (Esoteric Song) of vv. 17-18, and also XII:22-23 where the term is synonymous with theos.

τοῦτο ἐστὶν ὁ θεός, τὸ πᾶν. ἐν δὲ τῷ παντὶ οὐδὲν ἐστὶν ὃ μὴ ἔστιν ὁ θεός· ὅθεν οὔτε μέγεθος οὔτε τόπος οὔτε ποιότης οὔτε σχῆμα οὔτε χρόνος περὶ τὸν θεόν ἐστι· πᾶν γάρ ἐστι, τὸ δὲ πᾶν διὰ πάντων καὶ περὶ πάντα.

this is theos, All That Exists. For in all that exists there is no-thing that he is not.

Therefore, neither size, nor location nor disposition, nor appearance, nor age, are about theos. For he is all that exists; encompassing everything and within everything

When the context merits it, and to avoid awkward phraseology, I have sometimes translated τὸ πᾶν as Kosmos, as at vv. 18 and 19.

the perceivation. τῷ νοί. Which perceivation was mentioned in v. 11: "the seeing is not of the sight from the eyes but that through the noetic actus of the cræft. I am in the Heavens; on Earth; in Water; in Air..."

In effect, this perceivation is of theos, and thus (i) of perceiving that 'all that exists' - including ourselves - are emanations of theos, or (ii) of perceiving that 'all that exists', including ourselves, are effluvia and thus presence, manifest - or can presence and manifest, via for example the Way of Palingenesis - the divine, the numinous, with theos thus understood as the artisan who crafted ourselves and every-thing else:

Ἐπειδὴ τὸν πάντα κόσμον ἐποίησεν ὁ δημιουργός, οὐ χερσὶν ἀλλὰ λόγῳ, ὥστε οὕτως ὑπολάμβανε ὡς τοῦ παρόντος καὶ ἀεὶ ὄντος καὶ πάντα ποιήσαντος καὶ ἐνὸς μόνου, τῇ δὲ αὐτοῦ θελήσει δημιουργήσαντος τὰ ὄντα (Tractate IV:1)

Because the artisan crafted the complete cosmic order not by hand but through Logos you should understand that Being as presential, as eternal, as having crafted all being, as One only, who by theosis formed all that is.

Which metaphysical understanding is not only rather lost in conventional translations of ἐμαυτὸν ἐν τῷ νοί such as "I see myself in Mind," but which also introduce an abstraction, an ἰδέα, 'the mind', which detracts from an appreciation of emanations of theos and effluvia of the numinous.

No more to present the body in three separations. τὸ μηκέτι φαντάζεσθαι εἰς τὸ σῶμα τὸ τριχῇ διαστατόν. Or, less literally, "no more to present the body in three separate ways." And 'no more' because the perceivation is of 'all that exists' as either emanations of theos (the One) or presencings of the divine, the monadic numinous.

i) *to present.* That is, to present - to show - in a particular manner. In respect of φαντάζεσθαι, cf. Aeschylus, Agamemnon,

μηδ' ἐπιλεχθῆς
Ἀγαμεμνονίαν εἶναί μ' ἄλοχον.
φανταζόμενος δὲ γυναικὶ νεκροῦ 1500
τοῦδ' ὁ παλαιὸς δριμύς ἀλάστωρ
Ἀτρέως χαλεποῦ θοινατῆρος
τόνδ' ἀπέτεισεν

τέλεον νεαροῖς ἐπιθύσας.

But do not add to those words that it was me who was the mistress of Agamemnon
Since the wife of this corpse presents herself here
As that most ancient fierce Avenger.
It is Atreus, he of that cruel feast,
Who, in payment for that, has added to his young victims
This adult one.

ii) *separations*. As noted in my commentary on tractate IV:1, what is not meant by διαστατός is 'dimension', given what the term 'dimension' now imputes scientifically and otherwise. What is expressed in IV:1 may also be relevant here:

τοῦτο γάρ ἐστι τὸ σῶμα ἐκείνου, οὐχ ἄπτόν, οὐδὲ ὁρατόν, οὐδὲ μετρητόν, οὐδὲ διαστατόν, οὐδὲ ἄλλωι τινὶ σώματι ὅμοιον· οὔτε γὰρ πῦρ ἐστὶν οὔτε ὕδωρ οὔτε ἀήρ οὔτε πνεῦμα, ἀλλὰ πάντα ἀπ' αὐτοῦ.

That Being has no body that can be touched or seen or measured or which is separable or which is similar to any other body: not of Fire or Water or of Pneuma even though all such things are from that Being.

Thus, to translate τὸ μηκέτι φαντά ζεσθαι εἰς τὸ σῶμα τὸ τριχῇ διαστατόν as something like "no longer to picture the three-dimensional body" is to introduce two fairly recent, and unnecessary, abstractions: that of to picture/visualize - as if in some-thing denoted by the term 'mind' - and that of 'three-dimensions'. Whereas what the Greek expresses is relatively simple and suitable to the milieu of Greco-Roman mysticism: of not seeing, of not representing, the body in three particular ways. What these three separate ways are is open to interpretation, but the context suggests in terms of physicality, of psyche, and of pneuma.

through this disclosure. Although 'disclosure' seems apposite, λόγος could be translated here - as in the title - as 'discourse'.

Between τὸ τριχῇ διαστατόν and διὰ τὸν λόγον, Nock et al indicate a lacuna, although it is possible to make some sense of what is here rather obscure Greek. [An overview of some of the problems here - in the context of the meaning of the following διάβολος - is given by Anna Van den Kerchove, *La voie d'Hermès: Pratiques rituelles et traités hermétiques*, Brill (Leiden), 2012, pp.100-4]

written about for you alone. Reading ὃν εἰς σὲ μόνον ὑπεμνηματισάμην with Reitzenstein et al, and taking ὑπεμνηματισάμην to refer to 'writing about' Palingenesis.

rouner. διάβολος. In regard to the Old English word *rouner* - denoting a person who whispers secrets or who spreads rumours in a secretive, disruptive,

manner - qv. the Prologue of the 14th century *Cloud Of Unknowing*,

Fleschely janglers, opyn preisers and blamers of hemself or of any other, tithing tellers, rouners and tutilers of tales

Also, cf. 2 Timothy 3:3, ἄστοργοι, ἄσπονδοι, διάβολοι, ἀκρατεῖς (unloving, unforgiving, rouners, unrestrained) where mention is made of ἀκρατής, which in this tractate is personified as one of the Alastoras.

I take the following τοῦ παντός as referring to keeping the silence - the secrets - as mentioned in v. 22, rather than as referring to the preceding τὸ πᾶν.

the many. τοὺς πολλούς. It is possible to take this pejoratively and thus as referring to 'plebal outsiders', to 'the masses', the plebeians.

but instead to whomsoever theos himself desires. Reading ἀλλ' εἰς οὓς ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸς θέλει with Reitzenstein. The text is obscure to the point of being corrupt, with various emendations having been proposed, and thus my translation is somewhat conjectural.

14.

Speak quietly. Qv. v. 8

constituted of such cræfts. Such cræfts as Palingenesis, and thus such abilities as a cræft confers.

disrespected. ἀσεβεῖσθαι. Qv. Lysias, Funeral Oration, 2.7,

Ἀθηναῖοι ἡγησάμενοι ἐκείνους μέν εἴ τι ἡδίκουν, ἀποθανόντας δίκην ἔχειν τὴν μεγίστην τοὺς δὲ κάτω τὰ αὐτῶν οὐ κομίζεσθαι ἱερῶν δὲ μαινομένων τοὺς ἄνω θεοὺς ἀσεβεῖσθαι

the Athenians considered that if those ones had done harm then their death was the greater punishment, with those in the realms below not being attended to, and - with their consecrated places defiled - the gods above were being disrespected

Also, cf. Poemandres 23,

τοῖς δὲ ἀνοήτοις καὶ κακοῖς καὶ πονηροῖς καὶ φθονεροῖς καὶ πλεονέκταις καὶ φονεῦσι καὶ ἀσεβέσι πόρρωθέν εἶμι

I keep myself distant from the unreasonable, the rotten, the malicious, the jealous, the greedy, the bloodthirsty, the hubriatic

the quiddity of geniture. τῆς οὐσιωδοῦς γενέσεως. A metaphysical expression

which, in context, signifies that the essentiality, the realness, of the particular bringing-into-being that is Palingenesis - with its perception of effluvia (or of emanations of theos) and of the mortal being 'all that exists' - is far removed from the physis that ordinary perception associates with the physical body.

engendered of theos. θεὸς πέφυκας. That is, reborn through Palingenesis because of theos. The following καὶ τοῦ ἐνὸς παῖς provides the necessary context. In respect of Palingenesis signifying becoming *of* theos (as a child is *of* the parent) and not becoming theos or theoi, qv. the comment on v. 6, "by this geniture we are of theos." Cf. φύσει μὲν πέφυκας θεός (Josephus Hymnographicus, *Feast of Saint Basilissa*, Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, 105, 1120) and δόξης γέμων θεός πέφυκας (Joannes Geometra, *Carmina Varia*, Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, 106, 997)

15.

song. ὕμνος. Not a 'hymn' in the Christian sense (which the word hymn now so often imputes) but rather celebrating the numinous, and theos, in song, verse (ode), and chant.

you said you heard from those influences when you reached the Ogdoad. The Ogdoad - ὀγδοος, the eighth - relates to Poemandres 26, τὴν ὀγδοατικὴν φύσιν, the ogdoadic physis which is beyond the seven spheres, the reaching of which is celebrated in song, ὕμνεῖ σὺν τοῖς οὖσι τὸν πατέρα, which signifies the end of the mortal anados (ἄνοδος) and where the mortal hears 'the influences' - those of The Cræft - who or which are beyond the ogdoad celebrating theos in melodious song, τινων δυνάμεων ὑπὲρ τὴν ὀγδοατικὴν φύσιν φωνῇ τινι ἡδεῖαι ὕμνουσῶν τὸν θεόν.

There are several ways of interpreting the text here and what follows. If one accepts the emendation σου (Nock, after Reitzenstein) then Thoth is asking to hear the song Hermes heard when he reached the Ogdoad, while if one reads, with the MSS, μου, then Thoth is asking for the song Hermes said Thoth would hear when Thoth himself reaches the Ogdoad. In addition, τῶν δυνάμεων in association with either σου ἀκοῦσαι or μου ἀκοῦσαι is awkward, implying "heard from The Cræft" - or, in exoteric terms, "from the (those) Powers/Forces /Influences/" - when whomsoever reaches the Ogdoad, and which inclines one to ask, whose or what influences/powers? Those mentioned, for example, in vv. 8-9, such as Delightfulness, Self-Restraint, and Perseverance? If so, are these influences, collectively, The Cræft itself personified and who thus, through the generosity of theos, enable Palingenesis?

On balance, given the reference to Poemandres 26, I am inclined to accept the emendation σου and take 'the influences' as referring to those of The Cræft, some of whom are personified in vv. 8-9, and which 'influences' are those who in Poemandres 26 are "celebrating theos in melodious song."

divined about the Ogdoad. Taking καθὼς Ὀγδοάδα ὁ Ποιμάνδρης ἐθέσπισε with τέκνον, not with the preceding ἀκοῦσαι τῶν δυνάμεων.

Poemandres, the perceivization of authority. Qv. Poemandres 2, εἰμὶ ὁ Ποιμάνδρης, ὁ τῆς αὐθεντίας νοῦς. As there, the title implies "What (knowledge) I reveal (or am about to reveal) is authentic," so that an alternative translation, in keeping with the hermeticism of the text, would be "I am Poemandres, the authentic perceivization."

and entrusting me to presence the beautiful. καὶ ἐπέτρεψέ μοι ἐκεῖνος ποιεῖν τὰ καλά. While an alternative translation is "and entrusting me to presence the noble," it does not immediately connect to what follows: of beautifully presencing such beautiful things as the esoteric song (ὑμνωδία κρύπτη, cantio arcana) which Hermes proceeds to teach to Thoth.

16.

except to you at your completion. εἰ μὴ σοὶ ἐπὶ τέλει τοῦ παντός. More literally, "except to you at the ending of the whole." That is, at the ending of the initiation into the secret of Palingenesis.

respectfully. That is, reverentially. The sense of προσκυνέω here does not necessarily imply a 'kneeling down' or some sort of what the Greeks (and the Romans) would undoubtedly have described as a 'barbarian adoration' or prostration as if in worship of Helios or of some-thing. It also does not necessarily imply a type of body-bent bowing, a stooping, toward a particular person (cf. Herodotus, I:119.1, ἄρπαγος μὲν ὡς ἤκουσε ταῦτα, προσκυνήσας καὶ μεγάλα ποιησάμενος ὅτι τε ἡ ἁμαρτὰς οἱ ἐς δέον ἐγγόνεε καὶ ὅτι ἐπὶ τύχησι χρηστῆσι ἐπὶ δεῖπνον ἐκέκλητο, ἦε ἐς τὰ οἰκία).

What such respect, in this particular case, involved is unknown although the tractate - with its invocations of Self-Restraint, the imperturbable, the unwaveringly noble, of a contemplative silence, and its declamation of "go within" - is suggestive of a simple, unadorned, silent, respect for the numinous and the divine, as might perhaps be manifest in a slight bowing of the head. Cf. John 4:20 where the type of reverence is also unknown,

οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ προσεκύνησαν· καὶ ὑμεῖς λέγετε ὅτι ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις ἐστὶν ὁ τόπος ὅπου προσκυνεῖν δεῖ.

Our ancestors gave reverence on this mountain but you say that the necessary place of reverence is in Jerusalem.

17.

Logos Δ. The MSS at this point have the heading ὑμνωδία κρύπτη, λόγος Δ. While ὑμνωδία κρύπτη is understandable - Esoteric Song, Cantio Arcana, Secret Chant - the meaning of λόγος Δ is conjectural, with suggestions including The Fourth Song, The Fourth Formula, and the Fourth Discourse, with the obvious implication that there are, or were, four such hermetic songs, formulae, or discourses, with various suggestions as to those other three, such as Poemandres 31, tractate V:10, and Asclepius 41, all of which are relatively short.

every Physis of Kosmos. Among the presencings of the Kosmos described here by their physis are Earth, Trees, the Heavens, Air, and Water.

In respect of Kosmos and physis, qv. tractate XII:14,

ἀνάγκη δὲ καὶ ἡ πρόνοια καὶ ἡ φύσις ὄργανά ἐστι τοῦ κόσμου

Necessitas, foreseeing, and physis, are implements of Kosmos

Gaia. γῆ. Earth as elemental principle, hence the personification here since Earth is being directly, personally, invoked.

open. ἀνοίγνυμι. Cf. Papyri Graecae Magicae, XXXVI. 312ff. The term was often used in both mystic odes and in classical magicae incantations. The Latin *aperio* well expresses the sense, as in "aperire librum et septem signacula eius," (Jerome, Revelation V:5) and "et cum aperuisset sigillum secundum." (Jerome, Revelation VI:3)

μολός. Here, not a literal 'bolt' or 'lock' but what prevents (access to) or is a defence against something.

Abyss. ἄβυσσος. This is the emendation of Reitzenstein for the various readings of the MSS. Nock has ὄμβρου which does not make sense here, for why "open what prevents" rain? In respect of ἄβυσσος, qv. tractate III:1.

incurvate. This unusual English term is appropriate here to poetically suggest the sense of the Greek - σείω - which is to bend from side to side as if shaken by an earthquake, by a trembling of the Earth.

Master Artisan. κτίσεως κύριον. 'Founding Lord', or less poetically, Lord of Creation. Theos as creator-artisan is mentioned in Poemandres 9, with the term there, and in tractate IV:1, being δημιουργόν. Qv. also δύναμις δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἰών (the craft of theos: Aion) in tractate XI:3.

clan. κύκλος. Here signifying a particular group, or a particular assembly, of people as in the English expression "the inner circle." Hence, "the clan of

theos".

Sweet water. γλυκὺ ὕδωρ. The sweetness of water suitable to drink. Cf. John 4:10, ὕδωρ ζῶν, the 'living water' - that is, the water of life, ὕδωρ ζωῆς.

bring light to. In respect of φαίνω as 'bringing light', cf. Plato, Timaeus, 39b,

φῶς ὁ θεὸς ἀνῆψεν ἐν τῇ πρὸς γῆν δευτέρᾳ τῶν περιόδων, ὃ δὲ νῦν
κεκλήκαμεν ἥλιον, ἵνα ὅτι μάλιστα εἰς ἅπαντα φαίνοι τὸν οὐρανὸν

theos ignited a light in that second circle from Earth, named now as Helios, so that it could bring light to all of the heavens

fond celebration. Regarding εὐλογία in a neutral way which does not impute the Christian sense of "praise the Lord", qv. Poemandres 22,

παραγίνομαι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ὁ Νοῦς τοῖς ὁσίοις καὶ ἀγαθοῖς καὶ καθαροῖς
καὶ ἐλεήμοσι, τοῖς εὐσεβοῦσι, καὶ ἡ παρουσία μου γίνεται βοήθεια,
καὶ εὐθὺς τὰ πάντα γνωρίζουσι καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἰλάσκονται
ἀγαπητικῶς καὶ εὐχαριστοῦσιν εὐλογοῦντες καὶ ὑμνοῦντες
τεταγμένως πρὸς αὐτὸν τῇ στοργῇ

I, perceivation, attend to those of respectful deeds, the honourable, the refined, the compassionate, those aware of the numinous; to whom my being is a help so that they soon acquire knowledge of the whole and are affectionately gracious toward the father, fondly celebrating in song his position.

my Arts. As at Poemandres 31 - which is also a traditional doxology (δοξολογία) to theos - the sense of δυνάμεων is not 'powers', forces (or something similar and equally at variance with such a laudation) but 'arts'; that is, particular abilities, qualities, and skills. Here, these abilities and skills - the craft - relate to esoteric song; to be able to be an effective laudator in respect of theos and "every Physis of Kosmos."

18.

numinous. ἅγιος. As in the Poemandres tractate and other tractates.

knowledge. As at Poemandres 26, γνῶσις here could be transliterated as gnosis although I incline toward the view that such a transliteration might - given what the term gnosis now imputes, as for example in being a distinct 'spiritual way' - lead to incorrectly imposing modern meanings on the text.

numinal understanding. φωτίζω here implies an understanding given by a divinity, as for example in spiritual enlightenment, something that is not conveyed if a single word such as 'enlightened' is used as a translation. In order to express something of the Greek, I had used the term 'numinal understanding' with numinal implying 'divine' as at tractate III:1,

Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεὸς καὶ θεῖον καὶ φύσις θεία

The numen of all beings is theos: numinal, and of numinal physis.

phaos. As at Poemandres 4ff - and in other tractates - a transliteration of φῶς - using the the Homeric φάος, given that it (like physis) is a fundamental principle of Hermetic weltanschauungen and one which the overused English word 'light', with all its modern and Christian interpretations, does not satisfactorily express.

mastery. Implying mastery over one's self, cf. Chaucer, The Physician's Tale: "Bacus hadde of hir mouth right no maistrie." (v. 58)

respectful of custom. δίκαιος. Not 'righteous', which imposes abstract theological meanings (mostly derived from the Old and New Testaments) on the text, but rather 'respectful of custom', of dutifully doing one's duty (that is, being honourable) toward both the gods and other mortals.

Honesty. ἀλήθεια. Given that those who are urged to sing are personifications, this is not some abstract, disputable, 'truth' but as often elsewhere in classical literature, a revealing, a dis-covering, of what is real as opposed to what is apparent or outer appearance. In personal terms, being honest and truthful.

Through me, may Kosmos accept... δι' ἐμοῦ δέξαι τὸ πᾶν λόγῳ. I take this with the following λογικὴν θυσίαν, and τὸ πᾶν as vocative, and poetically combine the unnecessary λόγῳ with λογικὴν. As punctuated by Nock et al it would with λογικὴν θυσίαν literally be something such as "through me accept in speech All That Exists/the Kosmos, an offering spoken," which - in the context of the song and of theos being τὸ πᾶν, All That Exists/the Kosmos - is distinctly odd.

Here, as in v. 19, translating τὸ πᾶν as Kosmos, rather than 'All That Exists' to elucidate the meaning and avoid awkward phraseology.

respectful wordful offerings. Qv. Poemandres 31. The difficult to translate Greek term λογικὴν θυσίαν implies an offering, and one which is both respectful and conveyed by means of words but which words are of themselves insufficient, inadequate, with the term 'wordful' suggesting such insufficiency as well as doubling for λόγῳ in the previous line.

19.

I take λογικὴν θυσίαν (respectful wordful offerings) as the end of the named, the metaphysical, 'esoteric song' (ὕμνωδία κρύπτη) with what follows - lines 214-235, that is, until the interjection by Thoth - a personal evocation, a chant, to theos - τὸ πᾶν - for acceptance of the offering (the singing of the esoteric

song) followed by a personal request to remain enlightened, followed by an epiphonema which includes sentiments of personal gratitude.

Life, recure. σωζε ζωή. Recure - from the classical Latin recuro - is an interesting, if neglected, English word and is apposite here implying as it does restore (to health), heal, and preserve. As mentioned in Poemandres 17 regarding Life and Phaos,

ὁ δὲ Ἄνθρωπος ἐκ ζωῆς καὶ φωτὸς ἐγένετο εἰς ψυχὴν καὶ νοῦν, ἐκ μὲν ζωῆς ψυχὴν, ἐκ δὲ φωτὸς νοῦν

Of Life and Phaos, the human came to be of psyche and perceivration; from Life - psyche; from Phaos - perceivration

Theos, spiritus. πνεῦμα θεέ. In respect of πνεῦμα Nock considered it doubtful and noted the suggestion of Keil, πνευμάτιζε, although πνεῦμα θεέ - theos, pneuma (spiritus) - does seem appropriate: theos, 'a breath', a breathing, Pneuma; which breathing imbues beings with life and spirit, with pneuma.

Breath-Giver, Artisan. πνευματοφόρε δημιουργέ. Literally, "Pneuma-Bearing, Artisan." The Master Craftsman whose craft is to make - to construct, to create - living beings.

20.

Because of your desire. Qv. v. 4, θελήματι θεοῦ.

21.

I follow Festugiere and take τῷ σοῖ τὴν εὐλογίαν ταύτην λεγομένην as belonging to Thoth, not Hermes.

a more numinal perceivration. Regarding ἐπιφωτιζω, qv. v. 16, γνῶσις ἁγία, φωτισθεὶς ἀπὸ σοῦ and the comment on 'numinal understanding'. As there, what is meant is not some ordinary type of 'illumination' but rather a divinely-inspired or a divinely-given understanding. Here, this understanding has enhanced the perceivration Thoth has acquired.

from my heart. As at v. 4, φρήν as a metaphor for the heart. Which explains the response of Hermes: μὴ ἀσκόπως.

essentiator. Qv. v. 4.

kyrios. A transliteration of the Greek, appropriate here given what terms such as 'Lord' and 'Master' now so often denote, and given Poemandres 6,

Οὕτω γινώθι· τὸ ἐν σοὶ βλέπον καὶ ἀκοῦον, λόγος κυρίου, ὁ δὲ νοῦς
πατὴρ θεός. οὐ γὰρ διίστανται ἀπ' ἀλλήλων· ἔνωσις γὰρ τούτων ἐστὶν
ἡ ζωή

Then know that within you - who hears and sees - is logos kyrios, although
perceivation is theos the father. They are not separated, one from the other,
because their union is Life.

22.

invokation. εὐχομαι. Not 'pray' - which has too many Christian and other
non-Hellenic religious connotations - but invokation, as in appeal to a deity, to
call upon, to offer a laudation or an offering. Qv. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 933,
ἠὔξω θεοῖς δείσας ἂν ὧδ' ἔρδειν τάδε, did you invoke the gods because you
feared doing such things?

the unrottable produce. τὰ ἀθάνατα γενήματα. Literally, "the
deathless/immortal produce". Taking ἀθάνατος metaphorically contrasts well
with the preceding 'bearing good fruit'.

the tradition. In respect of παράδοσις, cf. παραδιδόναι μοι in v. 1. As there, the
suggestion is of a disclosing of some ancestral teaching or wisdom; the
disclosing by a teacher or master to a pupil.

rouners. For 'rouner' in respect of διάβολος, qv. v. 13, εἰς δὲ ὑπεμνηματι σάμην
ἵνα μὴ ὧμεν διάβολοι τοῦ παντὸς εἰς τοὺς πολλούς.

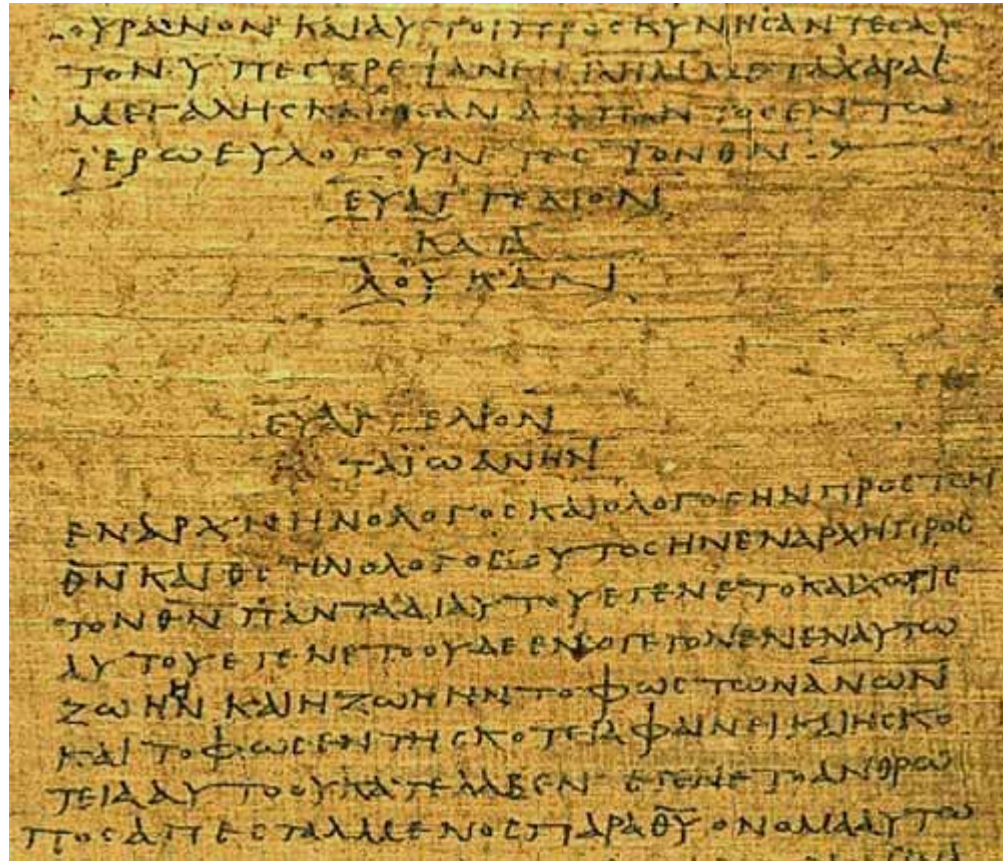
noesis. A technical, mystical, term, qv. the comment on 'noetic sapientia' in v. 2.

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The Gospel According to John

Translation And Commentary

Volume I

Chapters 1 - 5

David Myatt

Preface

This is the first of five projected volumes containing my complete translation of and commentary on the Gospel of John.

In respect of the Greek text, I have followed Nestle-Aland (NA28), although I have on occasion favoured some variant reading such as from the Textus Receptus (Stephanus, 1550) or from a particular MSS with such departures noted in the commentary and which commentary illustrates my methodology and thus my interpretation, which is of seeking to understand the meaning of certain Greek words in their historical context and of searching for appropriate English words to express that meaning and not the "meaning" that particular English words may now convey to the detriment of understanding this particular Gospel in that historical context.

In terms of layout of the translation, I follow the tradition of the Anglo-Saxon version - adopted by both Wycliffe and Tyndale - of placing each verse on a separate line and capitalizing the initial letter of each verse.

2017

Image credit:

Papyrus Bodmer XIV-XV (P75). c. 175-225 CE . Gospel of John, Chapter 1, vv.1 ff. Vatican Library.

Introduction

A New Interpretation

The genesis of this interpretation of meaning was some marginal notes I made, some forty years ago while a Christian monk, in my copy of τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον.

During my time in that monastery many hours on many days on many months were spent in the library reading many books that I now only vaguely recollect. But one of those which does still linger in memory was a work by John Chrysostom concerning the Gospel of John [i], homilies given toward the end of the fourth century Anno Domini, probably in Antioch, and over one and half thousand years before I sat down in a religious environment to read them. This continuity of religious tradition, of language, resonated with me then in a pleasing way as did the scholarly minutiae, sparsely scattered among the preaching, in which he explained some matters such as the use of the definite article in the phrase – from verse 1 of chapter one of the Gospel – θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος, Theos was the Logos.

In the matter of minutiae, I had then some doubts as to why θεὸς there is not ὁ θεὸς as at verse 24 of chapter four, πνεῦμα ὁ θεός. But arguments were made regarding why the Evangelist wrote ὁ λόγος (the logos) rather than just λόγος: because, it was argued, to distinguish Jesus (identified as the logos) from everyone else. In addition, the Evangelist, and thus his Gospel, were considered to be divinely-inspired – guided by the Holy Spirit, with the Evangelist thus aware of τὰ βάθη τοῦ θεοῦ [ii] – so that there are in that Gospel, as in the others, meanings beyond what an ordinary person might express in Hellenistic Greek.

Over forty years ago I, subsequent to such doubts, accepted such theological arguments and therefore had little interest – beyond disputations concerning the actual meaning of words such as λόγος in classical and Hellenistic Greek – in further questioning the accuracy of conventional interpretations of the Gospel of John such as that of the Douay–Rheims version.

Now, as someone with a rather paganus weltanschauung brought-into-being by some thirty years of πάθει μάθος, but respectful still of other manifestations of the numinous, I strive to understand that Gospel in the cultural milieu of the ancient Roman Empire and thus as a work, written in Hellenistic Greek, by a man who either had known Jesus and participated in his life, or who had known and was close to someone who did. That is, I now approach the text as I have in the past three decades approached the tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum and the extant writings of Sophocles and Aeschylus; as an original work, possibly a self-contained one, where the author conveys something derived from their knowledge, learning, and personal experience, and where the meanings of certain words or passages may sometimes be explained or placed into context by comparison with other authors writing in the same language in the same or in a similar cultural milieu.

Thus, and as I have sometimes done in translations of mine from Hellenic Greek (for example, tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum), I have here opted for some transliterations (such as logos and theos) in an endeavour to avoid reading into the text the meanings that some of the English words conventionally used in other translations – and given in lexicons – may now suggest, or do suggest often as a result of over a thousand years of exegesis. For the hope is that such transliterations, and eschewing some other English words that have traditionally been used, will enable the reader to approach and to appreciate the text in a new way, sans preconceptions, and hopefully intimate how it might have been understood by those – both pagans and new converts – who first heard or read this evangel in the formative years of Christianity before Christian doctrine became formalized, before disputations about heresy, and before there were extensive theological commentaries on the text.

To give just two examples. (i) In 8.7 and in respect of ἀναμάρτητος I have eschewed the common translation of ἁμαρτία by English word 'sin' and which English word, through centuries of Christian exegesis and preaching, has become a theological abstraction and a pejorative term, whereas the the original meaning of the English word syn imputed the sense of doing what was wrong, of committing an error, of making a mistake, of being at fault; of in some way overstepping the bounds or transgressing limits imposed by others, and thus of accepting responsibility for such an infraction, a sense which the suggested etymology of the word syn implies: from the Latin sons, sontis. While my translation of 'mistake' (in 8.7) and 'error' (in 1.29) may well be controversial, to me it imparts something important regarding the teachings, and the life, of Jesus of Nazareth: something quite human, something rather different from a stern preacher preaching about 'sin'; something which seems to express what the Beatitudes express, and something which individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox and William Penn many centuries later tried to say and write about Christianity and about the teachings and the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Thus the interpretation of this particular verse is "So, as they continued to ask he straightened himself, saying to them: Let he who has never made a mistake throw the first stone at her." (ii) In 1.10 – ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο – I take the sense of ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν as suggesting not that "he was in the world" but rather that he was "of the world", among – with – those of the world, with his mortal body subject to pain and bodily death, with καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο thus implying not that "the world was made/created through him" but that the world was presenced in him, past, present, and future, with the English word 'presenced' – etymon: Latin praesentia – suggested by how he came to be embodied, presenced, in the Eucharist (qv. the phrase "This same presence may be called moste fitly, a reall presence, that is a presence not fained, but a true & a faythfull presence," in John Foxe's *The first volume of the ecclesiasticall history: contaynyng the Actes and monumentes of thynges passed in every kynges tyme in this realme*, 1570).

In several instances, in respect of choice of English words, I have taken inspiration from the Anglo-Saxon version of the Gospels – the Wessex Gospels, dating from c.990 CE – as for example at 1.18 and 1.32.

[i] *Homiliae in Ioannem*, volume 59 of the Migne Patrologia Graeca series.

[ii] "The profundities of Theos." *First Epistle To The Corinthians*, 2.10. Both Wycliffe, and the King James Bible, translate as "The deep things of God."

Chapter One

1 In primacy was the logos, and the logos was with Theos, and the logos was Theos.

2 For this was, in primacy, with Theos

3 Who brought into being all beings and without whom no beings would exist:

4 Who was Life and which Life was the Phaos of human beings.

5 And the Phaos illuminates the dark and is not overwhelmed by the dark.

6 There was a man, a messenger from Theos, named John

7 Who, arriving as a witness so that others might trust him, gave evidence concerning the Phaos

8 For he himself was not the Phaos but rather gave evidence regarding the Phaos:

9 Of the advent into the world of the genuine Phaos who could enlighten any person.

10 He who was of the world with the world presenced in him but whose own did not recognize him.

11 For having ventured to his own his own did not receive him

12 While those who did receive him he confirmed as children of Theos including those affirming his Nomen

13 Who were begotten not of blood nor by the design of mortals but of Theos.

14 And the Logos became corporeal and dwelt among us and we perceived his numinosity, the numinosity of the only begotten of the Father, abounding in veritas, benevolence.

15 John was a witness for him and loudly said, "This is he of whom I spoke: the one who, arriving after me, takes precedence because he came-into-being before me.

16 Out of his plenitude we have been given benevolence after benevolence

17 For while the Nomos was received from Moses, benevolence and veritas came to be through Jesus Christ.

18 No one has ever yet beheld Theos; but the being in the greada of the Father has made him known."

19 For such was the evidence John gave when the Judaeans dispatched priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him: "Who are you?"

20 And he admitted, he did not deny but admitted, "I am not the Christ."

21 So they asked him: "Who, then? Are you Elijah?" And he said: "I am not."

"Are you the Prophet?"

And he replied, "No."

22 So they asked him: "Who, then? For we have to give an answer to those who dispatched us. What have you to say about yourself?

23 He replied: "I, a call sounding out in forsaken places, straightening the way for the Master, just as Isaiah the Prophet said."

24 Now those dispatched were from the Pharisees

25 And they asked him, saying: "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, not Elijah, not the Prophet?"

26 John, answering them, said: "I baptize in water yet standing in your midst is someone you do not recognize

27 Who, proceeding me, arrives after me whose sandal strap I do not deserve to unfasten."

28 Such was what came to pass in Bethany, on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

29 The next day he saw Jesus approaching him and said: "Observe! The Lamb of Theos who removes the error of the world.

30 This is he of whom I said: 'Having arrived after me, he takes precedence because he came-into-being before me.'

31 Although personally unacquainted with him, it was for his discovery by Israel that I set out to baptize in water,"

32 And, as evidence, John said: "I beheld the Spiritus as a dove descend from Empyrean and remain there with him.

33 And although personally unacquainted with Him, it was He who sent me to baptize in water, saying to me: 'Upon whosoever you behold the Spiritus descend and remain there with, is the same one who baptizes in Halig Spiritus.'

34 Such have I seen and such is my evidence that this is the Son of Theos."

35 Next day, John once more stood with two of his disciples

36 And, looking at Jesus as he passed them by, said: "Observe, the Lamb of Theos."

37 Hearing him say this, his two disciples followed Jesus

38 And Jesus, seeing them following him, turned around, asking: "What do you seek?"

And they replied: "Rabbi," - which is to say, when interpreted, Master - "where do you stay?"

39 He replied: "Arrive with me and you will see." So they arrived and saw where he stayed, staying with him that day: this, around the tenth duration.

40 One of the two who had followed him after having heard John was Andrew, brother of Simon Peter,

41 Who having firstly sought his brother Simon said to him: "We have found The Messias," which when interpreted is Christ.

42 And he led him to Jesus who, looking at him, said: "You are Simon, son of John, and you will be called Kephas," which, when explained, is Petros.

43 The next day Jesus went forth into Galilee and there found Philip, saying to him: "Follow me."
44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the community of Andrew and Peter.
45 Philip, finding Nathaniel, said to him: "We have found the one written about by Moses in the Nomos and by the Prophets: Jesus of Nazareth, son of Joseph."
46 And Nathaniel asked him: "Has anything good ever come from Nazareth?" To which Philip replied: "Set out with me and see."
47 When Jesus beheld Nathaniel approaching he said this about him: "Behold, a true Israelite: someone without guile."
48 Nathaniel said to him: "From where do you know me?" In answer, Jesus said: "Before Philip called you I beheld you beside a tree of figs."
49 To which Nathaniel replied: ""Rabbi, you are the Son of Theos, you are the King of Israel."
50 In answer, Jesus said: "Are you persuaded because I beheld you beside a tree of figs? You will see much more than that."
51 And he said to him: "Verily, verily, I say unto you that you will see the sky opening and those envoys of Theos descending to and ascending around the son of a mortal."

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Chapter Two

1 On the third day there was a marriage in Cana, Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.
2 Also invited to the wedding were Jesus and his disciples
3 And when there was an insufficiency of wine the mother of Jesus said to him: "They do not have any wine,"
4 And Jesus said to her: "My lady, what has that to do with you and me? For my season is not yet due."
5 His mother said to the attendants: "Do whatever he says."
6 And - as there were there six stone water-urns set up according to Judaeans cleansing holding two or three measures each -
7 Jesus said to them: "Fill those urns with water." And they completely filled them.
8 Then he said: "Now pour some out for the master of ceremonies." And they did.
9 Thus the master of ceremonies tasted the water become wine unaware from whence it was - although the attendants, having poured it, were aware - and called out to the spouse,
10 Saying to him: "Everyone sets out the better wine first and then, after a sufficiency is drunk, an inferior one, but you have kept the better wine until now."
11 This was the commencement of the signs, and this Jesus did in Cana, Galilee, and thus was his numinosity manifest with his disciples trusting him.

12 After this he - with his mother, brothers, and his disciples - went down to Capernaum, staying there for not many days,
13 And when the pascha of the Judaeans was near, Jesus went up to Jerusalem,
14 Where, in the temple, he found those sellers of oxen and sheep and doves as well as those seated changers-of-money,
15 And, fashioning a flail from cords, he cast all of them - including the sheep and the oxen - out from the temple and poured away the coins of those changers-of-money and overturned their tables,
16 Saying to those sellers of doves: "Take those from here. Do not make the house of my father a house of merchandise."
17 His disciples recalled that it was written: "Enthusiasm for your house will devour me."
18 In response, the Judaeans said to him: "What sign do you show us for you doing such things?"
19 Jesus replied, saying to them: "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it."
20 The Judaeans said: "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and you will raise it in three days?"
21 But he spoke of the temple of his body.
22 When therefore he was raised from the dead his disciples recalled that he had said this and trusted what was written and the word that Jesus had spoken.

23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at pascha on the feast-day, many trusted in his name having beheld the signs which he did,
24 But Jesus did not place his trust in them since he understood everything
25 And did not need anyone to give evidence regarding a person, aware as he was of the person within.

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Chapter Three

1 Now there was a Pharisee - a man called Nicodemus, a leader of the Judaeans -
2 Who, arriving at night, said to him: "Rabbi, we recognize that you are a teacher, arriving from Theos, for no one is able to do the signs you do unless Theos is with them."
3 In answer, Jesus said to him: "Verily, verily, I say unto you that if someone is not born anew they are unable to behold the Kingdom of Theos."
4 Nicodemus said to him: "How can a person be born when they are old? How are they able to twice enter the womb of the mother?"
5 Jesus answered: "Verily, verily, I say unto you that if someone is not born of Water and Spiritus they are unable to enter the Kingdom of Theos.
6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spiritus is spiritus.
7 Do not be astonished that I said to you to that it is needful for you to be born anew.

8 The wind blows where it will, and when you hear its sound you do not know from whence it came or whence it goes. So it is for everyone who is born of the Spiritus."

9 In reply, Nicodemus said to him: "How are such things able to exist?"

10 Jesus answered, saying to him: "You - a Magister of Israel - do not apprehend such things?

11 Verily verily I say unto you that what we recognize, we can talk about, and what we have observed we can give evidence concerning, and our evidence has not been accepted.

12 Having spoken to you of earthly things and you lack trust, how can you trust if I speak of things caelestien?

13 And no one has ascended into Empyrean without having descended out from Empyrean, the son of a mortal who is in Empyrean,

14 For just as Moses elevated that serpent in a forsaken place so will the son of a mortal be elevated

15 So that all those trusting in him might have life everlasting.

16 For Theos so loved the world that he offered up his only begotten son so that all those trusting in him would not perish but might have life everlasting.

17 For Theos did not dispatch his son to the world to condemn the world, but rather that the world might be rescued through him.

18 Whosoever trusts in him is not condemned while whomsoever does not trust is condemned for he has not trusted in the Nomen of the only begotten son of Theos.

19 And this is the condemnation: That the Phaos arrived in the world but mortals loved the darkness more than the Phaos, for their deeds were harmful.

20 For anyone who does what is mean dislikes the Phaos and does not come near the Phaos lest their deeds be exposed.

21 But whomsoever practices disclosure goes to the Phaos so that their deeds might be manifest as having been done through Theos.

22 After this, Jesus and his disciples, having arrived in the land of the Judaeans, stayed there together, for he was baptizing.

23 Also baptizing - in Aenon near Salim - was John, since the water there was plentiful and others had arrived to be baptized,

24 And John had yet to be hurled into a guarded cage.

25 Now, it came to pass that some disciples of John were disputing with a Judaeans about the cleansing,

26 So they went to John and said to him: "Rabbi, there on the other side of the Jordan is the one you gave evidence about. He is baptizing and everyone is going to him."

27 In answer, John said: "A person is unable to receive anything unless it is gifted to them from Empyrean.

28 You yourselves can give evidence that I said I am not the Christ but was dispatched before him.

29 He who has an espousess is the spouse, and the friend of the spouse - who stands by him and listens - is joyous with joy because of his words. Hence, my own joy is complete.

30 It is necessary that he continues to grow and that I wane.

31 The one who arrives from above is above everything while the one from the Earth is of the Earth and speaks about the Earth: the one who arrives from Empyrean is above everything.

32 He gives evidence about what he observed and heard and yet no one accepts his evidence.

33 Whomsoever accepts his evidence certifies by their seal that Theos is steadfast,

34 For the one dispatched by Theos speaks the words of Theos since he does not apportion Spiritus.

35 The father loves his son and has placed all things in his hands:

36 Whomsoever trusts in the son shall have life everlasting but whomsoever does not trust the son shall not see that life; rather, the anger of Theos abides on them.

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Chapter Four

1 Now, when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus had made more disciples and baptisms than John

2 Even though it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples,

3 He left Judaea and went back again into Galilee

4 With him of necessity having to pass through Samaria.

5 Thus did Jesus arrive in a town in Samaria called Sychar near to the plot of land that Jacob had gifted to Joseph his son

6 Where the well of Jacob was. And Jesus, wearied by his walking, sat down beside that well: this, around the sixth duration.

7 When a Samaritan woman arrived to haul-out water, Jesus said to her: "Grant me to drink,"

8 For his disciples had departed to the town to purchase food,

9 With the Samaritan woman saying to him: "How do you, a Judaeans, ask to drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" For Judaeans do not use Samaritan things.

10 Jesus answered and said to her: "Had you been aware of the gift of Theos and who it was saying to you 'grant me to drink,' you would have asked of him and he would have gifted you with living water."

11 The woman said to him: "Sir, you do not have anything to haul-out with and the well is deep. From where then is this living water that you have?"

12 Are you better than our ancestor Jacob who gifted us with this well which he himself drank from as did his sons and livestock?"

13 Jesus answered and said to her: "Whomsoever drinks this water will thirst again

14 But whomsoever would drink of the water I gift them would not ever thirst. Instead, the water I gift them would be in them a source of water rising up to life everlasting."

15 The woman said to him: "Sir, grant me that water so I never thirst nor have to be here, hauling."

16 To her he said: "Go, call your spouse and return here."

17 The woman answered, saying to him: "I do not have a spouse."

Jesus replied: "It is good that you said you have no spouse.

18 Although you have had five spouses, he whom you are with now is not your spouse. Thus, you told the truth."

19 The woman said to him: "Sir, I deem you are a prophet.

20 Our ancestors gave reverence on this mountain but you say that the necessary place of reverence is in Jerusalem."

21 Jesus said to her: "My lady, trust me. There is a season arriving when you will reverence the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.

22 You reverence what you do not recognize; we reverence what we recognize, for deliverance is of the Judaeans.

23 But a season is arriving - and is here, now - when the sincere reverencers will reverence the Father in spiritus and sincerity. And the Father seeks those who so reverence him.

24 Theos is Spiritus, and it behoves those reverencing him to give reverence in spiritus and sincerity."

25 The woman said to him: "I am aware that the Messias - called the Christ - is arriving. When he arrives, he will disclose everything to us."

26 Jesus said to her: "I am: who speaks to you."

27 It was then that the disciples arrived and, although they had wondered why he was speaking with a woman, none of them asked "What are you enquiring about?" or "Why are you speaking to her?"

28 The woman, leaving her water-urn, departed for the town and said to the people there

29 "Follow! Behold a man who related to me everything I have ever done. Could it be the Christ?"

30 So they went forth from the town to arrive near to him.

31 Meanwhile, the disciples made a request of him, saying: "Rabbi, eat."

32 But he said to them: "I have food to eat that you do not recognize."

33 Then the disciples said among themselves: "Did anyone provide, for him to eat?"

34 Jesus said to them: "My food is that I undertake the design of the one having sent me and accomplish His work.

35 Do you not say: There are four moons until the harvest arrives? Behold, I say to you: raise your eyes and observe the fields for they are already nearing harvest-white.

36 The one reaping receives payment, gathering together fruit for life everlasting, so that both the one sowing and the one reaping can rejoice.

37 In this instance, there is a relevant saying: One sows and another reaps.

38 I sent you to reap that which you did not toil for but which others did toil for, and you are entering into that toil."

39 Now, many Samaritans in that town trusted in him because of the word of the woman who gave evidence: "he related to me everything I have ever done."

40 Thus when the Samaritans, arriving, were near him they invited him to stay with them. And for two days he stayed there.

41 And many more trusted because of his word,

42 Saying to the woman: "We do not trust because of what you told us, for we ourselves have heard and recognize that this is indeed the Servator Of The World.

43 And, after two days, he went forth from there into Galilee,

44 For Jesus himself gave evidence that a prophet is not esteemed in his own village.

45 On his arrival in Galilee, the Galileans accepted him having observed all that he had done at the feast in Jerusalem, for they themselves had gone to that feast.

46 Then he went again to Cana of Galilee where he had made that water wine. And there was in Capernaum a royal official whose son was ill.

47 When he heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea he went to him to ask him to descend and heal his son who was about to die.

48 Jesus said to him: "If you do not observe signs and portents you will not trust."

49 The royal official said to him: "Sir, descend before my dear child dies."

50 Jesus said to him: "Be on your way: your son will live." The man trusted the word of Jesus that he had said to him, and went on his way.

51 And even as he was descending his servants met him, saying that his son was alive.

52 Thus he enquired of them in which duration his betterment took hold. And they said to him: "Yesterday, at the sixth duration the fever left him."

53 The father therefore learned that it was the duration when Jesus had said to him: "Your son will live," and thus he himself was trusting as was everyone in his household.

54 That was the second sign that Jesus brought about when he arrived in Galilee from Judea.

Chapter Five

1 Following this, there was a Judaeen feast and Jesus went to Jerusalem.

2 And there is in Jerusalem by the place of the sheep a pool, named in the language of the Hebrews as Bethesda, which has five colonnades

3 In which were a large number of the infirm - the blind, the limping, the withered - awaiting a change in the water

4 Since on occasion an Envoy of Theos descended into the pool, stirring the water, and whomsoever after that stirring of the water was first to enter became complete, the burden of their affliction removed.

5 And there was a man there who for eight and thirty years had been infirm.

6 Jesus, seeing him lying there and knowing of that lengthy duration, said to him: "Do you seek to be complete?"

7 The infirm one replied: "Sir, I do not have someone who when the water is stirred could place me in that pool, and, when I go, someone else has descended before me."

8 Jesus said to him: "Arise. Take your bedroll, and walk."

9 And, directly, the man became complete, took up his bedroll and walked around. And it was the day of the Sabbath.

10 Thus did the Judaeans say to the one who had been treated: "It is the Sabbath and it is not permitted for you to carry your bedroll."

11 To them he answered: "It was he who made me complete who said for me to take my bedroll and to walk around."

12 So they asked him: "Who is the man who said for you to take the bedroll and walk around?"

13 But the healed one did not know, for there was a crowd there with Jesus having betaken himself away.

14 Following this, Jesus discovered him in the temple and said to him: "Behold, you are complete. No more missteps, lest something worse befalls you."

15 The man then went away and informed the Judaeans that it was Jesus who had made him complete.

16 And thus did the Judaeans harass Jesus because he was doing such things on the Sabbath.

17 When Jesus responded to them: "My father even now labours, and I also labour,"

18 The Judaeans were even more determined to kill him since not only had he annulled the Sabbath but also because he spoke of Theos as his Father, presenting himself as equal to Theos.

19 In response, Jesus said to them: "Verily, verily, I say unto you that the son is not able to do anything on his own: only that which he observes his father doing. For whatever the father does, the son also does,

20 For the father loves the son and reveals to him all that he does. And, beyond this, he will reveal to him greater works which shall astonish you

21 Since just as the father awakens the dead, and gives life, so also the son gives life by design to whomsoever,

22 For the father does not choose anyone, having accorded all choosing to his son

23 So that all might honour the son as they honour the father. And whoever does not honour the son, does not honour the father who sent him.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you that whomsoever hears my Logos, and trusts who sent me, has life everlasting and is not entered into the choosing but passes from death into life.

25 Verily, verily, I say unto you that a season is arriving, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of Theos and those who listen shall live.

26 Just as the father possesses Life within himself so he gifted the son with Life within him,

27 And also gifted him - as the son of a mortal - with the authority of choosing.

28 Do not be astonished at this, for a season is arriving when all those in their burial places will hear his voice

29 And proceed forth: those who have acted honourably to anastasis of life; those who have acted dishonourably, to anastasis of the choosing.

30 For I am not able to do anything on my own. When I have listened, I choose; and my choosing is fair since I do not seek my own design but rather the design of he who sent me.

31 If I am a witness about myself then my testimony is invalid,

32 But there is another as a witness for me, and I recognize that his testimony about me is valid.

33 You inquired after John, and he was evidential to the veritas.

34 And, although the testimony I receive is not from people, I say these things that you may be rescued.

35 He: a lantern, firefull and revealing; you: desirous to seasonably exult in his phaos.

36 I however have a testimony beyond that of John, for the deeds the father gifted me that I should accomplish them - the deeds which I do - are witness that the father sent me,

37 With the father - he who sent me - a witness about me: he whose voice you have never heard, whose likeness you have never observed,

38 With his Logos not remaining within you for you do not trust the one he sent.

39 You search the writings because you suppose that there is within them life everlasting and that they are a witness about me.

40 And yet have no desire to go to me so that you might have Life.

41 I do not receive honours from people,

42 But I have recognized you: for love of Theos is not within you.

43 I have arrived in the name of my father yet you do not accept me, but if another arrives in his own name you will accept him.

44 How are you able to trust when you accept honours from one another and yet do not seek the honour that is only from Theos?

45 Do not suppose that I will accuse you before the father, for it is Moses - on whom you rely - who is the one accusing you.
46 Had you trusted Moses, you would have trusted me for it was he who wrote about me.
47 Thus, since you do not trust what he wrote, how can you trust what I say?

Commentary

Chapter One

1.

a) Ἐν ἀρχῇ

I have eschewed the conventional, and the somewhat bland, 'in the beginning', for the more descriptive 'in primacy', a sense which the Greek suggests.

b) λόγος

It is, in my view, better to transliterate this than give a definite interpretation such as 'Word', especially since I incline toward the view that λόγος (as the following verses indicate – qv. the note on πρὸς τὸν θεόν below) is used here both in the sense of divine wisdom as manifest in the divine Law (as for example in the LXX text of Exodus 34.28) and in reference to Jesus - the divine made manifest - thus implying a fundamental principle which describes/reveals the nature of Being and beings, and thus the relationship between Being and beings. In this case, between the divinity and we mortals, and the duties and responsibilities of mortals.

Thus the translation 'In primacy was the logos.'

c) θεὸς

A transliteration for two basic reasons. (i) Because this is the very beginning of the text, with nothing having been mentioned so far about the nature or the attributes of the deity, and (ii) because the English word God now implies a particular cultural interpretation, the assumption being of God, as father. It is here just theos, or Theos if one reads Θεόν rather than θεόν, which after much reflexion, I am inclined to do.

The nature and attributes of Theos do become revealed, as the text proceeds, and to transliterate here is to approach the text as the evangel it was, and to thus possibly appreciate how it was received by those who first heard it or read it in the formative years of Christianity.

i) In respect of Theos, the lack of the definite article in θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος formed part of a certain theological controversy in the 4th and 5th centuries CE concerning the nature of Theos/God and the nature of Spiritus/The Holy Spirit (qv. 4.24). The basis of the controversy was whether 'the Theos' (ὁ θεός, The God) was the same or different from Theos, and if so whether Jesus, as the son of Theos, was always-existent (and thus the same as The God) or came-into-being afterwards, with the dispute later described as the Arian controversy, with 'Arianism' (the belief that Jesus was not equivalent to The God) denounced as a 'heresy'.

ii) In respect of the meaning of θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος there was also some dispute on grammatical grounds and which dispute continued into the Renaissance and beyond. The conventional reading was "the logos was Theos", with the minority reading (qv. Jean Daillé) being "Theos was the logos." Although my initial reading - as evident in earlier drafts of my translation - was 'Theos was the logos' I have, after much reflection and a re-reading of pertinent texts by John Chrysostom, Origen, and others, decided on "the logos was Theos."

2.

a) πρὸς τὸν θεόν

What does πρὸς τὸν θεόν mean? Perhaps not exactly what the conventional translation of 'with' implies, given πρὸς here is a preposition (with the accusative) which is generally indicative of movement (*toward*, or to interact with, or *unto*, something) and that, for the reader of the translation, 'the Logos was *with* Theos' is not very clear. With, the reader might well enquire, in what manner? As in the sense of being beside, or close? As in the Shakespearean Heaven doth with us as we with torches do? [1] As in – a sense not relevant to the Greek here but which English usage might suggest – supporting?

The English word *with* – with all its possible meanings, recent and otherwise – is not therefore in my view altogether satisfactory in suggesting the sense of the Greek. In the subsequent verse of John – 1.42 πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν – the sense is *to* Jesus, and in Hebrews 2:17 τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν suggests the sense of 'concerning', of relating to, which the English word *with* can also denote.

Positioned as it is between 'the primacy of the Logos' and the 'Logos was Theos', the sense – because of the repeated ἦν – suggests melded, with a free, non-literal, interpretation therefore being:

In primacy, the Logos, with Logos and Theos melded, for the Logos was Theos.

This evangel does not, therefore in my view, begin with some sort of philosophical statement of a neo-Platonist kind about some metaphysical principle termed Logos, but rather is a reminder that, for mortals, what has and had primacy was Logos understood, prior to Jesus, as the divine guidance manifest in the wisdom that is the Law, and that this wisdom, given to mortals by the divinity was, of itself and for us, a divine manifestation, a presencing, of the divinity. A sense which the mention of John the Baptist in v. 6-7 confirms, for John was sent by the divinity to testify – μαρτυρήσῃ – as to this truth. For God is Wisdom, the Law, and the Law is of God and, importantly according to the Old Testament context of this gospel and of the other gospels, how mortals could - before the birth of Jesus - know and understand and be in the presence of God. As Paul of Tarsus expressed it in relation to the evangel of Jesus of Nazareth:

πλήρωμα οὖν νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη

love is the completion of the law [2]

With arrival of Jesus, the Logos is manifest in and though his life, teachings, crucifixion, death and resurrection, with reverence of and trust in Jesus reverence of and trust in Theos, with Jesus saying in 4.21 that "there is a season arriving when you will reverence the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem," and in 3.16 that "all those trusting in him would not perish but might have life everlasting."

b) Οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν

This line, with its repetition of ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ and of πρὸς τὸν θεόν from line 1 is very interesting, especially in relation to οὗτος which here imputes the sense of "for *this* was in [that] primacy [already melded] with Theos," a translation which in my view is somewhat more meaningful than the conventional [3] "the same was in the beginning with God" and certainly more accurate than the "He was with God in the beginning" of some newer translations.

3.

πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο

ἐγένετο – born, or (even better) *came into being*, rather than the more prosaic 'made' as if in illusion to something having been manufactured. The sense is of things – of beings – coming into being, given existence, because of and by Theos.

4.

a) ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων

Literally, "in whom The Life was" (that is, in whom The Life had being, existence) and "which Life was [became] the φῶς of human beings."

b) ἄνθρωπος – human beings, rather than the archaic 'man/Mankind'.

An alternative for ζωὴ would be 'being' in the sense of having existence as opposed to non-existence (death), suggesting "Who was Being and which being became [through Theos] the φῶς [the being] of human beings."

Given that φῶς metaphorically (qv. Iliad, Odyssey, Hesiod, etcetera) implies the being, the life, 'the spark', of mortals, and, generally, either (i) the illumination, the light, that arises because of the Sun and distinguishes the day from the night, or (ii) any brightness that provides illumination and thus enables things to be seen, I am inclined to avoid the vague English word 'light' which all other translations use and which, as in the case of God, has, in the context of the evangel of Jesus of Nazareth, acquired particular meanings mostly as a result of centuries of exegesis and which therefore conveys or might convey something that the Greek word, as used by the author of this particular Greek text, might not have done.

Hence my transliteration – using the Homeric φῶς instead of φῶς – and which transliteration requires the reader to pause and consider what phaos may, or may not, mean, suggest, or imply. As in the matter of logos, it is most probably not some sort of philosophical principle, neo-Platonist or otherwise.

Interestingly, φῶς occurs in conjunction with ζωὴ and θεὸς and ἐγένετο and Ἄνθρωπος in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, thus echoing the evangel of John:

φῶς καὶ ζωὴ ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατήρ, ἐξ οὗ ἐγένετο ὁ Ἄνθρωπος [4]

Life and phaos are [both] of Theos, The Father, Who brought human beings into existence

c) τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει

Here, the value of using the transliteration phaos is evident, for 'phaos illuminates the dark' rather than 'light shines into the darkness' since the suggestion appears to that there is a revealing [5] of what has been obscured; that 'phaos dispels the obscurity' as the illumination brought by the Sun dispels the obscurity that is a feature of the night, or least was, in the days when the evangel of Jesus of Nazareth was revealed, when the dark night could only partially (and not very far, in distance) be illuminated by items such as small oil lamps or by candles or by the flicker of burning torches.

5. ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν

καταλαμβάνω is an interesting word to use, suggestive here, given the context, of an activity – overcome, seize, take -

rather than 'comprehend' which is somewhat anthropomorphic.

Hence, 'not overwhelmed by', as the dark of the night cannot overwhelm the illumination that the Sun brings but rather is itself overwhelmed.

12. Nomen: ὄνομα. Not simply 'name' as we understand a name but rather a term, an appellation, 'a word', which expresses or signifies his very nature, his being, his physis.

13. θέλημα - not 'will' but 'design/desire', giving thus "not by the design/desire of mortals/human beings."
The English term 'will' has too many modern and post-Hellenic connotations (qv. JS Mill, Nietzsche, JS Huxley, καὶ τὰ λοιπά)

14. καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ. Compare the beginning of the ἱερός Λόγος tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum: Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεὸς καὶ θεῖον καὶ φύσις θεία, The numen of all beings is theos: numinal, and of numinal physis.

As noted in my commentary on that tractate, 'numen' expresses the religious sense of δόξα better than ordinary (now overused) words such as 'splendour' and 'glory', and with 'numinal' more expressive and more appropriate there than 'divine'.

πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθεία. Regarding χάρις the English term benevolence is more appropriate than 'grace' given over a thousand years of exegesis in respect of 'grace', including the *sola gratia* of the Reformation. In respect of ἀληθεία I have chosen the Latin veritas in order to avoid the disputations - philosophical and otherwise - and the assumptions that the English word 'truth' so often now imputes and engenders, with the reader (or the listener) thus having to reflect on what veritas might, in this context, signify. In addition, ἀληθείας here suggests not some abstract, impersonal, 'truth' but rather truthfulness, sincerity, integrity: the type of person that Jesus of Nazareth is. In respect of 'veritas' suggesting such truthfulness and sincerity, qv. the entry for veritas in Lexicon Totius Latinitatis, volume 4b. Interestingly, Tyndale in his 1526 translation has "which worde was full of grace, and verite," and at 1.17 has "favour and verite cam by Jesus Christ."

15. ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν

The sense of γίνομαι here is 'came-into-being' (before me), rather than simply 'was before me' for the usage is metaphysical as often in the Corpus Hermeticum, for example Poemandres 17, tractate III:3, tractate IV:4.

17. νόμος. A transliteration - nomos - since as with logos a particular metaphysical principle is implied and one which requires contextual interpretation; a sense somewhat lost if the English word 'law' is used especially given what the word 'law' often now imputes.

18. Reading μονογενῆς θεὸς with NA28 and not the 'Byzantine textual' variant ὁ μονογενὴς υἱὸς which most translators - ancient and modern - have favoured given the difficulty of translating μονογενῆς θεὸς in context, although the meaning seems clear: "while no one so far has beheld Theos, the being [ὁ ὢν] in the greada [κόλπον] of the father has now explained [ξηγήσατο] him."

Regarding greada, this Old English word - qv. the tenth/eleventh century Anglo-Saxon version of Luke 16:23 - is a fitting translation of the Greek given that the alternatives, lap, and bosom, seem too anthropomorphic to be used in the context of Theos especially as "no one has ever seen him" with it only being said that Jesus has "explained" who and what Theos is. Interestingly, for this verse of the Gospel of John the Anglo-Saxon translator used the synonym 'barme' as does the Lindisfarne Gospel in respect of Luke 6:38.

19. ὅτε ἀπέστειλαν πρὸς αὐτὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων. After much consideration I have translated Ἰουδαία not by the conventional term 'Jews' but rather by Judaeans, given (i) that the English terms Jews and Jewish (deriving from the 13th/14th century words gvn/gyw and lewe) have acquired connotations (modern and medieval) which are not relevant to the period under consideration; and (ii) that the Greek term derives from a place name, Judaea (as does the Latin iudaeus); and (iii) that the Anglo-Saxon version (ASV) retains the sense of the Greek: here (iudeas) as elsewhere, as for example at 2.6, æfter iudea geclensunge, "according to Judaeans cleansing." [6]

23. ἔφη ἐγὼ φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῃ. I have opted for a fairly literal translation, with ἔρημος retaining its original meaning of an 'unpopulated, deserted, forsaken' place, and with βοάω suggestive of a caller 'calling out aloud' in such a place. Hence, "I, a call sounding out in forsaken places" rather than the conventional (KJV) "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness."

26. ὃν ὑμεῖς οὐκ οἴδατε. One - someone - "you do not know" in the sense of not perceiving (seeing) them; that is, not recognizing them. Cf. συννοίᾳ δὲ δάπτομαι κέαρ ὁρῶν ἑμαυτὸν ὥδε προυσελούμενον (Aeschylus, Prometheus Bound, 438), "disturbing things devour my heart since I recognize just how mistreated I have been."

Interestingly, the ASV of the Gospel of John has *ne cunnon* so that the text can be read "not acquainted/not familiar with." Cf. Beowulf:

metod hie ne cuþon,
dæda demend, ne wiston hie drihten god,
ne hie huru heofena helm herian ne cuþon,
wuldres waldend. (180-183)

[they were] unacquainted with The Chief,
Judger of deeds, and with the Lord God,
as well as unacquainted with how to praise

29. ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἀμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου. As mentioned in the Preface, I translate ἀμαρτία not by the conventional 'sin' but rather by 'error' or 'mistake', which is quite apposite here considering the use of the singular and the preceding mention of Jesus as the Lamb of God: of Jesus having arrived to remove the error, the fault, that 'the world' has made, has fallen into, with 'the Lamb of God' thus healing the injury so caused. Which is quite different from some preacher sternly preaching about 'sin' and warning about the 'fire and brimstone' that await sinners. As Thomas Aquinas noted in his commentary on this passage, "Alia ratio ut excluderet errorem." (Super Evangelium S. Ioannis lectura, caput I, Lectio 14)

32.

a) τὸ πνεῦμα. Almost without exception, since Wycliffe's Bible the Greek here has been translated as "the spirit", although the ASV has gast (gast of heofenum), whence the later English word 'ghost'. However, given what the terms 'spirit' and 'ghost' - both in common usage, and as a result of over a thousand years of Christian exegesis - now impute, it is apposite to offer an alternative and one which is germane to the milieu of the Gospels or which at least suggests something of the numinosity presenced, in this instance, via the Gospel of John. Given that the transliteration pneuma - with its modern association with terms such as pneumatic - does not unequivocally suggest the numinous, I have chosen spiritus, as referenced in respect of gast in Wright's *Anglo-Saxon And Old English Vocabularies* [7].

b) ἐξ οὐρανοῦ. Conventionally, οὐρανός here is always translated as 'heaven' although the term 'heaven' - used in the context of the Gospels - now has rather different connotations than the Greek οὐρανός, with the word 'heaven' now often implying something explained by almost two thousand years of exegesis and as depicted, for example, in medieval and Renaissance Christian art. However, those hearing or reading this particular Greek gospel for the first time in the formative years of Christianity would most probably have assumed the usual Greek usage of "the heavens" in the sense of the "the star-filled firmament above" or in the sense of "the sky" or as the abode of theos and/or of the gods (ἐν οὐρανῷ θεοί), an assumption consistent with the fact that the Evangelist explains and interprets certain non-Greek words (qv. the comment on 1.42) and considering also his use of a colloquial Greek expression (qv. the comment on 1.51).

It therefore seems apposite to suggest a more neutral word than 'heaven' as a translation of οὐρανός and one which might not only be understood in various 'classical' ways by an audience of Greek speakers (such as the ways described above) but also be open to a new, and Christian, interpretation consistent with the milieu that existed when the Gospel of John was written and first heard. That is, before the exegesis of later centuries and long before post-Roman Christian iconography. Hence my suggestion of the post-classical Latin term Empyrean, which can bear the interpretation of the abode of theos and/or of the gods, of "the sky", of the "the star-filled firmament above"; and a Christian one suggested by Genesis 2.8 - παράδεισον ἐν Εδεμ (the Paradise of Eden) - and also by shamayim, שָׁמַיִם

33. ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ. *in Halig Spiritus*. I have here used the Old English word Halig - as for example found in the version of John 17.11 in the Lindisfarne Gospel, 'Du halig fæder' - to translate ἅγιος rather than the later word 'holy' derived as that is from halig and used as it was by Wycliffe in his 1389 translation of this phrase, "in the Hooly Gost", which itself echoes the ASV, "on Halgum Gaste."

The unique phrase *in Halig Spiritus* - in place of the conventional 'with the Holy Spirit' - may thus express something of the numinosity, and the newness, of the original Gospel, especially as the word 'holy' has been much overused, imputes particular meanings from over a thousand years of exegesis, and, latterly in common parlance, has become somewhat trivialized.

In respect of ἐν, while most translators have opted here (as in respect of 1.26 ff) for "with", I have opted for "in", given that John baptized "in water" - for example, in Aenon - and given that Jesus baptizes "in, with" (in the name of) Halig Spiritus.

39. ὥρα ἣν ὡς δεκάτη. To translate ὥρα here as 'hour' is somewhat misleading given that the term 'hour' now means a fixed period of sixty minutes whereas the day of the ancient (Roman governed) milieu of the Gospel was divided into twenty-four durations or periods and which durations depended on the length of daylight (and thus the season) at the location in question, with there being twelve durations of daylight and twelve durations of night. Hence the 'tenth duration' mentioned in this verse - whether it be the tenth duration of the daylight hours or the tenth duration of the twenty-four - would not necessarily equate to what we would term 'ten o'clock' in the morning and certainly would not equate to a tenth 'hour' lasting sixty minutes. In addition, it depends on when the first duration was measured from: sunrise, or sunset, or from 'the mid-point of the night'. Which has led to debate among scholars as to whether or not John in this Gospel is, in respect of ὥρα, using Roman terminology for such periods, as well as to debates about whether the Roman durations were reckoned from 'the mid-point of the night' or from sunrise. If reckoned from sunrise, then allowing for latitude and seasonal variation, this 'tenth duration' was between mid to late afternoon. If reckoned from 'the mid-point of the night' then this 'tenth duration' was mid to late morning.

This fluid, local, sense of 'time' is well-expressed by the Old English word *tyd* - from whence the term *tide* - which signified a period, a duration, of the day or of a season when it was appropriate or propitious to undertake a specific task or tasks. Hence the ASV having - for ὥρα ἣν ὡς δεκάτη - *hyt wæs þa seo teoðe tyd*. Such a fluid sense of an appropriate or propitious duration - a tide, a moment, a season - is apposite in several instances when John uses the term ὥρα, as for example at vv. 2.4 and 7.30.

41. τὸν Μεσσίαν. The Messiah. Following Wycliffe and Tyndale, I have transliterated as Messiah (ASV has Messiam) rather than the more usual Messiah, given how the term Messiah is now commonly used in a non-Christian way. As John Chrysostom noted in his commentary on this verse (Migne Patrologia Graeca 59, Homily XIX), the use here of the

definite article by the Evangelist seems deliberate: with Jesus described as *The* Messiah, rather than a messias.

42. ὁ ἐρμηνεύεται Πέτρος. I have transliterated Πέτρος - rather than translate as 'Rock' - and for ἐρμηνεύω (the etymon of the relatively modern, c.1670's, term hermeneutic) have chosen 'explain' to compliment the previous use of μεθερμηνεύω, 'interpretation'.

44. ἐκ τῆς πόλεως Ἀνδρέου καὶ Πέτρου. While πόλις here is invariably translated as 'city' that English word is misleading given (i) the modern connotations of the term city, and (ii) with Bethsaida being described by Mark (8.22-23) - ἔξω τῆς κώμης - as a village, and (iii) that some archaeological evidence points to Bethsaida being et-Tell, which in New Testament times was a small fishing settlement beside the Sea of Galilee. Thus, I incline toward the view that πόλις here is best translated as 'community', qv. Sophocles, Oedipus Tyrannus, 22 and 28. [8]

51.

a) ὄψεσθε τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνεωγμένον. Conventionally, "you will see [the] heaven[s] open" although as noted in the comment on 1.32 the term 'heaven' now has rather different connotations than the Greek οὐρανός. While, as at 1.32, Empyrean is suitable, the context suggests the ordinary meaning of "the sky", thus avoiding the colloquial "you will see the heavens open."

b) τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ θεοῦ. Conventionally, "the angels of God," but as seems apparent from the use by the Evangelist of expressions such as ἐρμηνεύω and μεθερμηνεύω - explaining and interpreting unusual (for Greek speakers) words such as Rabbi - those hearing or reading this particular gospel for the first time would have been familiar with ἄγγελος as an 'envoy' or as a 'messenger', not as an "angel" and certainly not as a being of the type described by later Christian iconography. Because of this, I incline toward the view that the English word 'angel' is unsuitable as a translation here leading as it does to retrospective reinterpretation of the text. Hence, "those envoys of Theos."

c) τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Is it possible to interpret this in English without defaulting to the masculine singular thus avoiding the conventional appellation *the Son of Man*, and thus providing 'gender inclusive' alternatives? In the case of υἱός this could be 'descendant' - or the later second/third century (CE) 'child' - although ἀνθρώπου is more problematic. For example the Oxford Inclusive version [9] has, for the Son of Man, "the Human One" which rather distorts the meaning of the Greek, missing at it does the reference to υἱός, while the inclusive terms 'human' and 'human being' combined with υἱός as child impart a particular meaning - the human child, child of human beings - which particular meaning does not readily convey the theological and Biblical resonances of the terms Son of Man/Son of Mankind.

Hence my choice of "the son of a mortal" - of a mortal (singular), not of *mortals* (plural) - which not only resonates with the narrative of the Virgin Birth but also provides a necessary contrast with expressions such as Ἀληθῶς θεοῦ υἱὸς ἦν οὗτος (in truth, this was the Son of Theos) in Matthew 27.54. Hence, Jesus as being a son born of one particular mortal and also being the son of an immortal, a mortal descendant of Theos/God who as a mortal suffers and dies, and yet who, as the Son of Theos, arose from the dead and ascended into Heaven.

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Chapter Two

4.

a) τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, γύναι. This has been somewhat misunderstood in two respects. Firstly, the rather colloquial Greek phrase τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί occurs in Epictetus (Discourses, Book II, 19) and means "what is this between you and me?" That is, what has this to do with us? [10] Secondly, to translate γύναι here as "woman" is misleading, giving the impression as it does of a rebuke. However, correctly understood in its cultural context, it is a polite honorific in the same way that the modern expression "ladies and gentlemen" is a polite form of address. The phrase in Epictetus is followed by ἄνθρωπε; here, the phrase is followed by γύναι, with the former approximating to "friend, fellow, sir" and the latter to "friend, my lady, wife" with 'wife' being, in such a cultural context, an expression of familial inclusion, or of friendship, or of politeness, and thus not restricted to one's partner by marriage, a fact expressed by the ASV version of this passage: *la wif, hwæt ys me & þe*, a literal translation of which is "Wife, what's this to me and thee?"

b) οὕτω ἦκει ἡ ὥρα μου. The sense of ὥρα here is 'season'. Which season is that of 'the signs' (σημεῖα), of the Passion, the death and resurrection of Jesus, and his Ascension.

8. ἀρχιτρίκλινος. Literally, 'the authority at the feast'. The English term 'master of ceremonies' suitably suggests the function of this person.

11. ταύτην ἐποίησεν ἀρχὴν τῶν σημείων. The fact that the Evangelist uses the word σημεῖον and not δυνάμεις as in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, is notable and thus should be reflected in the translation, with σημεῖον a 'sign', an 'indication', or an 'omen', and with δύναμις literally implying 'force', 'power', 'authority', and which has generally - in respect of the other Gospels - been translated as 'miracle' (a manifestation of divine power).

13. τὸ πάσχα τῶν Ἰουδαίων. As with Ἰουδαία (qv. 1.19) I have retained the meaning of the Greek and thus have here transliterated πάσχα - pascha - rather than translated as 'Passover' especially as (i) the term Passover now has (often modern) connotations not relevant to the milieu of John the Evangelist and his Gospel, and (ii) that the Greek Orthodox Church retains the word πάσχα in respect of Easter, and (iii) there has been some theological debate as to whether the

Christian pascha (that is, Easter) has through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus voided the pascha (and the Temple in Jerusalem) of the type that the Evangelist goes on to describe.

Thus I incline toward the view that the conventional translation here of "the Passover of the Jews" may impose meanings (especially modern meanings) not merited by the original text while a literal translation - "the pascha of the Judaeans" - is open to contextual interpretation, the context here being what John the Evangelist narrates in his Gospel about the signs (σημεῖα) and about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. This literal sense is retained in the Latin version of the verse: et prope erat pascha iudaeorum et ascendit Hierosolyma Iesus.

As to whether the juxtaposition of κατέβη and ἀνέβη - 'went down', to Capernaum and 'went up', to Jerusalem - in verses 12 and 13 - have any significance is moot, with some suggesting that it is meant literally since Jerusalem was at a higher elevation in relation to Capernaum; others that it is metaphorical given that Jerusalem was the capital of Judea and the site of the Temple; while others, such as Thomas Aquinas, compared it to Ephesians IV, 10, and thus considered it in theological terms as a 'descending' and then an 'ascending', with Aquinas writing:

"Sed non vacat a mysterio, quod in Capharnaum descendit, et postmodum Ierosolymam ascendit. Nisi enim descendisset primum, non competisset ei ascendere: quia, ut dicitur Eph. IV, 10, qui descendit, ipse est et qui ascendit." *Super Evangelium S. Ioannis lectura*, caput II, Lectio 1

That he descended to Capernaum and then ascended to Jerusalem is not without its mystery since if he did not first descend he would not have been able to then ascend, for as has been related (Eph. IV, 10) "The one who descended is the same as the one who ascended." [11]

22. καὶ ἐπίστευσαν τῇ γραφῇ καὶ τῷ λόγῳ ὃν εἶπεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς.

a) The consensus is that γραφῇ here - as throughout the New Testament - has the meaning 'scripture' rather than its normal sense of 'that which is written', with the English word 'scripture' (usually written with a capital S) having the specific meaning "the writings of the Old and/or of the New Testament". However, this specific meaning only dates back to c.1300 and was used by Wycliffe in his 1389 translation, from whence, via Tyndale, it was used in the King James version. Prior to 1300, the ASV has *gewrite* - 'what was written', writing, inscription - with the Latin of Jerome having *scripturae*, as does Codex Palatinus of the earlier Vetus Latina. [12] Classically understood, the Latin has the same meaning as the Greek γραφῇ: writing, something written, an inscription. [13]

Considering what has been mentioned regarding how the Evangelist explained and interpreted certain non-Greek words (qv. the comment on 1.42) and considering also his use of a colloquial Greek expression (qv. the comment on 1.51) it seems probable that the Evangelist is using the word γραφῇ in its usual sense, and that it was only much later that the Greek word, and the Latin *scripturae*, were interpreted to mean 'Scripture' in the 14th century sense of the English word.

Thus I have retained here the ordinary meaning of the Greek, with the reference to the Old Testament being implied by the phrase "trusted what was written."

b) The use here of the singular - τῷ λόγῳ ὃν εἶπεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς, 'the word (logos) that Jesus had spoken' - is notable, and occurs several times in this Gospel in relation to Jesus, as for example at 5.24, 14.23, and 15.3.

23. ἐν τῷ πάσχα ἐν τῇ ἑορτῇ. The sense of the Greek is "at pascha on the feast-day." Interestingly, for πάσχα here the ASV has *eastron* - Ða he wæs on ierusalem on eastron on freols-daige; Wycliffe has *pask* - And whanne Jhesus was at Jerusalem in pask, in the feeste dai - and Tyndale has *ester*, "When he was at Ierusalem at ester in the feaste".

24. γινώσκειν πάντας. That is, as the Evangelist goes on to explain, he apprehended - he understood - the motivations, the character, of those who trusted him because he aware of, he knew, the person within.

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Chapter Three

1. ἄρχων τῶν Ἰουδαίων. In reference to Nicodemus, this can be, and has been, interpreted in several ways. As referring to "an Elder," to "a leader," to "a ruler," as well as to "a prince" (cf. 16.11, ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου, "Prince of this world," in reference to τοῦ διαβόλου, the Devil). Given Mark 8.31 - τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καὶ τῶν ἀρχιερέων καὶ τῶν γραμματέων - I have opted for "a leader of the Judaeans."

2. οὗτος ἦλθεν πρὸς αὐτὸν νυκτὸς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ. While many translations refer to Jesus here - as does the KJV, "the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him" - he is not named in the Greek verse, which verse together with the proceeding one might colloquially be translated as "Now there was a man of the Pharisees, Nicodemus by name, a leader of the Judaeans. The same it was who arrived at night and said to he himself..."

3. γεννηθῇ ἄνωθεν. The question that Nicodemus goes on to ask - πῶς δύναται ἄνθρωπος γεννηθῆναι γέρων ὢν - suggests the sense of ἄνωθεν here: 'anew', rather than 'from above.'

4. τὴν κοιλίαν τῆς μητρὸς. Although this literally means "the cavity of the mother" it is most often translated as "the womb of the mother" although the ASV has, instead of 'cavity', 'innoðe' - the 'inside' of the body - and Tyndale simply has 'body' (hys moders body). For the sake of clarity, I have chosen 'womb' here.

5. ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος. In respect of τὸ πνεῦμα as 'the Spiritus' - rather than the conventional 'the Spirit' - qv. the

comment on 1.32. Also, I have translated literally - ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς, of the flesh; and ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος, of the Spiritus - thus preserving the definite article, something sometimes lost in translation, although preserved in both Tyndale and the KJV.

8. δεῖ ὑμᾶς γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν. The plural 'you' is meant here: 'it is needful for you all [for everyone] to be born anew.'

10. σὺ εἶ ὁ διδάσκαλος τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ. Given the use here of the definite article, διδάσκαλος suggests something more than just 'teacher' - cf. 3.2 - and I have therefore opted to use the Latin term Magister, implying as it does a particular and high official status, rather than use the literal "the teacher of Israel".

Given the definite article, it is debatable as to whether the Evangelist here wants to convey that Jesus is using the appellation ὁ διδάσκαλος politely or as a rebuke, although I incline toward the view that it is meant politely. Whatever the intent, the effect is that Nicodemus stays silent either because of being rebuked or because he realizes that despite being known as a Magister he really does not know everything. That the Evangelist later on describes Nicodemus trying to ensure a fair trial for Jesus (7.50f) and assisting in the burial of Jesus (19.39ff) might indicate the latter.

In addition, in order to suggest something about the use here of the conjunctive (which allows for several interpretations of the interrogative) I have avoided the English 'and' and used dashes, thus placing the emphasis on whether or not Nicodemus is aware or unaware of such matters as Jesus has mentioned.

12.

a) οὐ πιστεύετε. As at 1.7, 2.11, and 2.24, the personal context suggests 'trust' rather than 'believe'. Here, 'trust' emphasises the person, the character, of Jesus, while 'belief' can convey a belief in something abstract, impersonal, such as a dogma or some particular interpretation of some faith.

b) τὰ ἐπουράνια πιστεύετε. As noted in the comment on 1.32, I have translated οὐρανός not by the conventional English word 'heaven' but by Empyrean. Similarly, for ἐπουράνιος here I have avoided the word 'heavenly' (with all its connotations, ancient, modern, and colloquial) and chosen 'caelestien', a 14th century variant spelling of the post-classical Latin 'caelestianus' which derives from the classical Latin caelestia (celestial).

The effect here of using 'caelestien', as with the use of words such as 'numen' and transliterations such as Theos and phaos, is to suggest the ancient milieu of those who were reading or who were listening to this Gospel in the early years of Christianity, centuries before now common words such as 'heaven', grace, God, and Light had acquired particular theological meanings and an associated iconography.

13. ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Reading the addition ὁ ὢν ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ with the Textus Receptus and Tischendorf, and which addition is followed by the ASV, Wycliffe, Tyndale, and the KJV.

In respect of "the son of a mortal" for ὁ υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, qv. the comment on 1.51.

19-20. ἦν γὰρ αὐτῶν πονηρὰ τὰ ἔργα. For their deeds were harmful; that is, caused pain and suffering. To impute to πονηρός here the meaning of a moral abstract 'evil' is, in my view, mistaken. Similarly with the following φαῦλος in v.20 which imparts the sense of being 'mean', indifferent.

Since the Phaos is Jesus, those who are mean, those who do harm, avoid Jesus because (qv. 2.25) he - as the only begotten son of Theos - knows the person within and all their deeds. Thus, fearing being exposed, they avoid him, and thus cannot put their trust in him and so are condemned and therefore lose the opportunity of eternal life.

21. ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν. Literally, 'they practising the disclosing.' That is, those who disclose - who do not hide - who they are and what deeds they have done, and who thus have no reason to fear exposure. Here, as in vv.19-20, the meaning is personal - about the character of people - and not about abstractions such as "evil" and "truth", just as in previous verses it is about trusting in the character of Jesus. Hence why here ἀλήθεια is 'sincerity', a disclosing, a revealing - the opposite of lying and of being deceitful - and not some impersonal 'truth'.

24. βεβλημένος εἰς τὴν φυλακὴν. A phrase deserving some consideration, for φυλακή is not 'prison' as prisons are understood today and in the past few centuries but rather 'a guarded cage', with βεβλημένος εἰς implying a forceful 'throwing' or a hurling into such a cage.

25. περὶ καθαρισμοῦ. *about the cleansing*. The term 'the cleansing' refers to the traditional ritual purification undertaken by Judaeans.

29. Here, as at 2.9, I have translated νυμφίος by the older (and gender neutral) English term 'spouse' rather than by the now common - rather overused - term bridegroom. In regard to νύμφη I have likewise avoided 'bride' and chosen espousess which - as with espouse - is a variant spelling of espousee, a 14th century term used by Wycliffe and contemporaries, and which term seems apposite here since from the 12th to the 14th centuries it also had a specific religious connotation, being used (as with spouse) in a gender neutral way in reference to those who were devoted to Jesus, although it later came to refer only to those women, such as nuns, who devoted their lives to Jesus.

33. The phrase "certifies by their seal" expresses the literal meaning of ἐσφράγισεν here. Similarly, the meaning of ἀληθής here is well-expressed by the Old English term *soothfast* - trustworthy, steadfast - and which term is used in

this verse in the ASV (god ys soðfestnysse) and in the translation by Wycliffe, with *soothe*, and various other derivatives, also used in the Lindisfarne Gospels.

36. οὐκ ὄψεται ζωὴν. There are two ways of understanding the literal 'shall not see life' depending on how ὄράω is understood in context: as a reference to life everlasting (will not see life everlasting) or as will not perceive, apprehend, understand, take heed of life (for the opportunity it is).

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Chapter Four

1. Ὡς οὖν ἔγνω ὁ Ἰησοῦς. The Textus Receptus, and Westcott and Hort, have κύριος (Lord, Master) instead of Ἰησοῦς.

4. Ἦδει δὲ αὐτὸν διέρχασθαι διὰ τῆς Σαμαρείας. The Evangelist states that it was necessary (δεῖ) for Jesus to walk through Samaria which given what follows (vv.9-10) suggests a certain historical antipathy between the people of Judaea and the people of Samaria even though the Samaritans - as is apparent from the Gospel - shared many, but not all, of the religious traditions of the Judaeans, as did most of the people of Galilee, including Jesus. Since the Evangelist specifically writes that it was Judaeans who sought to kill Jesus (5.18; 7.1; 7.19 et seq) it seems as if the antipathy by Judaeans to Jesus of Nazareth in particular and to Samaritans in general - with the Evangelist stating that Judaeans would not share or make use of (συγχράομαι) Samaritan things - arose from Judaeans in general believing that their religious practices based on their particular interpretation of the religion of Moses and the Prophets were correct and that they themselves as a result were 'righteous' - better than Samaritans - with Jesus the Galilean considered by many Judaeans, and certainly by the priestly authorities, as having committed (qv. 10.33) 'blasphemy' (βλασφημία) and thus should be killed.

Such differing religious traditions, such internecine feuds, such religious fanaticism and intolerance on behalf of some Judaeans - an intolerance exemplified also when (qv. 10.22) one of the guards of Caiaphas the High Priest (Καϊάφαν τὸν ἀρχιερέα) physically assaults Jesus for not showing the High Priest "due deference" - exemplifies why in this Gospel Ἰουδαία should (qv. my comment on 2.13) be translated not by the conventional term 'Jews' but rather by Judaeans.

6. ὥρα ἦν ὥς ἕκτη. In respect of ὥρα as 'duration' rather than 'hour' qv. the comment on 1.39. As noted there, there are two means of reckoning the durations, with this sixth duration thus being either around the middle of the day (reckoned from the time of sunrise at the location) or early evening.

7.

a) Ἔρχεται γυνὴ ἐκ τῆς Σαμαρείας. Given that the English word Samaritan now has meanings which are not relevant to the text here I have opted to use the term Samaritans - rather than Samaritans - to describe the people of Samaria. Hence here the phrase a 'Samaritan woman' rather than a 'Samaritan woman'.

b) δός μοι πεῖν. I take the sense of δίδωμι here to be the more polite 'grant' rather than 'give'. Combined with πεῖν - to drink - this (grant me to drink) imparts a somewhat different tone than the conventional "give me a drink."

9. πῶς σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὢν. This is interesting for three reasons. Firstly, the use of πῶς, 'how' (by what means). Secondly the statement σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὢν, 'you being Judaeans'. Thirdly the repetition of πεῖν.

The Evangelist then explains the reason for her asking 'how can' Jesus accept water from her: because Judaeans would not share or make use of (συγχράομαι) Samaritan things. Which leaves unexplained why the woman - who as the Evangelist goes on to explain has a similar religious heritage to Jesus of Galilee - considers him as being from Judaea.

10.

a) εἰ ἦδεις τὴν δωρεὰν τοῦ Θεοῦ. The ASV has *Gif þu wistes godes gyfe*, with 'wistes' - wistist, in Wycliffe - well-expressing in English the sense of ἦδεις here: "if you were witan to the gift of Theos," or more colloquially "if you were wise to the gift of Theos."

b) ὕδωρ ζῶν. Here, ὕδωρ ζῶν, 'living water' - that is, the water of life, ὕδωρ ζωῆς - has both a metaphysical and a literal meaning. The literal meaning of fresh, clean, water is evident from the reply of the Samaritan woman: οὐτε ἄντλημα ἔχεις, you have nothing to haul-out [water] with. The metaphysical meaning is explained by the Evangelist in the verses which follow: the living water is the gift of Halig Spiritus (the Holy Spirit) and which gift is eternal life.

20. οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ ὅρει τούτῳ προσεκύνησαν. Given that there is no context - no mention of the form or type of 'worship' - the term 'reverence' seems appropriate regarding προσκυνέω, expressing as it does both the lack of detail in the narrative and the ambiguity the Greek can have, from a profound 'reverence' - as in the custom of prostration - to an action of honourable respect - as in bowing or being in awe of or showing admiration for - to a silent or verbal (prayerful) personal or communal veneration. In addition, since the English term 'worship' has, over centuries, acquired many religious connotations - both Christian and otherwise - that are not or may not be relevant here, the term is unsuitable, projecting as it does or can do particular meanings onto the text.

21. γύναι. In respect of the polite form of address - here, 'My lady' - rather than the conventional (rather strident)

'woman', qv. the comment on 2.4.

22. ὅτι ἡ σωτηρία ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐστίν. Given (i) that σωτηρία is 'deliverance'; and (ii) that the term 'salvation' has acquired particular meanings through centuries of exegesis, and (ii) that Ἰουδαίων implies Judaeans, the statement is that "deliverance is of - arises from, is because of - the Judaeans." For it is Judaeans who seek to kill Jesus for blasphemy (qv. 10.33) and Judaeans who bring Jesus before Pontious Pilate and insist that he be crucified.

23. ὅτε οἱ ἀληθινοὶ προσκυνηταὶ προσκυνήσουσιν τῷ πατρὶ ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ. In respect of ἀλήθεια as 'sincerity' qv.3.21; hence οἱ ἀληθινοὶ as 'the sincere'. In respect of 'reverencers' - "the sincere reverencers will reverence the Father in spiritus and sincerity" - the English word reverencer dates back to the 16th century and has been regularly used since, denoting as it does a person who shows reverence toward someone or toward something deserving of reverence, qv. 4.20.

As to whether spiritus here is Spiritus as in 1.31-2 (the Halig Spiritus, Halgum Gaste, Holy Ghost, Holy Spirit) or refers to an interior 'spiritual' reverence (cf. 3.6) has been much discussed, with the consensus being that it refers to Halig Spiritus.

24. πνεῦμα ὁ θεός. This can be read "Theos: Spiritus," and - like θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος in v.1 - lead to some theological controversy in the 4th and 5th centuries CE concerning the nature of Theos/God and the nature of Spiritus/The Holy Spirit, for here, as with θεὸς in v.1, πνεῦμα lacks the definite article while in v.1 λόγος does not.

26. Ἐγὼ εἰμὶ ὁ λαλῶν σοι. The first part - Ἐγὼ εἰμὶ - literally means "I am." Most translations insert 'he' - "I am he" - which rather lessens the impact of what Jesus says, which is that he just "is", beyond causality itself and thus beyond any manifestation of Being - on Earth - as "a being", be such a being the mortal Messiah or some other mortal. Expressed less philosophically, Jesus says that it is the divinity who is speaking to her: "it is *I AM* who is speaking to you." Cf. 8.24.

34. ποιήσω τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός με καὶ τελειώσω αὐτοῦ τὸ ἔργον. Given (i) θέλημα not as 'will' but rather as 'design' in the sense of 'a plan' that someone can bring to fruition - qv. 1.13 - and (ii) that ποιέω can imply make, produce, construct, and (iii) the following ἔργον, then this suggests the more evocative "undertake the design of [the one] having sent me and accomplish His work."

35. τετράμηνος. Not 'of or lasting four months' but 'of four moons' (four new moons). The word 'month' - with its modern implications of a particular number of days and of there being twelve months in a year - imposes meanings on the text that are not relevant to life in ancient times in a rather remote Roman province during the reign of Tiberius.

I read ἤδη as part of v.35 and not as the beginning of v.36.

36. εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον. Here, while the English words 'for' or 'unto' for εἰς are not entirely satisfactory - since the sense is of *for* the purpose of entering into life everlasting - I can find no suitable alternatives.

37. ἐν γὰρ τούτῳ ὁ λόγος ἐστὶν ἀληθινός. The context suggests the meaning of ἀληθινός here. In this [matter] - ἐν γὰρ τούτῳ - of sowing and reaping Jesus says that one person has sown the crop and another person has reaped that crop, which as an objective statement of fact is not always 'true' since the same person can sow a crop and also later on reap the crop they had sown. Thus ἀληθινός here does not suggest 'true' in an objective way but 'real, genuine, trustworthy' - cf. Aristotle, Eudemian Ethics, Book VII, 1236b, ἀληθινὸς φίλος, a 'genuine friend'; also Plato, Republic, Book I, 347d, ἀληθινὸς ἄρχων, a trustworthy leader.

That is, in this particular instance the saying is trustworthy, correct; it is relevant. There is therefore no need to suggest, as some commentators have done, that this simple statement of fact is a spiritual maxim concerning the spiritual reality behind outward appearance.

42. ὁ σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου. Some MSS - including the Textus Receptus - have ὁ σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου ὁ χριστός. It possible that ὁ χριστός - 'the Christ' - was appended because σωτὴρ was an epithet of Zeus (qv. Pindar, Olympian Ode, 5.40, Σωτὴρ ὑπινεφὲς Ζεῦ) and other classical deities and in its Latin form, Servator, was often used in reference to the Roman Emperor and those who had done significant deeds beneficial to Rome or its Empire.

While generally translated in the Gospels as saviour, the classical sense is someone who protects, defends, and preserves; in respect of individuals, someone or some divinity who protects, can defend, them and preserve their life; in respect of communities, someone or some divinity who protects, defends, and maintains the community and thus the status quo, qv. Cicero:

ego tantis periculis propositis cum, si victus essem, interitus rei publicae, si vicissem, infinita dimicatio pararetur, committerem ut idem perditor rei publicae nominarer qui servator fuissem. (For Placinius, 36.89)

Since both 'Saviour' and 'Redeemer', in the almost two thousand years since the Gospel was written - and first read and heard - have acquired particular theological (and especially soteriological) meanings which are not or may not have been relevant all those centuries ago I have chosen to use the Latin term *servator*. This avoids imposing upon the text much later theological/soteriological meanings, iconography, and archetypes; as for example in the following: "est duplex salus: quaedam vera, quaedam non vera. Vera quidem salus, cum liberamur a veris malis, et conservamur in veris bonis." (Thomas Aquinas, *Super Evangelium S. Ioannis lectura*, caput 4, lectio 5)

The term servator also has the benefit of suggesting that the Evangelist, in using the expression ὁ σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου, might have been contrasting Jesus - as Servator of The World - with the Roman Emperor as servator of the Roman Empire.

44. ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ πατρίδι. This does not refer to Galilee itself - or to "in his own country" as in the KJV - but rather to "his home village," Nazareth. As to the size of Nazareth during the life of Jesus, and thus as whether it was a town or a village, scholarly opinion - based on the scant archaeological and historical evidence - indicates it was probably a village, not a town, and certainly not a city.

46. τις βασιλικὸς. The 'royal official' belonged to the court of King Herod and the term βασιλικὸς might well have been used by the Evangelist to distinguish this official from a Roman one.

47. ἡρώτα ἵνα καταβῇ. The use of καταβαίνω (descend, come down) is suggestive of topography, with Capernaum a town by the Sea of Galilee and Cana (wherever it was located historically) somewhat higher up, just as Nazareth is above that Sea.

52.

a) ἐν ᾗ κομψότερον ἔσχεν. I have translated literally - eschewing prosaic terms such as 'got better' and 'began' - in order to try and convey the meaning of the Greek, of a royal official using a precise expression: κομψότερον ἔσχεν, which implies a sudden 'betterment', a remarkable recovery, rather than 'began to get better.'

b) Ἐχθὲς ὥραν ἐβδόμην. In respect of ὥρα as 'duration' qv. 1.39. As noted there regarding determining durations, the 'sixth duration' mentioned here could be either early afternoon or early evening.

54. The exact meaning of the beginning here - of the final verse of chapter 4 - is difficult to deduce since the Greek text - τοῦτο πάλιν δεύτερον σημεῖον, in the Textus Receptus - even when amended to τοῦτο [δὲ] πάλιν δεύτερον σημεῖον is rather obscure. However the general sense seems clear, with the Evangelist narrating either that Jesus did two signs - 'miracles' - in Galilee after he left Judea for Galilee by way of Samaria with one of them being the healing of the son of royal official, or that the two signs in Galilee are the previous one at Cana (water into wine) and the healing of the son of royal official. I incline toward the former, hence: "that was the second sign that Jesus brought about when he arrived in Galilee from Judea."

ooo

Chapter Five

2.

the place of the sheep. Since the Greek προβατικός means "of or relating to sheep" and there is no mention of a 'gate' (or of anything specific such as a market) I prefer a more literal translation. It is a reasonable assumption that the sheep were, and had in previous times been, kept there prior to being offered as sacrifices, as for example sheep are still so held in particular places in Mecca during Eid al-Adha, the Muslim feast of sacrifice.

named in the language of the Hebrews. ἐπιλεγομένη Ἑβραϊστὶ.

3.

the infirm. The Greek word ἀσθενέω implies those lacking normal physical strength.

awaiting a change in the water. Reading ἐκδεχομένων τὴν τοῦ ὕδατος κίνησιν with the Textus Receptus, omitted by NA28, but included in ASV, Tyndale, and Wycliffe.

4. Reading ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου κατὰ καιρῶν κατέβαινεν (qv. Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on John, Book II, V, 1-4, Migne Patrologia Graeca 73) and ἐν τῇ κολυμβήθρα, καὶ ἐτάρασσεν τὸ ὕδωρ· ὁ οὖν πρῶτος ἐμβὰς μετὰ τὴν παραχὴν τοῦ ὕδατος, ὑγίης ἐγίνετο, ᾧ δὴποτε κατειχετο νοσήματι with the Textus Receptus. Although the verse is omitted in NA28, and generally regarded as an interpolation, I include it since it is in ASV, Tyndale, Wycliffe, KJV, and Douay-Rheims.

a) *envoy.* As noted in the commentary on 1:51, interpreting ἄγγελος as 'envoy' (of theos) and not as 'angel', particularly given the much later Christian iconography associated with the term 'angel'.

b) *Theos.* Regarding ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου, qv. Matthew 28.2 ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου καταβὰς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, "an envoy of [the] Lord/Master descended from Empyrean/the heavens." Since here κύριος implies Theos (cf. John 20.28 where it is used in reference to Jesus), an interpretation such as "envoy of Theos" avoids both the phrase "envoy of the Master" - which is unsuitable given the modern connotations of the word 'master' - and the exegetical phrase "angel/envoy of the Lord" with all its associated and much later iconography both literal, by means of Art, and figurative, in terms of archetypes and one's imagination. An alternative expression would be "envoy of the Domine," with Domine (from the Latin Dominus) used in English both as a respectful form of address and as signifying the authority of the person or deity.

c) *became complete*. ὕγιής ἐγένετο. The suggestion is of the person becoming 'whole', complete, *sanus*, and thus ceasing to be 'broken', incomplete, infirm.

8. *bedroll*. κράβατος (Latin, grabatus) has no suitable equivalent in English since in context it refers to the portable bed and bedding of the infirm. The nearest English approximation is bedroll.

9. *And, directly, the man became complete*. καὶ εὐθέως ἐγένετο ὕγιής ὁ ἄνθρωπος. Metaphysically, the Evangelist is implying that 'completeness' - wholeness - for both the healthy and the infirm (whether infirm because of sickness or a physical infirmity) arises because of and through Jesus.

10. *treated*. Taking the literal sense of θεραπεύω here. Hence: cared for, treated, attended to. As a healer or a physician might care for, treat, or attend to, someone.

14. *no more missteps*. μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε. That is, make no more mistakes in judgement or in deeds. Qv. the Introduction regarding translating ἀμαρτία in a theologically neutral way as 'mistake' or 'error' instead of by the now exegetical English word 'sin'. Cf. 1.29, 8.7, et seq.

16. *harass*. διώκω. Cf. the Latin *persequor*, for the implication is of continually 'following' and pursuing him in order to not only try and worry or distress him but also (as becomes evident) to find evidence against him in order to have him killed, qv. 5.18, 7.1, 7.19 et seq.

18. *annulled the Sabbath*. ἔλυνεν τὸ σάββατον. They were more determined to kill Jesus not because he himself had 'broken' the Sabbath but because they believed he had publicly 'annulled' (λύω) the Sabbath by telling someone to do what the Judeans regarded as impermissible, and thus, by now equating himself to Theos, seemed desirous of replacing their Judaeian laws with new laws of his own.

19. *on his own*. ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ. Literally, of/from himself. The verse itself is evocative of a human son learning by observing what his father does.

21. *awakens*. Given the following ζωοποιέω - 'make alive, give life' - I am inclined to take the general sense of ἐγείρω - 'wake' - rather than the specific 'raise up' and which "raising up of the dead" now implies certain post-Hellenic iconographies.

22. *For the father does not choose anyone, having accorded all choosing to his son*. οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ πατήρ κρίνει οὐδένα, ἀλλὰ τὴν κρίσιν πᾶσαν δέδωκεν τῷ υἱῷ. The preceding θέλει and the context suggest κρίνω as 'choose' not 'judge', and which interpretation imparts a somewhat different meaning from the conventional one which involves Jesus giving life to 'whomsoever he wishes' and judging them; and a different meaning given how the term 'judgement' has for over two thousand years been interpreted in relation to the Old and the New Testaments.

Instead of such later interpretations, the Evangelist describes how Jesus simply gives life by design because his father - Theos - has given the task of choosing to his son. Which is why Jesus previously said (4:34)

Ἐμὸν βρῶμά ἐστιν ἵνα ποιήσω τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός με καὶ τελειώσω αὐτοῦ τὸ ἔργον

My food is that I undertake the design of the one having sent me and accomplish His work.

Thus here Jesus is affirming that he is indeed annulling the laws of the old covenant: it is he who now chooses who has life everlasting. Cf. Deuteronomy 32:39, 2 Kings 5:7, et seq.

24. *not entered into the choosing*. εἰς κρίσιν οὐκ ἔρχεται. Literally, "does not go to Choosing" - in conventional terms, does not go into judgement - because having heard, and trusted the father through the son, they already have the gift of life everlasting and thus pass straight from death to that new life.

25. *shall hear ... have listened*. ἀκούσουσιν ... ἀκούσαντες. The literal "shall hear" and "that hear" does not clearly express what is meant.

27. *and also gifted him - as the son of a mortal - with the authority of choosing*. καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ κρίσιν ποιεῖν ὅτι υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ἐστίν. Literally, "and he gifted him with authority to undertake choosing because he is the son of a mortal." Which explains the following μὴ θαυμάζετε τοῦτο, "be not astonished at this". In regard to υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου as 'son of a mortal' instead of Son of Man, qv. the comment on 1:51. Also, cf. 9:35, Σὺ πιστεύεις εἰς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, which makes perfect sense if Jesus is asking "Do you trust the son of a mortal?" but is somewhat problematic if conventionally interpreted as "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

28. *burial places*. While the choice in respect of μνημεῖον seems to be between the literal 'monument', and tomb or grave, a most suitable alternative - cf. ASV (byrgenum) and Wycliffe (in buriels) - is 'burial places'.

29.

a) *those that have acted honourably*. οἱ τὰ ἀγαθὰ ποιήσαντες. In various essays - such as *Cicero On Summum Bonum* [14] - and in my commentaries on tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum, I have explained my reasons for interpreting ἀγαθός not as some posited, abstract, 'good' but classically as, according to context, nobility, noble, honourable. This is apposite here given the emphasis on personal deeds, on what a person had done (ποιήσαντες) or not done. Cf. the

following from the Corpus Aristotelicum:

τῆς δὲ φρονήσεώς ἐστι τὸ βουλευσασθαι, τὸ κρίναι τὰ ἀγαθὰ καὶ τὰ κακὰ καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν τῷ βίῳ αἰρετὰ καὶ φευκτά, τὸ χρῆσθαι πᾶσι καλῶς τοῖς ὑπάρχουσιν ἀγαθοῖς, τὸ ὁμιλῆσαι ὀρθῶς [De Virtutibus et Vitiis Libellus 1250a]

It is part of wisdom to accept advice, to distinguish the honourable, the dishonourable, and all that is, in life, acceptable or to be avoided; to fairly use all resources; to be genuine in company.

b) *anastasis*. ἀνάστασις. A transliteration since the term 'resurrection' has, since it was first used in the 14th century, acquired various religious, doctrinal, and other associations (such as, in relation to Jesus, the resurrection of the physical body) and which associations may or may not be relevant here. In context, anastasis might refer here (contra Irenaeus) to a non-corporeal elevation or re-birth, and thus to the ψυχή - the spirit or soul - of those mortals who have been gifted with life everlasting proceeding to a place such as Empyrean.

c) *dishonourably*. The sense of φαῦλος is not some posited, abstract, impersonal, 'evil' but of personal deeds that are 'base', mean, and thus ignoble, dishonourable, and hence revealing of a rotten personal character, of a bad physis. Qv. πονηρός and φαῦλος at 3:19-20.

d) *to anastasis of the choosing*. εἰς ἀνάστασιν κρίσεως. Literally, 'to anastasis of choosing'. They - or their ψυχή - proceed forth from their place of burial to where Jesus chooses whether or not to gift them with life everlasting.

30. *I am not able to do anything on my own*. Qv. 5:19

33.

a) *you inquired after John*. ὑμεῖς ἀπεστάλκατε πρὸς Ἰωάννην. Literally, "you dispatched unto John," referring to 1:19, the priests and Levites dispatched from Jerusalem.

b) *and he was evidential to the veritas*. καὶ μεμαρτύρηκεν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ. That is, he attested - gave evidence concerning - the veritas. Regarding veritas, qv. the comment on πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας, 1:14.

35.

a) *lantern*. λύχνος. The term 'lamp' is inappropriate given its modern connotations.

b) *firefull and revealing*. καίόμενος καὶ φαίνων. I take this metaphorically - the burning fire of the lantern shines a bright revealing light - rather than the literal "burning and bright".

c) In regard to *phaos*, qv. 1:4-5. Cf. Poemandres, 32, ζῶν καὶ φῶς; Eusebius, Historia Ecclesiastica, I:2, τό τε φῶς τὸ προκόσμιον καὶ τὴν πρὸ αἰώνων νοερὰν καὶ οὐσιώδη σοφίαν τὸν τε ζῶντα.

36. *beyond that of John*. μείζω τοῦ Ἰωάννου. Not the rather strident 'greater than' - with its implication of 'better than' - but the comparative 'beyond that' as in an elder or someone fully-grown who is years beyond the age of someone younger, qv. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 358,

ὥς μήτε μέγαν μήτ' οὖν νεαρῶν τιν' ὑπερτελέσαι μέγα δουλείας γάγγαμον ἄτης παναλώτου

Such that neither the full-grown nor any young were beyond the limits of Misfortune's all-taking enslaving vast trawl. [15]

37. *whose likeness you have never observed*. οὔτε εἶδος αὐτοῦ ἐώρακατε. An interesting question of interpretation here is the meaning of εἶδος. Whether to translate as 'form' - with a possible implied reference to Plato's 'theory of forms' - or as the literal 'shape' or 'appearance'. Given the context - and 6:46, οὐχ ὅτι τὸν πατέρα ἐώρακέν τις εἰ μὴ ὁ ὢν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ, οὗτος ἐώρακεν τὸν πατέρα - I take the literal meaning; hence *likeness*, as in Wycliffe.

39. *you search the writings*. ἐραυνᾶτε τὰς γραφάς. Qv. 2:22 regarding γραφῇ not as the post-Hellenic exegetical 'scripture' but as having the usual Hellenistic meaning of 'that which is written', a writing. The ASV has Smeageað halige gewritu.

41. *I do not receive honours from people*. Δόξαν παρὰ ἀνθρώπων οὐ λαμβάνω. Regarding δόξα in respect of the supra-personal, qv. the comment on 1:14. Here, the human context implies receiving honour - praise, renown, a good reputation, a title or titles - from others and thus being regarded by people as an illustrious person: being 'glorified' by them on the basis of such human given honours.

44. *from Theos alone*. Reading παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ μόνου. NA28 has παρὰ τοῦ μόνου θεοῦ. There are two ways of interpreting the Greek of NA28: (i) that genuine honour is only from Theos, and thus that they do not seek such honour as is "only from Theos", or (ii) that they do not seek the honour that is from "the [one and] only Theos."

While the latter imposes a strictly grammatical interpretation on the text, such a restrictive interpretation does not in my view suit the context at all, which is of worldly honours in contrast to the (genuine) honour which Theos bestows. Jesus has emphasized that he has been sent by the father, that the father is his witness, that he does not receive honours from people, and goes on to say that Moses wrote about him. There seems no need to mention that his father is "the only Theos", given the Judaeans would assuredly know that "the father" meant their "one and only god" and

that Moses spoke and wrote of "the one God". Cf. John 17:3, τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν θεὸν and phrases such as ὁ μόνος θεός and ὁ θεὸς μόνος in the Old Testament. [16]

An interesting alternative Byzantine reading (Codex Petropolitanus Purpureus) is τοῦ μονογενοῦς θεοῦ, cf. 1:18, μονογενῆς θεός.

Footnotes

[1] Measure for Measure. Act One, Scene One, v. 32

[2] Romans 13.10

[3] King James version, following Tyndale.

[4] 1.21 (Ποιμάνδρης)

[5] φαίνω as a revealing is much in evidence in classical Greek literature, often in relation to theos. For example:

ἤτέομεν δὲ θεὸν φῆναι τέρας: αὐτὰρ ὃ γ' ἡμῖν
δεῖξε, καὶ ἠνώγει πέλαγος μέσον εἰς Εὐβοίαν
τέμνειν, ὄφρα τάχιστα ὑπὲκ κακότητα φύγοιμεν.

About this we asked the god to reveal to us a sign
And he exhorted us to cut through the middle of the sea to Euboea
In order to swiftly pass that bad luck by.

The Odyssey, Book 3, 173-5

[6] As noted in the Appendix - *A Note On The Term Jews In The Gospel of John* - in respect of the term Ἰουδαία, it is interesting to consider two writings by Flavius Josephus, and one by Cassius Dio Cocceianus (dating from c.230 CE). The two works by Josephus are conventionally entitled 'Antiquities of the Jews' (c. 93 CE) and 'The Jewish Wars' (c. 75 CE) although I incline toward the view that such titles are incorrect and that the former - entitled in Greek, Ἰουδαϊκῆς ἀρχαιολογίας - should be 'Judaean Antiquities', while the latter - entitled in Greek, Ἱστορία Ἰουδαϊκοῦ πολέμου πρὸς Ῥωμαίου - should be 'History of the Conflict Between Judaeans and Romaeans', and this because of how Josephus, in those works, describes himself and that conflict.

Ἰουδαϊκῆς ἀρχαιολογίας

In this work Josephus wrote:

1.4 τούτων δὴ τῶν προειρημένων αἰτιῶν αἱ τελευταῖαι δύο κάμοι συμβεβήκασιν· τὸν μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον ἡμῖν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις γενόμενον [...]

1.5 διάταξιν τοῦ πολιτεύματος ἐκ τῶν Ἑβραϊκῶν μεθρημηνευμένην γραμμάτων [...]

1.6 δηλῶσαι τίνες ὄντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ἰουδαῖοι

a) 1.4. τὸν μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον ἡμῖν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις γενόμενον, "how that conflict between Romaeans and we Judaeans came about."

To be pedantic, Ῥωμαίους - Romaeans - implies those "of Rome". That is, the word suggests those associated with a particular place, as does the term Judaeans. Which association of people with a particular place or region is historically germane.

b) 1.5. διάταξιν τοῦ πολιτεύματος τῶν Ἑβραϊκῶν μεθρημηνευμένην γραμμάτων, "the decrees of our civitatum as expounded in the writings of the Hebrews."

Less literally, "the laws of our communities as expounded in the writings of the Hebrews."

c) 1.6 δηλῶσαι τίνες ὄντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ἰουδαῖοι, "to make known how Judaeans came about."

Ἱστορία Ἰουδαϊκοῦ πολέμου πρὸς Ῥωμαίου

In the Προοίμιον of this book Josephus wrote:

a) Ἰώσηπος Ματθίου παῖς ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερεύς

That is, Josephus describes himself as "the son of Matthias, a priest, from Jerusalem." He does not write that he is

"Jewish" and nor does he write that he is from Judaea.

b) σχεδὸν δὲ καὶ ὧν ἄκοῦ παρειλήφαμεν ἢ πόλεων πρὸς πόλεις ἢ ἔθνῶν ἔθνεσι συρραγέντων.

A conventional translation would have πόλις as 'city' and ἔθνος as 'nation' so that the latter part would conventionally be translated along the following lines: "cities would have fought against cities, or nations against nations."

However, the terms 'nation' and 'city' are or can be misleading, given their modern connotations, whereas a historical approximation for ἔθνος would be 'tribe', 'people', or 'community', and for πόλις - understood here as referring to a particular named place with a history of settlement - town, fortified town, burg, borough, municipality. Such choices would produce a translation such as: "municipality would have fought municipality, community with community." The evocation is thus more parochial, more regional, as befits the historical past and the context: here, an insurrection, a conflict between the people of Judaea and the armed forces commanded by Roman citizens (those "of Rome") duly appointed to positions of power.

Regarding The Term Ἰουδαϊκός

While the term is conventionally cited as meaning Jewish - although LSJ provide no sources, with the English word 'Jew' not existing until the 13th/14th century CE - the sense of the term in Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία by Cassius Dio Cocceianus (for example, 67.14.2, 68.1.2) is Judaeian, referring to the people of Judaea and their customs and way of life, Ἰουδαϊκοῦ βίου, τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἥθη:

ὕφ' ἧς καὶ ἄλλοι ἐς τὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἥθη ἐξοκέλλοντες πολλοὶ κατεδικάσθησαν καὶ οἱ μὲν ἀπέθανον οἱ δὲ τῶν γούν οὐσιῶν ἐστερήθησαν (67.14.2)

[7] Thomas Wright. *Anglo-Saxon And Old English Vocabularies*. Second edition, London, 1884. pp.72, 156, 316.

[8]

ὁρᾷς μὲν ἡμᾶς ἡλίκοι προσήμεθα
βωμοῖσι τοῖς σοῖς: οἱ μὲν οὐδέπω μακρὰν
πτέσθαι σθένοντες, οἱ δὲ σὺν γήρᾳ βαρεῖς,
ἱερῆς, ἐγὼ μὲν Ζηνός, οἶδε τ' ἡθέων
λεκτοί: τὸ δ' ἄλλο φύλον ἐξεστεμμένον
20 ἀγοραῖσι θακεῖ πρὸς τε Παλλάδος διπλοῖς
ναοῖς, ἐπ' Ἰσμηνοῦ τε μαντεῖα σποδῶ.
πόλις γάρ, ὥσπερ καὶ τὸς εἰσορᾷς, ἄγαν
ἤδη σαλεύει κἀνακουφίσαι κάρα
βυθῶν ἔτ' οὐχ οἷα τε φοινίου σάλου,
25 φθίνουσα μὲν κάλυξιν ἐγκάρποις χθονός,
φθίνουσα δ' ἀγέλαις βουνόμοις τόκοισί τε
ἀγόνοις γυναικῶν: ἐν δ' ὁ πυρφόρος θεὸς
σκήψας ἐλαύνει, λοιμὸς ἔχθιστος, πόλιν,
ὕφ' οὗ κενοῦται δῶμα Καδμεῖον, μέλας δ'
Ἄϊδης στεναγμοῖς καὶ γόοις πλουτίζεται.

You see how many sit here
Before your altars - some not yet robust enough
To fly far; some heavy as I, Priest of Zeus, with age;
And these, chosen from our unmarried youth.
Enwreathed like them, our people sit in the place of markets,
By the twin shrines of Pallas
And by the embers of the Ismenian oracle.
Our community, as you yourself behold, already heaves
Too much - its head bent
To the depths bloodily heaving.
Decay is in the unfruitful seeds in the soil,
Decay is in our herds of cattle - our women
Are barren or abort, and that god of fever
Swoops down to strike our community with an odious plague,
Emptying the abode of Cadmus and giving dark Hades
An abundance of wailing and lamentation.

[9] *The New Testament and Psalms: An Inclusive Version*, Oxford University Press, 1995.

[10] The Discourses of Epictetus were compiled (by Arrian) some decades before the Gospel of John was written (which according to scholarly consensus was around or shortly after 90 CE). Given that both Epictetus and Arrian were native Greek speakers, the use of such a colloquial Greek phrase by the Evangelist perhaps indicates something not only about John himself but also about the audience and the readers who first heard or read his Gospel.

[11] For context, the Greek of the complete verse of Ephesians is: ὁ καταβὰς αὐτός ἐστιν καὶ ὁ ἀναβὰς ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν ἵνα πληρώσῃ τὰ πάντα. Literally, "The one having descended is the same as the one who, having ascended high above all the heavens, completes everything."

[12] For context, the verse in the Latin version of Jerome is: cum ergo resurrexisset a mortuis recordati sunt discipuli

eius quia hoc dicebat et crediderunt scripturae et sermoni quem dixit iesus

The Latin of Codex Palatinus, Vetus Latina: Cum ergo resurrexit a mortuis commonefacti sunt discipuli eius quoniam hoc dicebat et crediderunt scripturae et sermoni quem dixit IHS.

The Latin of Codex Brixianus, Vetus Latina: cum ergo resurrexisset a mortuis recordati sunt discipuli eius quia hoc dixerat et crediderunt scripturae et sermoni quem dixit IHS.

[13] Qv. Tacitus: "non diurna actorum scriptura reperio ullo insigni officio functam." *Annals*, Book III, 3.

[14] In *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum* Marcus Tullius Cicero, in criticizing Epicurus and others, presents his view of Summum Bonum, a term normally translated as 'the supreme good'. According to Cicero, honestum (honourable conduct) is the foundation of Summum Bonum which itself can be discerned by careful consideration (ratio) in conjunction with that knowing (scientia) of what is divine and what is mortal that has been described as wisdom (sapientia),

aequam igitur pronuntiabit sententiam ratio adhibita primum divinarum humanarumque rerum scientia, quae potest appellari rite sapientia, deinde adiunctis virtutibus, quas ratio rerum omnium dominas, tu voluptatum satellites et ministras esse voluisti. (II, 37)

He then writes that honestum does not depend on any personal benefit (omni utilitate) that may result or be expected but instead can be discerned by means of consensus among the whole community in combination with the example afforded by the honourable actions and motives of the finest of individuals:

Honestum igitur id intellegimus, quod tale est, ut detracta omni utilitate sine ullis praemiis fructibusve per se ipsum possit iure laudari. quod quale sit, non tam definitione, qua sum usus, intellegi potest, quamquam aliquantum potest, quam communi omnium iudicio et optimi cuiusque studiis atque factis, qui permulta ob eam unam causam faciunt, quia decet, quia rectum, quia honestum est, etsi nullum consecuturum emolumentum vident. (II, 45f)

In effect, Summum Bonum – what the Greeks termed τὸ ἀγαθὸν – depends on certain personal qualities such as a careful consideration of a matter; on a personal knowing of what is divine and what is mortal; on the example of personal noble deeds and motives, and on a communal consensus.

There is therefore nothing morally abstract or dogmatic about Cicero's understanding of Summum Bonum which so well expresses the Greco-Roman view, as does Seneca:

summum bonum est quod honestum est; et quod magis admireris: unum bonum est, quod honestum est, cetera falsa et adulterina bona sunt. *Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales*, LXXI, 4

Thus, perhaps a more apt translation of the term Summum Bonum would be *the highest nobility*.

[15] In context, the quotation from Aeschylus is:

ὦ Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ καὶ νύξ φιλία
μεγάλων κόσμων κτεάτειρα,
ἥτ' ἐπὶ Τροίας πύργοις ἔβαλες
στεγανὸν δίκτυον, ὥς μήτε μέγαν
μήτ' οὖν νεαρῶν τιν' ὑπερτελέσαι
360μέγα δουλείας
γάγγαμον, ἅτης παναλώτου

You, Zeus our Chief, and Nox, our companion -
Mistress of the mighty cosmos
Who cast over the Trojan towers a covering net
Such that neither the full-grown nor any young were beyond the limits
Of Misfortune's all-taking enslaving vast trawl.

[16] In respect of the article, τοῦ, here and the phrase ὁ μόνος θεός, cf. Philo, *De Profugis*, 71-72,

τοῦ μὲν γὰρ πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ἀνθρώπου, ὃς δὴ νοῦς ἐστὶ καθαρώτατος, εἷς ὁ μόνος θεὸς δημιουργός, τοῦ δὲ λεγομένου καὶ κεκραμένου μετ' αἰσθήσεως τὸ πλῆθος. οὗ χάριν ὁ μὲν κατ' ἐξοχὴν ἄνθρωπος σὺν τῷ ἄρθρῳ μεμνήνυται λέγεται γάρ· ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον, τὸν αἰδῆ καὶ ἄκρατον ἐκεῖνον λογισμόν, ὃ δὲ ἄνευ τῆς τοῦδε προσθήκης· τὸ γὰρ ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον ἐμφαίνει τὸν ἐξ ἀλόγου καὶ λογικῆς συνυφανθέντα φύσεως.

ΕΠΙΛΟΓΟΣ

A Question Of Interpretation

Vernacular translations are, by the nature of translation, interpretations, with the history of vernacular translations of the Bible - and especially of the Gospels - revealing how such interpretations could be used to support schisms; for example, in the case of Wycliffe's English, the Lollards, and in the case of Luther's German, the Protestant reformation. In addition, some translations enriched the vernacular language itself, as for example, the translations of Tyndale and the King James Bible did in respect of English.

My own interpretation of the Gospel of John is not intended to be schismatic but rather to be unfamiliar, with such unfamiliarity hopefully betaking some readers to the unfamiliar milieu of an ancient Judaea governed as it was by Rome and abode as it was of those Judaeans who believed in a Messias/Messiah, with it being written in the first chapter of the Gospel of John that in, reference to Jesus, Andrew - the brother of Simon Peter - announced: εὕρηκαμεν τὸν Μεσσίαν (we have found the Messias).

My interpretation is intended to be unfamiliar for several reasons. Firstly, because the Gospels were written in Hellenistic (Koine, κοινὴ) Greek, with the author of the Gospel of John by including colloquial Greek sayings and offering explanations for some particular terms [a] indicating that his intended or actual audience - those reading or hearing his Gospel in late first century and early second century CE - were most probably native speakers of Hellenistic Greek or at least quite familiar with that language.

Intended to be unfamiliar secondly because the standard English versions of the Gospel of John - and English versions of the other Gospels - have become so familiar to so many people in the West over so many centuries that certain words and terms have acquired particular meanings, with those meanings and certain passages - via iconography, exegesis, and preaching - assuming archetypal status. Hence, and to provide just some examples, our assumptions about God (theos), about 'angels' (τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ θεοῦ), about Heaven (οὐρανός), about sin (ἁμαρτία) and about 'the Holy Spirit' (τὸ πνεῦμα).

An interpretation intended to be unfamiliar, thirdly, because the Gospels were written at a time when Christianity was, in the lands of the Roman Empire, one small religious sect among many others and had yet to develop a standardized doctrinal theology or a centralized ecclesiastical authority, with the Gospel of John not providing any theological explanation of what is meant by theos, by τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ θεοῦ, by οὐρανός, by ἁμαρτία, by τὸ πνεῦμα, and by many other terms. Thus, there is a natural tendency for us to project medieval, Renaissance, and modern meanings onto such terms with the inevitable consequence of us assuming that we understand the message of the Evangelist and thus comprehend at least something of Christianity itself.

In contrast, what are we to make of such translated passages as the following:

I beheld the Spiritus as a dove descend from Empyrean and remain there with him. (1.32)

It was He who sent me to baptize in water, saying to me: 'Upon whosoever you behold the Spiritus descend and remain there with, is the same one who baptizes in Halig Spiritus.' (1.33)

Having spoken to you of earthly things and you lack trust, how can you trust if I speak of things caelestien? (3.12)

And this is the condemnation: That the Phaos arrived in the world but mortals loved the darkness more than the Phaos, for their deeds were harmful. (3.19)

Are we betaken to an unfamiliar milieu where, having read or listened to the evangel attributed to John from familiar translations, we believe we may know something about such things as Heaven (οὐρανός, Empyrean) and the Spirit (τὸ πνεῦμα, the Spiritus) but now may have some doubts about their meaning and doubts about how they may relate to the Light (φῶς, Phaos) and thus to a man named Jesus? Are such doubts relevant or perhaps even necessary given that the emphasis in the Gospel seems to be on individuals trusting in the person of Jesus after they had accepted that the narrated signs (σημεῖα) - such as the Passion, the death and resurrection of Jesus, and his Ascension - indicate that he may well be the only begotten Son of Theos so that, by trusting in him, we have the opportunity of life everlasting?

Such were some of the questions I pondered when a Christian monk, and my fallible interpretation of the Gospel of John, founded on some forty years of reflection and study, is my fallible attempt to find some answers.

David Myatt
2017

[a] Qv. my comments on 1.42 and 1.51.

Appendix

A Note On The Term Jews In The Gospel of John

In the past century or so there has been much discussion about the term 'the Jews' in standard English translations of the Gospel of John and thus whether or not the Gospel portrays Jews in a negative way given such words about them as the following, from the translation known as the Douay-Rheims Bible:

You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and he stood not in the truth; because truth is not in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof. (8.44)

In the Gospel of John the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι first occurs in verse 19 of chapter one:

ὅτε ἀπέστειλαν πρὸς αὐτὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερεῖς καὶ Λευίτας ἵνα ἐρωτήσωσιν αὐτόν

In the Douay-Rheims Bible this is translated as: "when the Jews sent from Jerusalem priests and Levites to him." In the King James Bible: "when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him."

In my translation of John I translated as: "when the Judaeans dispatched priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him."

For, after much consideration, I chose – perhaps controversially – to translate Ἰουδαία by Judaeans, given (i) that the English terms Jews and Jewish (deriving from the 13th/14th century words gyy/gyw and lewe) have acquired connotations (modern and medieval) which are not relevant to the period under consideration; and (ii) that the Greek term derives from a place name, Judaea (as does the Latin iudaeus); and (iii) that the Anglo-Saxon version (ASV) retains the sense of the Greek: here (iudeas) as elsewhere, as for example at 2.6, ἄφ' ἰουδαίας γεγενῆσθαι, "according to Judaeian cleansing."

Such a translation not only dispenses with the "portraying Jews in a negative way" discussion but also reveals a consistent narrative, with the Evangelist not writing that "the Jews" sought to kill Jesus, but only that some Judaeans desired to do so. In addition, as the story of the Samaritan (Samaritan) woman in chapter 4 makes clear, it places into perspective the difference between Judaea, Samaria, and Galilee, and why the Evangelist narrates that it was "necessary" for Jesus to pass through Samaria on the way to Galilee, Ἔδει δὲ αὐτὸν διέρχεσθαι διὰ τῆς Σαμαρείας.

Given what follows (chapter 4 vv.9-10) this suggests a certain historical antipathy between the people of Judaea and the people of Samaria even though the Samaritans – as is apparent from the Gospel – shared many, but not all, of the religious traditions of the Judaeans, as did most of the people of Galilee, including Jesus. Since the Evangelist specifically writes that it was Judaeans who sought to kill Jesus (5.18; 7.1; 7.19 et seq) it seems as if the antipathy by Judaeans to Jesus of Nazareth in particular and to Samaritans in general – with the Evangelist stating that Judaeans would not share or make use of (συγχράομαι) Samaritan things – arose from Judaeans in general believing that their religious practices based on their particular interpretation of the religion of Moses and the Prophets were correct and that they themselves as a result were 'righteous' – better than Samaritans – with Jesus the Galilean considered by many Judaeans, and certainly by the priestly authorities, as having committed (qv. 10.33) 'blasphemy' (βλασφημία) and thus should be killed.

Such differing religious traditions, such internecine feuds, such religious fanaticism and intolerance on behalf of some Judaeans – an intolerance exemplified also when (qv. 10.22) one of the guards of Caiaphas the High Priest (Καϊάφαν τὸν ἀρχιερέα) physically assaults Jesus for not showing the High Priest "due deference" – exemplifies why in this Gospel Ἰουδαία should be translated not by the conventional term 'Jews' but rather by Judaeans.

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In respect of the term Ἰουδαία, it is interesting to consider two writings by Flavius Josephus, and one by Cassius Dio Cocceianus (dating from c.230 CE). The two works by Josephus are conventionally entitled 'Antiquities of the Jews' (c. 93 CE) and 'The Jewish Wars' (c. 75 CE) although I incline toward the view that such titles are incorrect and that the former – entitled in Greek, Ἰουδαϊκῆς ἀρχαιολογίας – should be 'Judaeian Antiquities', while the latter – entitled in Greek, Ἱστορία Ἰουδαϊκοῦ πολέμου πρὸς Ῥωμαίων – should be 'History of the Conflict Between Judaeans and Romaeans', and this because of how Josephus, in those works, describes himself and that conflict.

Ἰουδαϊκῆς ἀρχαιολογίας

In this work Josephus wrote:

1.4 τούτων δὴ τῶν προειρημένων αἰτιῶν αἱ τελευταῖαι δύο κάμοι συμβεβήκασιν· τὸν μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον ἡμῖν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις γενόμενον [...]

1.5 διάταξιν τοῦ πολιτεύματος ἐκ τῶν Ἑβραϊκῶν μεθρημηνευμένην γραμμάτων [...]

1.6 δηλῶσαι τίνες ὄντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ἰουδαῖοι

a) 1.4. τὸν μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον ἡμῖν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις γενόμενον, "how that conflict between Romaeans and we Judaeans came about."

To be pedantic, Ῥωμαίους – Romaeans – implies those "of Rome". That is, the word suggests those associated with a particular place, as does the term Judaeans. Which association of people with a particular place or region is historically germane.

b) 1.5. διάταξιν τοῦ πολιτεύματος τῶν Ἑβραϊκῶν μεθερμηνευμένην γραμμάτων, "the decrees of our civitatum as expounded in the writings of the Hebrews." Less literally, "the laws of our communities as expounded in the writings of the Hebrews."

Thus he does not write about the "Jewish scriptures" or about "the scriptures of the Jews", even though the consensus is that γραφή here – as throughout the New Testament – has the meaning 'scripture' rather than its normal sense of 'that which is written', with the English word 'scripture' (usually written with a capital S) having the specific meaning 'the writings of the Old and/or of the New Testament'. However, this specific meaning only dates back to c.1300 and was used by Wycliffe in his 1389 translation, from whence, via Tyndale, it was used in the King James version. Prior to 1300, the ASV has *gewrite* – 'what was written', writing, inscription – with the Latin of Jerome having *scripturae*, as does Codex Palatinus of the earlier Vetus Latina. [2] Classically understood, the Latin has the same meaning as the Greek γραφή: writing, something written, an inscription. [3]

c) 1.6 δηλῶσαι τίνες ὄντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ἰουδαῖοι, "to make known how Judaeans came about."

Ἱστορία Ἰουδαϊκοῦ πολέμου πρὸς Ῥωμαίου

In the Προοίμιον of this book Josephus wrote:

a) Ἰώσηπος Ματθίου παῖς ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερεύς

That is, Josephus describes himself as "the son of Matthias, a priest, from Jerusalem." He does not write that he is "Jewish" and nor does he write that he is from Judaea.

b) σχεδὸν δὲ καὶ ὧν ἀκοῇ παρειλήφαμεν ἢ πόλεων πρὸς πόλεις ἢ ἔθνῶν ἔθνεσι συρραγέντων.

A conventional translation would have πόλις as 'city' and ἔθνος as 'nation' so that the latter part would conventionally be translated along the following lines: "cities would have fought against cities, or nations against nations."

However, the terms 'nation' and 'city' are or can be misleading, given their modern connotations, whereas a historical approximation for ἔθνος would be 'tribe', 'people', or 'community', and for πόλις – understood here as referring to a particular named place with a history of settlement – town, fortified town, burg, borough, municipality. Such choices would produce a translation such as: "municipality would have fought municipality, community with community." The evocation is thus more parochial, more regional, as befits the historical past and the context: here, an insurrection, a conflict between the people of Judaea and the armed forces commanded by Roman citizens (those "of Rome") duly appointed to positions of power.

Regarding The Term Ἰουδαϊκός

While the term is conventionally cited as meaning Jewish – although LSJ provides no sources, with the English words 'Jew' and 'Jewish' not existing until the 13th/14th century CE – the sense of the term in Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία by Cassius Dio Cocceianus (for example, 67.14.2, 68.1.2) is Judaeans, referring to the people of Judaea and their customs and way of life, Ἰουδαϊκοῦ βίου, τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἥθη:

ὕφ' ἧς καὶ ἄλλοι ἐς τὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἥθη ἐξοκέλλοντες πολλοὶ κατεδικάσθησαν καὶ οἱ μὲν ἀπέθανον οἱ δὲ τῶν γούν οὐσιῶν ἐστερήθησαν (67.14.2)

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The Way Of Jesus of Nazareth

A Question Of Hermeneutics?

As my translation of and commentary on the *Gospel According To John* so very slowly progresses [1] what I am (re)discovering is how different the 'way of Jesus of Nazareth' – as presented in and by that particular Gospel over two thousand years ago – seems to me to be from what has so often been preached by so many and for so long regarding that religion which has become known as Christianity, dependant as such preaching so often is and has been on interpretations, and translations, of the Greek texts that form the 'New Testament'.

What emerges from my own translation – that is, from my particular 'interpretation of meaning' of the Gospel According To John – is rather reminiscent of what individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox, and William Penn wrote and said about Jesus and the spiritual way that the Gospels in particular revealed. This is the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from supra-personal moralistic interpretations based on inflexible notions of 'sin' and thus on what is considered 'good' and what is considered 'evil'.

A difference evident in many passages from the Gospel of John, such as the following two, one of which involves the Greek word πιστεύω, and which word is perhaps a relevant hermeneutical example. The conventional interpretation of meaning, in respect of New Testament texts, is 'believe', 'have faith in', so that John 3:16 is interpreted along the following lines:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (King James Bible)

Similarly in respect of other verses where πιστεύω occurs, so that the impression is of the necessity of believing, of having or acquiring faith.

Yet, and in regard to the aforementioned verse, if one interprets that particular (and another) Greek word in a more Hellenistic – a more Greek – way, then one has:

Theos so loved the world that he offered up his only begotten son so that all those trusting in him would not perish but might have life everlasting.

Not only is this personal, direct – as in personally trusting someone as opposed to a 'blind believing' – but there are no prior hermeneutic assumptions about 'God', derived as such assumptions are from over two thousand years of scriptural exegesis and preaching.

Example One. Chapter Three, 16-21

DWM:

Theos so loved the world that he offered up his only begotten son so that all those trusting in him would not perish but might have life everlasting. For Theos did not dispatch his son to the world to condemn the world, but rather that the world might be rescued through him. Whosoever trusts in him is not condemned while whomsoever does not trust is condemned for he has not trusted in the Nomen of the only begotten son of Theos.

And this is the condemnation: That the Phaos arrived in the world but mortals loved the darkness more than the Phaos, for their deeds were harmful. For anyone who does what is mean dislikes the Phaos and does not come near the Phaos lest their deeds be exposed. But whomsoever practices disclosure goes to the Phaos so that their deeds might be manifest as having been done through Theos. [2]

King James Bible:

God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

Example Two. Chapter Five, 1-16

DWM:

Following this, there was a Judaeen feast and Jesus went to Jerusalem. And there is in Jerusalem by the place of the sheep a pool, named in the language of the Hebrews as Bethesda, which has five colonnades in which were a large number of the infirm – the blind, the limping, the withered – awaiting a change in the water since on occasion an Envoy of Theos descended into the pool, stirring the water, and whomsoever after that stirring of the water was first to enter became complete, the burden of their affliction removed.

And there was a man there who for eight and thirty years had been infirm. Jesus, seeing him lying there and knowing of that lengthy duration, said to him: "Do you seek to be complete?"

The infirm one replied: "Sir, I do not have someone who when the water is stirred could place me in that pool, and, when I go, someone else has descended before me."

Jesus said to him: "Arise. Take your bedroll, and walk."

And, directly, the man became complete, took up his bedroll and walked around. And it was the day of the Sabbath.

Thus did the Judaeans say to the one who had been treated: "It is the Sabbath and it is not permitted for you to carry your bedroll."

To them he answered: "It was he who made me complete who said for me to take my bedroll and to walk around."

So they asked him: "Who is the man who said for you to take the bedroll and walk?"

But the healed one did not know, for there was a crowd there with Jesus having betaken himself away.

Following this, Jesus discovered him in the temple and said to him: "Behold, you are complete. No more missteps, lest something worse befalls you."

The man then went away and informed the Judaeans that it was Jesus who had made him complete, and thus did the Judaeans harass Jesus because he was doing such things on the Sabbath. [3][4]

King James Bible:

After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.

And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.

Conclusion

The first example seems to me to be revealing of the personal nature of the 'way of Jesus of Nazareth' – of a personal trust in a particular person, in this instance a trust in Jesus because of how he and his life are recounted by the Evangelist – contrasting with a rather impersonal demand to believe, to have faith, based on doctrine as codified by someone else or by some organized regulatory and supra-local hierarchy.

The second example seems to me to be revealing of the contrast between the then organized supra-personal religion of the Judaeans – with its doctrinal forbiddance, sometimes on pain of death, of certain personal deeds – and the empathy and compassion of an individual, as evident in Jesus in the immediacy of the moment healing a long-suffering infirm man and bidding him to take up and carry his bedroll, undoubtedly aware as Jesus was that he was doing and inciting what was forbidden because for him empathy and compassion were more important than some established doctrine.

Is this contrast between what seems to be a particular dogmatism, a particular religious (hubriatic) intolerance by the Judaeans, and an individual being empathic and compassionate in the immediacy of the moment, still relevant today? Personally, I do believe it is, leading me to conclude that τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον – The Gospel According To John – contains certain truths not only about our physis as human beings but also about our relation to Being, to the divine, to the numinous. For, as described in tractate III of the Corpus Hermeticum,

The numen of all beings is theos: numinal, and of numinal physis. The origin of what exists is theos, who is Perceivation and Physis and Substance: the sapientia which is a revealing of all beings. For the numinal is the origin: physis, vigour, incumbency, accomplishment, renewance [...]

The divine is all of that mision: renewance of the cosmic order through Physis, for Physis is presenced in the divine. [5]

David Myatt
October 2017

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Footnotes

[1] Volume I (chapters 1-5) of my translation of and commentary on the Gospel According To John is available at <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2023/08/myatt-gospel-john-1-5.pdf>

[2] A (slightly edited) extract from my commentary on John 3:16-21.

° *Nomos*. νόμος. A transliteration since as with 'logos' a particular metaphysical principle is implied and one which requires contextual interpretation; a sense somewhat lost if the English word 'law' is used especially given what the word 'law' often now imputes.

° *Phaos*. Given that φάος metaphorically (qv. Iliad, Odyssey, Hesiod, etcetera) implies the being, the life, 'the spark', of mortals, and, generally, either (i) the illumination, the light, that arises because of the Sun and distinguishes the day from the night, or (ii) any brightness that provides illumination and thus enables things to be seen, I am inclined to avoid the vague English word 'light' which all other translations use and which, as in the case of God, has, in the context of the evangel of Jesus of Nazareth, acquired particular meanings mostly as a result of centuries of exegesis and which therefore conveys or might convey something that the Greek word, as used by the author of this particular Greek text, might not have done.

Hence my transliteration – using the Homeric φάος instead of φῶς – and which transliteration requires the reader to pause and consider what phaos may, or may not, mean, suggest, or imply. As in the matter of logos, it is most probably not some sort of philosophical principle, neo-Platonist or otherwise.

Interestingly, φῶς occurs in conjunction with ζωή and θεός and ἐγένετο and Ἄνθρωπος in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, thus echoing the evangel of John:

φῶς καὶ ζωή ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατήρ, ἐξ οὗ ἐγένετο ὁ Ἄνθρωπος (Poemandres, 1.21)

Life and phaos are [both] of Theos, The Father, Who brought human beings into existence

° *For their deeds were harmful*. ἦν γὰρ αὐτῶν πονηρὰ τὰ ἔργα. Harmful: that is, caused pain and suffering. To impute to πονηρός here the meaning of a moral abstract 'evil' is, in my view, mistaken. Similarly with the following φαῦλος in v.20 which imparts the sense of being 'mean', indifferent.

Since the Phaos is Jesus, those who are mean, those who do harm, avoid Jesus because (qv. 2.25) he – as the only begotten son of Theos – knows the person within and all their deeds. Thus, fearing being exposed, they avoid him, and thus cannot put their trust in him and so are condemned and therefore lose the opportunity of eternal life.

° *whomsoever practices disclosure*. ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν. Literally, 'they practising the disclosing.' That is, those who disclose – who do not hide – who they are and what deeds they have done, and who thus have no reason to fear exposure. Here, as in vv.19-20, the meaning is personal – about the character of people – and not about abstractions such as "evil" and "truth", just as in previous verses it is about trusting in the character of Jesus. Hence why here ἀλήθεια is 'sincerity', a disclosing, a revealing – the opposite of lying and of being deceitful – and not some impersonal 'truth'.

[3] Note how Jesus does not disapprovingly preach about – does not even mention – the apparently superstitious practice of infirm individuals waiting by a 'miraculous' pool in order to be cured.

[4] A (slightly edited) extract from my commentary on John 5:1-16.

° *the place of the sheep*. Since the Greek προβατικός means "of or relating to sheep" and there is no mention of a 'gate' (or of anything specific such as a market) I prefer a more literal translation. It is a reasonable assumption that the sheep were, and had in previous times been, kept there prior to being offered as sacrifices, as for example sheep are still so held in particular places in Mecca during Eid al-Adha, the Muslim feast of sacrifice.

° *named in the language of the Hebrews*. ἐπιλεγομένη Ἑβραϊστὶ.

° *the infirm*. The Greek word ἀσθενέω implies those lacking normal physical strength.

° *awaiting a change in the water*. Reading ἐκδεχομένων τὴν τοῦ ὕδατος κίνησιν with the Textus Receptus, omitted by NA28, but included in ASV, Tyndale, and Wycliffe.

° *Envoy of Theos*. Reading ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου κατὰ καιρῶν κατέβαινεν (qv. Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on John, Book II, V, 1-4, Migne Patrologia Graeca 73) and ἐν τῇ κολυμβήθρᾳ, καὶ ἐτάρασσεν τὸ ὕδωρ· ὁ οὖν πρῶτος ἐμβὰς μετὰ τὴν ταραχὴν τοῦ ὕδατος, ὑγιὴς ἐγένετο, ᾧ δῆποτε κατειχετο νοσήματι with the Textus Receptus. The verse is omitted

by NA28, but included in ASV, Tyndale, and Wycliffe.

a) *envoy*. As noted in the commentary on 1:51, interpreting ἄγγελος as 'envoy' (of theos) and not as 'angel', particularly given the much later Christian iconography associated with the term 'angel'.

b) *Theos*. Regarding ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου, qv. Matthew 28.2 ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου καταβὰς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, "an envoy of [the] Lord/Master descended from Empyrean/the heavens." Since here κύριος implies Theos (cf. John 20.28 where it is used in reference to Jesus), an interpretation such as "envoy of Theos" avoids both the phrase "envoy of the Master" - which is unsuitable given the modern connotations of the word 'master' - and the exegetical phrase "angel/envoy of the Lord" with all its associated and much later iconography both literal, by means of Art, and figurative, in terms of archetypes and one's imagination. An alternative expression would be "envoy of the Domine," with Domine (from the Latin Dominus) used in English as both a respectful form of address and as signifying the authority of the person or a deity.

c) *became complete*. ὑγιὴς ἐγένετο. The suggestion is of the person becoming 'whole', complete, *sanus*, and thus ceasing to be 'broken', incomplete, infirm.

° *bedroll*. κράβατος (Latin, grabatus) has no suitable equivalent in English since in context it refers to the portable bed and bedding of the infirm. The nearest English approximation is bedroll.

° *And, directly, the man became complete*. καὶ εὐθέως ἐγένετο ὑγιὴς ὁ ἄνθρωπος. Metaphysically, the Evangelist is implying that 'completeness' - wholeness - for both the healthy and the infirm (whether infirm because of sickness or a physical infirmity) arises because of and through Jesus.

° *treated*. Taking the literal sense of θεραπεύω here. Hence: cared for, treated, attended to. As a healer or a physician might care for, treat, or attend to, someone.

° *no more missteps*. μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε. That is, make no more mistakes in judgement or in deeds. Qv. the Introduction [to Volume I of the translation] regarding translating ἀμαρτία in a theologically neutral way as 'mistake' or 'error' instead of by the now exegetical English word 'sin'. Cf. 1.29, 8.7, et seq.

° *Judaeans*. Qv. my essay *A Note On The Term Jews In The Gospel of John*, available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/07/05/a-note-on-the-term-jews-in-the-gospel-of-john/>

° *harass*. διώκω. Cf. the Latin *persequor*, for the implication is of continually 'following' and pursuing him in order to not only try and worry or distress him but also (as becomes evident) to find what they regard is evidence against him in order to have him killed, qv. 5.18, 7.1, 7.19 et seq.

[5] *Ἰερός Λόγος: An Esoteric Mythos*. Included in: David Myatt, *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates: Translation and Commentary*, 2017. ISBN 978-1976452369

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The Beatitudes

The Learning On The Hillside

Τὸ κατὰ Ματθαῖον εὐαγγέλιον

The Gospel According To Matthew

5:1-10

Text

- 1 Ἰδὼν δὲ τοὺς ὄχλους ἀνέβη εἰς τὸ ὄρος, καὶ καθίσαντος αὐτοῦ προσῆλθαν αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ·
- 2 καὶ ἀνοίξας τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ ἐδίδασκεν αὐτοὺς λέγων·
- 3 Μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.
- 4 μακάριοι οἱ πενθοῦντες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ παρακληθήσονται.
- 5 μακάριοι οἱ πραεῖς, ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσιν τὴν γῆν.
- 6 μακάριοι οἱ πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες τὴν δικαιοσύνην, ὅτι αὐτοὶ χορτασθήσονται.
- 7 μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται.
- 8 μακάριοι οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν θεὸν ὄψονται.
- 9 μακάριοι οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί, ὅτι αὐτοὶ υἱοὶ θεοῦ κληθήσονται.
- 10 μακάριοι οἱ δεδιωγμένοι ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

Translation

- 1 Observing the multitudes, he ascended the hill and, having sat down, his disciples approached him.
- 2 Then, a revelation, for he instructed those there by saying this:
- 3 Fortunate, those humble with spiritus, for theirs is the Kingdom of Empyrean.
- 4 Fortunate, those who grieve, for they shall have solace.
- 5 Fortunate, the gentle, for they shall acquire the Earth.
- 6 Fortunate, those who hunger and thirst for fairness, for they shall be replete.
- 7 Fortunate, the compassionate, for they shall receive compassion.
- 8 Fortunate, the refined of heart, for they shall perceive Theos.
- 9 Fortunate, the peaceable, for they shall be called children of Theos.
- 10 Fortunate, those harassed due to their fairness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Empyrean.

Commentary

1. ὄρος. Here a hill, rather than a mountain.

2.

ἀνοίξας τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ. I take this metaphorically as in a disclosing or a revealing, not literally as in "opening his mouth."

those there. Although the Greek text does not explicitly state the fact, the context suggests that Jesus addressed both the multitude and his disciples.

3.

μακάριος. A difficult word to translate since "blessed" has acquired particular (sometimes moralistic) meanings as a result of nearly two thousand years of exegesis, while "happy" is rather prosaic. The context - as in ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν - suggests "fortunate".

On a pedantic note, English translations invariably add "are" after μακάριος whereas the Greek - μακάριοι οἱ - reads "fortunate, the..."

πτωχός. Usually translated as "poor" which however has too many exegetical and modern connotations, and does not express the metaphorical sense here which implies being "humble" in respect of τὸ πνεῦμα.

τῷ πνεύματι [...] τῶν οὐρανῶν. In respect of τὸ πνεῦμα as the spiritus (rather than as the Spirit) and οὐρανός as Empyrean (rather than Heaven), qv. my commentary on John 1:32, [1] from which this an extract:

οὐρανός here is always translated as 'heaven' although the term 'heaven' - used in the context of the Gospels - now has rather different connotations than the Greek οὐρανός, with the word 'heaven' now often implying something explained by almost two thousand years of exegesis and as depicted, for example, in medieval and Renaissance Christian art. However, those hearing or reading this particular Greek gospel for the first time in the formative years of Christianity would most probably have assumed the usual Greek usage of "the heavens" in the sense of the "the star-filled firmament above" or in the sense of "the sky" or as the abode of theos and/or of the gods, ἐν οὐρανῷ θεοί [...]

It therefore seems apposite to suggest a more neutral word than 'heaven' as a translation of οὐρανός and one which might not only be understood in various 'classical' ways by an audience of Greek speakers (such as the ways described above) but also be open to a new, and Christian, interpretation consistent with the milieu that

existed when the Gospel of John was written and first heard. That is, before the exegesis of later centuries and long before post-Roman Christian iconography. Hence my suggestion of the post-classical Latin term Empyrean, which can bear the interpretation of the abode of theos and/or of the gods, of "the sky", of the "the star-filled firmament above"; and a Christian one suggested by Genesis 2.8 - παράδεισον ἐν Εδεμ (the Paradise of Eden) - and also by shamayim, שָׁמַיִם

5. πρᾶος. Gentle - in the sense of mild, balanced, temperament - rather than "meek".

6. δικαιοσύνη. Fairness. Not some abstract, legalistic, "justice", and not "righteousness" which word has over centuries acquired sometimes strident and disputable moralistic meanings as well as implying a certain conformity to accepted (and disputable or dogmatic) standards.

7. ἐλεήμων. The classical Latin term misericordia - used by Jerome, and the origin of the English word miséricordious - expresses the sense well, which is of συμπάθεια (sympatheia, benignity) resulting in compassion. Cf. Luke 11.41 (πλὴν τὰ ἐνόντα δότε ἐλεημοσύνην, καὶ ἰδοὺ πάντα καθαρὰ ὑμῖν ἐστίν), Acts 10:2, κτλ.

8.

οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ. Literally, those whose hearts are clean, in the physical sense, as in having undertaken a ritual cleansing of the body. Cf. Corpus Hermeticum, Poemandres 22, [2] where as in Luke 11.41 - qv. ἐλεήμων in v. 7 here - it occurs in relation to compassion, the compassionate:

παραγίνομαι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ὁ Νοῦς τοῖς ὁσίοις καὶ ἀγαθοῖς καὶ καθαροῖς
καὶ ἐλεήμοσι, τοῖς εὐσεβοῦσι, καὶ ἡ παρουσία μου γίνεται βοήθεια,
καὶ εὐθὺς τὰ πάντα γνωρίζουσι καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἰλάσκονται
ἀγαπητικῶς καὶ εὐχαριστοῦσιν εὐλογοῦντες καὶ ὑμνοῦντες
τεταγμένως πρὸς αὐτὸν τῇ στοργῇ

I, perceiviation, attend to those of respectful deeds, the honourable, the refined, the compassionate, those aware of the numinous; to whom my being is a help so that they soon acquire knowledge of the whole and are affectionately gracious toward the father, fondly celebrating in song his position.

In respect of καθαροῖς, I prefer *refined* here - as in the Corpus Hermeticum - rather than 'pure' given the disputable nature of the term 'pure' and the connotations acquired over centuries be they religious, sanctimonious, political, or otherwise.

θεὸς. For reasons explained in my commentary on verse I of chapter one of The Gospel According To John - and in my commentaries on tractates from the Corpus Hermeticum [2] - I transliterate θεὸς.

9. οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί. The peaceable ones, which includes pacificators - those who are pacificatory, and thus who are conciliatory and who actively seek peace - and those who have a peaceable disposition.

10. διώκω. Harass, rather than "persecuted" which has acquired too many modern and especially political connotations. Cf. John 5:16, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐδίωκον οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τὸν Ἰησοῦν, ὅτι ταῦτα ἐποίει ἐν σαββάτῳ, "and thus did the Judeans harass Jesus because he was doing such things on the Sabbath."

My interpretation, based on John 5:16, is that those who are harassed are so on account of (ἐνεκα) their fairness, not because those who are harassing them disparage or hate fairness in general.

David Myatt
30.iii.18

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Notes

[1] My translation and commentary - of chapters 1-5 - is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/gospel-according-to-john/>

[2] D. Myatt. *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*. Translations And Commentaries. CreateSpace. 2017. ISBN 978-1976452369.

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Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos

David Myatt

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Second Edition
2017

Introduction

This book originated from some - mostly philosophical - questions asked of me during the Spring and Summer of 2017. One of those questions was:

You talk about how you have an appreciation for rural communities and how these communities sometimes have a wordless appreciation of the cosmos and share an aural tradition which originated decades if not centuries ago. Would you say that such a perspective is slowly being lost because of our modern way of living and that this lack of contact with the wordless, with nature, will cause more abstractions and thus, more suffering? If so, do you believe that such a rural way of living facilitates a journeying (both as an individual person and as a collectivity) toward Wu-Wei and a restoration of δίκη?

To which my answer was:

My fallible intimation - which yet again is nothing original or new - is that such a wordless perception of the Cosmos, and especially of Nature, is indeed being slowly lost for a variety of reasons. One reason seems to be an increasing dependence on technology and machines over and above crafts and work which require both a certain skill and the use of one's hands and hand-held tools, which crafts and work involve a certain careful, and slow, and often a toiling way of working. Another reason is a lack of direct, personal, and rural contact with Nature over the Seasons of many years, which rural closeness - through a working-there or a dwelling-there for years - reveals the natural rhythms of Nature and the Cosmos beyond, one of which rhythms is the process of balance, manifest as this sometimes is in good seasons, in bad seasons, and in birth, living, work, and death. Another reason is that for so many in the modern West there is no longer an ancestral culture of which one is a living, dwelling, part - a connexion between the past and the future and a connexion with a rural place of dwelling - and which culture preserves the slowly learned wisdom of the past, manifest as that often is in aurally and personally learning what is right, what is wrong, and thus how one should behave in order to maintain the natural balance of life. Instead there are external influences, changeable, and changing, manufactured and disposable, often material and egoistical and hubriatic in ethos and increasingly being rapidly relayed through various types of readily accessible media.

This took me beyond the mystical and somewhat eremitic and very personal weltanschauung I had developed in the previous five or so years which centred

around a non-involvement - communal, social, political, cultural - except in the immediacy-of-the-moment in respect of personal honour.

A re-reading of classical authors such as Cicero, Seneca, Pliny, Homer, Plutarch, and Thucydides, among others, together with my on-going translations of tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum and the Gospel of John, made me consider whether it would be possible to provide an understanding of the numinous such that, for instance, what ancient (Greco-Roman) anthropomorphic deities and their interaction with mortals represented and presenced in terms of ethos was expressed ontologically, in terms of Being, beings, and φύσις (physis) thus providing a better understanding of that ancient spirituality; a better understanding of the numinous, and of why Christianity supplanted in the lands of Europe that ancient pagan spirituality [1] and developed an ethos and a culture different in many respects from the ethos and culture of ancient Greece and Rome, a development that has culminated in what seems to be a modern schism between a Christian culture extolling the virtues of compassion, tolerance, inclusion, and equality - that is, which is more balanced in respect of the masculine and the muliebral - and a Christian culture which retains and seeks to maintain what its proponents describe as a more traditional Christian ethos and practice evident for instance in their disdain for and often condemnation of - on the basis of their interpretation of the Scriptures - those whose love is for someone of the same gender.

Which schism returns us to a fundamental difference between Christianity (past and present) and the culture of ancient Greece and Rome, which is the Christian reliance on the Scriptures (and thus on its interpretation) and the Christian requirement that individuals not only trust someone whose mortal death occurred millennia ago but also believe that that person was, on the basis of the σημεῖα (signs) and δυνάμεις (miracles) described in parts of those Scriptures, the son of God. This difference inclines me to favour the type of pagan spirituality that was manifest in ancient Greece and Rome where, for example, τὸ καλόν, ἀρετή, and τὸ ἀγαθόν were related to and defined by certain living individuals: individuals of beauty; individuals of valour and courage; individuals of honour, manners, and nobility.

Yet the culture that arose around such an ancient spirituality was not noted for its compassion, tolerance, inclusion, and equality, and part of which ancient culture was an acceptance that enslavement of human beings was natural and necessary. Is such a pagan spirituality consistent with such (in my view, necessary) virtues as compassion, tolerance, inclusion, and equality? Is the combination of the pagan weltanschauung evident in the writings of Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Cicero and many other classical authors, and the pagan mysticism evident in many of the tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum, more human in physis, more balanced, and could possibly be more productive of a healthy ψυχή, than revealed religions such as Christianity? Is the fundamental difference between such a pagan spirituality and Christianity (past and present) simply the difference between λόγος (logos) understood as 'reason' and

λόγος understood as faith and belief and thus as the Word of God?

This book represents my fallible attempt to answer such questions and to metaphysically express the substance of that *paganus weltanschauung*. Given that such a *paganus weltanschauung* could possibly be productive of a healthy ψυχή, it seems somewhat unfortunate - and perhaps also symptomatic - that the study of the literature of Ancient Greece and Rome has been in decline in the lands of the West for decades.

Although I have made extensive use of my translations of certain classical authors and of various hermetic texts as well as the Gospel of John, given that those translations are currently quite accessible I have not except on a few occasions explained my interpretations of certain Greek or Latin terms - exempli gratia: νοῦς as (according to context) perceivance, perceivation, rather than the conventional 'mind' - since such explanations are available either in the commentaries which accompany my translations of various hermetic texts and the Gospel of John, or in my writings concerning my 'philosophy of pathei-mathos.'

For this Second Edition, I have clarified and extended the text in several places, added a revised version of my essay *From Aeschylus To The Numinous Way* as an Appendix, and taken the opportunity to correct some typos.

David Myatt
2017

[1] As I note in the text, I prefer the term *paganus* - a transliteration of the classical Latin, denoting as it does connection to Nature, to the natural, more rural, world - in preference to 'pagan' since *paganus* is, in my view and in respect of the Greco-Roman ethos, more accurate given what the term 'pagan' now often denotes.

Chapter One

An instructive example of the difference between the ethos of ancient Greece and the ethos of Christianity occurs in section 10 of tractate IX of the Corpus Hermeticum:

ταῦτά σοι, Ἀσκληπιέ, ἐννοοῦντι, ἀληθῆ δόξειεν, ἀγνοοῦντι δὲ ἄπιστα.
τὸ γὰρ νοῆσαί ἐστι τὸ πιστεῦσαι, ἀπιστῆσαι δὲ τὸ μὴ νοῆσαι. ὁ γὰρ
λόγος οὐ φθάνει μέχρι τῆς ἀληθείας. [1]

If you are insightful, Asclepius, such things should be uncovered for you, although without insight they would be doubted. For noesis is in trusting, while doubting is not noesis, with my logos attaining veracity. [2]

This statement of the need - the requirement - to trust a person and thus believe the doctrine or beliefs they are expounding is evidential of all revealed religions, from Judaism to Christianity to Islam. In Christianity, the requirement is to trust in the person of Jesus of Nazareth and to believe that the Passion, the death, the Resurrection, and the Ascension of Jesus are divine σημεῖα (signs, in the Gospel of John), and divine δυνάμεις (miracles, in the other Gospels) and which God-given signs or miracles are the basis of that trust and the foundation of Christian belief:

καὶ καθὼς Μωϋσῆς ὑψωσεν τὸν ὄφιν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, οὕτως ὑψωθῆναι
δεῖ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ἐν αὐτῷ ἔχῃ ζωὴν
αἰώνιον. Οὕτως γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν τὸν
μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται ἀλλ'
ἔχῃ ζωὴν αἰώνιον. (John 3:14-16) [3]

For just as Moses elevated that serpent in a forsaken place so will the son of a mortal be elevated so that all those trusting in him might have life everlasting. For Theos so loved the world that he offered up his only begotten son so that all those trusting in him would not perish but might have life everlasting.

In addition, it is apposite that John 20:24-29 describes Thomas as doubting the veracity of the Resurrection of Jesus, with Jesus saying to Thomas:

Ὅτι ἐώρακάς με πεπίστευκας; μακάριοι οἱ μὴ ἰδόντες καὶ
πιστεύσαντες.

Because you observed me, you have trusted. Those who have not observed yet have trusted are blessed.

There is also a supra-personal trust in what others have written:

Ἐμνήσθησαν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ὅτι γεγραμμένον ἐστίν, Ὁ ζῆλος τοῦ οἴκου σου καταφάγεται με. ἀπεκρίθησαν οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ, Τί σημεῖον δεικνύεις ἡμῖν, ὅτι ταῦτα ποιεῖς; ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Λύσατε τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον καὶ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις ἐγερῶ αὐτόν. εἶπαν οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, Τεσσαράκοντα καὶ ἕξ ἔτεσιν οἰκοδομήθη ὁ ναὸς οὗτος, καὶ σὺ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις ἐγερεῖς αὐτόν; ἐκεῖνος δὲ ἔλεγεν περὶ τοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ. ὅτε οὖν ἠγέρθη ἐκ νεκρῶν, ἐμνήσθησαν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ὅτι τοῦτο ἔλεγεν, καὶ ἐπίστευσαν τῇ γραφῇ καὶ τῷ λόγῳ ὃν εἶπεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς. (John, 2:17-22)

His disciples recalled that it was written: "Enthusiasm for your house will devour me."

In response, the Judaeans said to him: "What sign do you show us for you doing such things?"

Jesus replied, saying to them: "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it."

The Judaeans said: "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and you will raise it in three days?"

When therefore he was raised from the dead his disciples recalled that he had said this and trusted what was written and the word that Jesus had spoken."

Which trust led - despite the words of Jesus - to individuals in the centuries that followed to rely on and to "search the writings [the scriptures] because you suppose that there is within them life everlasting and that they are a witness about me," ἐραυνᾶτε τὰς γραφάς, ὅτι ὑμεῖς δοκεῖτε ἐν αὐταῖς ζῶην αἰώνιον ἔχειν καὶ ἐκεῖναί εἰσιν αἱ μαρτυροῦσαι περὶ ἐμοῦ (John, 5:39).

In contrast, the ethos of ancient Greece - well-explained in the first three books of Homer's *Odyssey*, and in many passages in *Thucydides* - is the ethos of respect for the divine manifest as the divine is in named divinities both male and female; in trusting someone based on a personal acquaintance and on knowledge of their reputation established as that has been through personal valourous deeds; in being hospitable to strangers of their own kind; and in not trusting those whose actions or deeds or bad manners have shown them to be disrespectful and/or cowardly and ignoble.

Thus *Thucydides* wrote:

ὅμως δὲ πόλιν μεγάλην οἰκοῦντας καὶ ἐν ἥθεσιν ἀντιπάλοις αὐτῇ τεθραμμένους χρεὼν καὶ συμφοραῖς ταῖς μεγίσταις ἐθέλειν ὑφίστασθαι καὶ τὴν ἀξίωσιν μὴ ἀφανίζειν - ἐν ἴσῳ γὰρ οἱ ἄνθρωποι δικαιοῦσι τῆς τε ὑπαρχούσης δόξης αἰτιᾶσθαι ὅστις μαλακίᾳ ἐλλείπει καὶ τῆς μὴ προσηκούσης μισεῖν τὸν θρασύτητι ὀρεγόμενον - ἀπαλγήσαντας δὲ τὰ ἴδια τοῦ κοινοῦ τῆς σωτηρίας ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι.
[4]

Since your abode is a great community reared with a suitable ethos, you should not however great the calamity be overwhelmed and thus obscure your reputation - for mortals equally judge those who through weakness lose the reputation they have, as they dislike those who arrogantly try to grasp a reputation that does not belong to them - but instead put aside your sorrows and share in communal safety.

In a passage redolent of the classical paganus ethos [5] and thus worthy of being quoted in full, Homer describes how the youthful Telemachus - son of Odysseus - laments his misfortune to his guest, Athena - "the goddess with those beautiful blue eyes," [6] - who, as classical deities were sometimes wont to do, had 'shapeshifted' and thus disguised herself as Mentès, the proud son of battle-hardened Anchialus and Chief of those most excellent oarsmen, the Taphians, Μέντης Ἀγχιάλοιο δαΐφρονος εὖχομαι εἶναι υἱὸς ἅτὰρ Ταφίοισι φιληρέτμοισιν ἀνάσσω.

According to Homer, Book I, vv 213-268,

τὴν δ' αὖ Τηλέμαχος πεπνυμένος ἀντίον ἦδ' αἶψα
'τοιγὰρ ἐγὼ τοι, ξεῖνε, μάλ' ἀτρεκέως ἀγορεύσω.
μήτηρ μὲν τέ μέ φησι τοῦ ἔμμεναι, αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ γε
οὐκ οἶδ': οὐ γάρ πώ τις ἐδὼν γόνον αὐτὸς ἀνέγνω.
ὥς δὲ ἐγὼ γ' ὄφελον μάκαρός νύ τευ ἔμμεναι υἱὸς
ἀνέρος, ὃν κτεάτεσσιν ἐοῖς ἐπὶ γῆρας ἔτετμε.
νῦν δ' ὃς ἀποτμότατος γένετο θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων,
τοῦ μ' ἔκ φασι γενέσθαι, ἐπεὶ σύ με τοῦτ' ἐρεΐνεις.

τὸν δ' αὖτε προσέειπε θεά, γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη:
'οὐ μὲν τοι γενεήν γε θεοὶ νῶνυμνον ὀπίσσω
θῆκαν, ἐπεὶ σέ γε τοῖον ἐγείνατο Πηνελόπεια.
ἀλλ' ἄγε μοι τόδε εἰπὲ καὶ ἀτρεκέως κατάλεξον:
225 τίς δαίς, τίς δὲ ὄμιλος ὃδ' ἔπλετο; τίπτε δέ σε χρεώ;
εἰλαπίνη ἢ γάμος; ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἔρανος τάδε γ' ἐστίν:
ὥς τέ μοι ὑβρίζοντες ὑπερφιάλως δοκέουσι
δαίνυσθαι κατὰ δῶμα. νεμεσσήσαιτό κεν ἀνὴρ
αἴσχεα πόλλ' ὀρόων, ὅς τις πινυτός γε μετέλθοι.

τὴν δ' αὖ Τηλέμαχος πεπνυμένος ἀντίον ἦδ' αἶψα
'ξεῖν', ἐπεὶ ἄρ' ἤδη ταῦτά μ' ἀνείρεαι ἠδὲ μεταλλάξ,
μέλλεν μὲν ποτε οἶκος ὃδ' ἀφνειὸς καὶ ἀμύμων
ἔμμεναι, ὄφρ' ἔτι κείνος ἀνὴρ ἐπιδήμιος ἦεν:
νῦν δ' ἐτέρως ἐβόλοντο θεοὶ κακὰ μητιόωντες,
οἳ κείνον μὲν αἶστον ἐποίησαν περὶ πάντων
ἀνθρώπων, ἐπεὶ οὐ κε θανόντι περ ὧδ' ἀκαχοίμην,
εἰ μετὰ οἷς ἐτάροισι δάμνη Τρώων ἐνὶ δήμῳ,
ἢ φίλων ἐν χερσίν, ἐπεὶ πόλεμον τολύπευσεν.
τῷ κέν οἱ τύμβον μὲν ἐποίησαν Παναχαιοί,
ἠδὲ κε καὶ ὧ παιδὶ μέγα κλέος ἦρατ' ὀπίσσω.
νῦν δέ μιν ἀκλειῶς ἄρπυιαι ἀνηρεΐσαντο:
οἷχετ' αἶστος ἄπυστος, ἐμοὶ δ' ὀδύνας τε γόους τε
κάλλιπεν. οὐδέ τι κείνον ὀδυρόμενος στεναχίζω

οἶον, ἐπεὶ νύ μοι ἄλλα θεοὶ κακὰ κήδε' ἔτευξαν.
ὅσσοι γὰρ νήσοισιν ἐπικρατέουσιν ἄριστοι,
Δουλιχίῳ τε Σάμῃ τε καὶ ὑλήεντι Ζακύνθῳ,
ἢ δ' ὅσσοι κραναὴν Ἰθάκην κάτα κοιρανέουσιν,
τόσσοι μητέρ' ἐμὴν μνῶνται, τρύχουσι δὲ οἶκον.
ἢ δ' οὐτ' ἀρνεῖται στυγερὸν γάμον οὔτε τελευτὴν
ποιῆσαι δύναται: τοὶ δὲ φθινύθουσιν ἔδοντες
οἶκον ἐμόν: τάχα δὴ με διαρραίσουσι καὶ αὐτόν.

τὸν δ' ἐπαλαστήσασα προσήδα Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη:
'ὦ πόποι, ἦ δὴ πολλὸν ἀποιχομένου Ὀδυσῆος
δεύῃ, ὃ κε μνηστῆρσιν ἀναιδέσι χεῖρας ἐφείη.
εἰ γὰρ νῦν ἐλθὼν δόμου ἐν πρώτῃσι θύρῃσι
σταίῃ, ἔχων πήληκα καὶ ἀσπίδα καὶ δύο δοῦρε,
τοῖος ἔων οἶόν μιν ἐγὼ τὰ πρῶτ' ἐνόησα
οἶκῳ ἐν ἡμετέρῳ πίνοντά τε τερπόμενόν τε,
ἔξ Ἐφύρης ἀνιόντα παρ' Ἴλου Μερμερίδα—
ᾧχετο γὰρ καὶ κεῖσε θοῆς ἐπὶ νηὸς Ὀδυσσεὺς
φάρμακον ἀνδροφόνον διζήμενος, ὅφρα οἱ εἴη
ιοὺς χρίεσθαι χαλκήρεας: ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν οὐ οἱ
δῶκεν, ἐπεὶ ῥα θεοὺς νεμεσίζετο αἰὲν ἐόντας,
ἀλλὰ πατήρ οἱ δῶκεν ἐμός: φιλέεσκε γὰρ αἰνῶς—
τοῖος ἔων μνηστῆρσιν ὁμιλήσειεν Ὀδυσσεύς:
πάντες κ' ὠκύμοροί τε γενοίατο πικρόγαμοί τε.
ἀλλ' ἦ τοι μὲν ταῦτα θεῶν ἐν γούνασι κεῖται

Then Telemachus - he full of vigour - said in answer:
"To you, my guest, I shall declare it with no fear of anyone.
My mother has announced that I am his - although this is something I myself
Do not know since no person can ever be completely sure whose offspring he is.
But I wish I was the lucky son of someone
Who had attained his old age with all his possessions
Instead of which - since you have asked me - I am a descendant
Of the most unlucky of mortals: he whom it is said I am descended from."

In answer, the goddess Athena - she with those beautiful blue eyes - said:
"The gods have decreed that hereafter your descendants
Will not be lacking in glory since Penelope has given birth to such a son as you.
But now, without fear of anyone, inform me about the following:
What have you to do with this crowd feasting here?
Is it a marriage, a banquet - or perhaps some public festival?
It is my opinion that they entertain themselves in this hall
In an overbearing, arrogant ill-mannered way
And any healthy man who happened to see them
Would be indignant at such disgraceful things."

Then Telemachus - he full of vigour - said in answer:
"I shall, since you, as a guest, have enquired and asked me about these things.
This family was wealthy - as it was steadfastly blameless
While he who was its man resided here.
But now it is different since the gods resolved to bring us bad luck
Having concealed him more completely than any other mortal
Which injures me worse than if they had conquered him
While he was among his comrades in the land of the Trojans

Or when his companions were nearby after that fighting was finished.
For then, the entire Achaean race would have prepared a tumulus for him
With his son inheriting his honourable name, whereas now
He is without an honourable name having been snatched from us by abductors
Who took him away silently and unobserved to leave me wounded and lamenting.

But it is not only because of him that I am wounded and grieving
But because I have other injuries from the bad luck given me by the gods.
They are those eminent ones, there, who rule in the islands
Of Dulichium, Samos, Zancythus of the forests
And those Chiefs of rugged Ithica itself
All of whom seek to court my mother and who are exhausting this household.
She cannot refuse what would be an odious marriage
As she cannot fittingly make an end of this matter
And so they are killing this household by gnawing away at it
Just as they could soon break me who is by myself into pieces."

Then Pallas Athena - angry at this - said to him:
"Before the gods! How great is the need here for the absent Odysseus -
For him to set about these disrespectful ones with his fists!
Would that he would arrive at the outer gate of this dwelling
With his helmet on and holding his shield and two spears
And as he was when I myself first saw him,
At my own abode, drinking and enjoying himself
He having set out from Ephyra and from Ilus son of Mermerus.
He had gone there in that fast ship of his
In search of a man-killing potion with which to poison his bronze-headed arrows:
But that person would not give it since he believed he would be blamed
By those gods who exist for aeons.

But my own father give it to him, for they were great comrades.
May it be the same Odysseus who engages those suitors
So that they all quickly die of the injuries he gives them
Because of that marriage they had hoped for!
But whether such things will be, depends on the gods."

Such quotations - and many more could be adduced - clearly illustrate the difference between a *paganus weltanschauung* and the religiosity of a revealed religion such as Christianity. In the *paganus weltanschauung*, there is an engagement with the world; feasting, drinking, enjoyment, combined not only with an awareness of the divine, of the gods, and thus of how the gods involve themselves with mortals, but also an appreciation of τὸ καλόν (the beautiful), of such things as manners, and how and why disrespectful ones should be personally punished by those they have disrespected or by their kin. In Christianity, there is a spiritual, and sometimes a literal, disengagement from the world, born from a belief in the possibility of attaining life everlasting; and a certain reliance on 'sacred' texts, studied and searched for guidance and for answers.

In regard to the *paganus weltanschauung* of ancient Greece, Sophocles expressed an important aspect of it:

οὐκ ἐκ θεῶν τὰ μῶρα καὶ γέλοια χρὴ χανόντα κλαίειν ὕστερ’

"If what is of the gods amuses you, be assured that lamentation will follow your mirth." [7]

Balanced as such an aspect is by Sappho:

ἄστερες μὲν ἀμφὶ κάλαν σελάνναν
ἄψ ἀπυκρύπτοισι φάεννον εἶδος
ὅπποτα πλήθοισα μάλιστα λάμπῃ
γᾶν [...] ἀργυρία

Awed by her brightness
Stars near the beautiful moon
Cover their own shining faces
When she lights earth
With her silver brilliance
Of love... [8]

While the author of the Poemandres tractate expressed another aspect:

ὁ δὲ Νοῦς ὁ θεός, ἀρρενόθηλυσ ὢν, ζωὴ καὶ φῶς ὑπάρχων, ἀπεκύησε
λόγῳ ἕτερον Νοῦν δημιουργόν, ὃς θεὸς τοῦ πυρὸς καὶ πνεύματος ὢν,
ἐδημιούργησε διοικητὰς τινὰς ἑπτὰ, ἐν κύκλοις περιέχοντας τὸν
αἰσθητὸν κόσμον, καὶ ἡ διοίκησις αὐτῶν εἰμαρμένη καλεῖται.

Theos, the perceiviation, male-and-female, being Life and phaos,
whose logos brought forth another perceiviation, an artisan, who -
theos of Fire and pneuma - fashioned seven viziers to surround the
perceptible cosmic order in spheres and whose administration is
described as fate.

As Aeschylus expressed yet another aspect centuries before:

ἄλλ’ εἶμι κὰν δόμοισι κωκύσουσ’ ἐμὴν
Ἀγαμέμνονός τε μοῖραν. ἀρκείτω βίος.
ἰὼ ξένοι,
οὔτοι δυσοίζω θάμνον ὥς ὄρνις φόβῳ
ἄλλως: θανούσῃ μαρτυρεῖτέ μοι τόδε,
ὅταν γυνὴ γυναικὸς ἀντ’ ἐμοῦ θάνῃ,
ἀνὴρ τε δυσδάμαρτος ἀντ’ ἀνδρὸς πέσῃ.
ἐπιξενοῦμαι ταῦτα δ’ ὥς θανουμένη.

Now I will go to that family chanting an elegy about the Destiny
Of Agamemnon and me. What I have lived has been sufficient.
My friends:

I am in no way different from a fearful bird, suspicious
Of a bush. Give testimony to this about my dying:

For me, a woman, another woman shall die -
For her man, unluckily-wed, another man will fall.
I - about to die - you received as a guest. [9]

An aspect balanced by Sappho:

φαίνεται μοι κῆνος ἴσος θεοῖσιν
ἔμμεν' ὦνερ, ὅττις ἐνάντιός τοι
ἰσδάνει καὶ πλάσιον ἄδυ φωνεί-
σας ὑπακούει
καὶ γελαίσας ἰμέροεν, τό μ' ἦ μὰν
καρδίαν ἐν στήθεσιν ἐπτόαισεν·
ὥς γὰρ ἔς σ' ἴδω βρόχε', ὥς με φώναι-
σ' οὐδ' ἐν ἔτ' εἴκει,
ἀλλ' ἄκαν μὲν γλῶσσα <ἔαγε>, λέπτον
δ' αὐτίκα χρωὶ πῦρ ὑπαδεδρόμηκεν,
ὀππάτεσσι δ' οὐδ' ἐν ὄρημ', ἐπιρρόμ-
βεισι δ' ἄκουαι,
<έκαδε> μ' ἴδρωσ ψῦχρος κακχέεται, τρόμος δὲ
παῖσαν ἄγρει, χλωροτέρα δὲ ποίας
ἔμμι, τεθνάκην δ' ὀλίγω 'πιδεύης
φαίνομ' ἔμ' αὐται

I see he who sits near you as an equal of the gods
For he can closely listen to your delightful voice
And that seductive laugh
That makes the heart behind my breasts to tremble.
Even when I glimpse you for a moment
My tongue is stilled as speech deserts me
While a delicate fire is beneath my skin -
My eyes cannot see, then,
When I hear only a whirling sound
As I shivering, sweat
Because all of me trembles;
I become paler than drought-grass
And nearer to death... [10]

In retrospection, it would therefore seem that the *paganus weltanschauung* evident in the writings of Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Cicero and many other classical authors, and the *paganus mysticism* evident in many of the tractates of the *Corpus Hermeticum* [11], might be, when combined, more human in physis, more balanced, and could possibly be more productive of a healthy *ψυχή*, than revealed religions such as Christianity, albeit (i) that the revealed religion of Christianity has evolved, over some two thousand years, to be more empathic, more compassionate, than such a Greco-Roman *weltanschauung*; and (ii) that the Greco-Roman *weltanschauung* has not undergone any evolution at all, and

(iii) that such a Greco-Roman weltanschauung and such a Hellenic pagan mysticism have hitherto been somewhat mis-understood often because of translations of ancient texts which, through an injudicious choice of words, impose modern meanings on such texts resulting in a retrospective re-interpretation.

Given this mis-understanding, it seems pertinent to examine the Greco-Roman weltanschauung in more detail.

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Notes

[1] The Greek text used is that of A.D. Nock & A-J. Festugiere, *Corpus Hermeticum*, Tome I, Third Edition, 1972.

[2] Notes on the translation:

insightful. Regarding ἐννοέω cf. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 1088, εἰ σὺ μὴ τόδ' ἐννοεῖς ἐγὼ λέγω σοι καὶ τάδ' οὐκ ἔρεῖς ψύθη, "If you had not observed this, then it is I who have told you - and you cannot pronounce it false."

Here, as in Poemandres 3 - νοῆσαι τὴν τούτων φύσιν, "to apprehend the physis of beings" - the sense is of having a perceptiveness, and thus of having, or of acquiring, a particular apprehension (cf. *noesis*, below) of certain things; whereas in the Agamemnon, the Chorus contrast their direct, clear, observation of something - their perception and thus their understanding - with the intuitive perceptions and prophecies of Cassandra, going on (vv. 1111-1112) to say to her, οὐπω ξυνῆκα: νῦν γὰρ ἐξ αἰνιγμάτων ἐπαργέμοισι θεσφάτοις ἀμηχανῶ, that the enigma of her unclear oracles are for the moment beyond their cunning, their understanding.

uncovered. As elsewhere in Corpus Hermeticum - qv. Poemandres 30, XI:1 et seq - ἀληθής is not something which is 'true' in some abstract disputable sense but rather what is uncovered, revealed, real, demonstrable, an actuality, and thus 'clear'. In personal terms - qv. John 1:14, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθεία - ἀληθεία is veritas: honesty, truthfulness, sincerity.

noesis. The process or the act of noetic apprehension. In the Corpus Hermeticum, νοέω and νοερός are often technical (esoteric) and related terms implying a particular type of apprehension, and thus do not necessarily denote what English words such as 'understand', intelligence, and 'intellectual' now so often denote. Qv. tractate XIII:22, "through noesis you have obtained knowledge about yourself and our father," νοερώς ἔγνωσ σεαυτὸν καὶ τὸν πατέρα τὸν ἡμέτερον, which requires contextual interpretation, as at XIII:2, σοφία νοερά, noetic sapientia, with noetic sapientia implying in that tractate

that the knowledge and understanding that is noetically acquired transcends - or at least is different from - the ordinary understanding acquired both (a) through observation of and deductions concerning phenomena and (b) through the use of denotata. Cf. the metaphysical terms νοῦς νοερός, νοῦς οὐσιώδης, and νοῦς ζωτικός in *Procli Diadochi In Platonis Timaeum Commentari*, Volume 5, Book 4, 245-247; and *Procli in Platonis Parmenidem Commentaria*, II 733 and IV 887.

my logos. Reading ὁ γὰρ λόγος μου φθάνει with the MSS and not the emendation of Nock. As in the title of XIII and elsewhere, λόγος could be translated here as 'discourse'.

[3] The Greek text is from NA28. Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th revised edition. Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart. 2012

[4] The Peloponnesian War, Book II, chapter 6

[5] I prefer to use the term *paganus* - a transliteration of the classical Latin, denoting a connection to Nature, to the natural, more rural, world - in preference to 'pagan' since *paganus* is, in my view and in respect of the Greco-Roman ethos, more accurate given what the term 'pagan' now often denotes.

[6] The Homeric epithet associated with Athena - γλαυκῶπις - is conventionally translated as 'with bright (or gleaming or grey) eyes' which is somewhat nondescript and rather unfitting for a goddess. However, Herodotus (4.108) uses γλαυκόν in reference to a tribe called Budini, living East of the Danube river, with the suggestion being - qv. the description of Tacitus in *Germanorum* I:4, "truces et caerulei oculi, rutilae comae" - of a blue-eyed, red-haired people. Hence my translation of the Homeric epithet as "with beautiful blue eyes" with 'beautiful' appropriately suggestive of a deep-blue and thus of being 'penetratingly' divine.

[7] *Ichneutae*, 369-370.

[8] Fragment 34.

[9] *Agamemnon*, 1313-1320.

[10] Fragment 31.

[11] Tractates such as *Ιερός Λόγος* (III), *Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς* (IV), *Νοῦς πρὸς Ἑρμῆν* (XI), and *Ερμού του τρισεγγίστου προς τον υιόν Τάτ εν ὀρει λόγος ἀπόκρυφος περί παλιγγενεσίας και σιγῆς επαγγελίας* (XIII).

Chapter Two

The spiritual weltanschauung expounded in the Gospel of John - with the requirement that individuals trust the person of Jesus of Nazareth and believe that the Passion, the death, the Resurrection, and the Ascension of Jesus are divine σημεῖα (signs, omens) with Jesus, presented as a mortal, therefore being the Son of God - has, over two thousand years, significantly evolved.

The Johannine weltanschauung with its very human Jesus and its requirement of personal trust in a living being was (some might say, unfortunately) combined with other sources - including the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke - with a new weltanschauung and thence a new religion thus developed codified as that religion was in creeds, declarations, sermons, and dogma by those claiming to be the rightful heirs of such friends of Jesus as Simon Peter, and by those such as Paul of Tarsus who described himself as an apostle. The natural consequences of such codification, such claims of authority and such supra-personal organization, were - given our jumelle human physis - schisms, sects, accusations of heresy, persecution, torture, killings, wars, together with reformation and counter-reformation. That is, centuries of personal suffering deriving from individuals, groups, organizations, 'churches', denominations, and sects having a certitude of knowing regarding their particular interpretation and beliefs. For God - or so they believed - was 'on their side'. A belief fostered by their reliance on and their interpretation of what came to known as 'the Scriptures', the books of the Old and the New Testaments, dealing as those books mostly did with stories about those people the Greek-speaking Romans described as Hebrews. [1]

There thus developed, over centuries and in Europe, a belief - manifest initially in the Code of Justinian (529-534 CE) - that Christianity should both directly and indirectly influence the civil authority, a practice evident in that Code which began *In Nomine Domini Nostri Jesu Christi* and which influence over secular affairs continued for over a millennia with witnesses in courts of law, for instance, giving their evidence by holding or touching a copy of the Scriptures and taking an oath affirming that the 'Almighty God' of Christianity was their witness that what they were about to relate was the truth.

In effect, the dominant ethos of Europe, and of European colonies and émigré lands, was not only patriarchal - since both spiritual and civil authority resided in masculous cliques - but also in contrast to, and often the direct opposite of, the paganus ethos of ancient Greece and Rome, evident as that paganus ethos was in many things including:

- (i) the appreciation of personal virtues such as τὸ καλόν, ἀρετή, and τὸ ἀγαθόν,
- (ii) avoidance of ὕβρις,

(iii) an appreciation of πάθει μάθος,
(iv) an apprehension - intuitive or philosophical - of what it is convenient to describe as acausality; that is, of how beings, their physis, and their change(s) cannot be correctly understood by positing a primal cause (such as God) which or who is or the origin of such beings and which or who causally determines or can determine, and/or 'know', all the changes of such beings, past-present-future.

The personal classical virtues of τὸ καλόν, ἀρετή, and τὸ ἀγαθὸν related to pre-eminent individuals: τὸ καλόν, the beautiful, to individuals of beauty and individuals who manifest a well-balanced demeanour [2]; ἀρετή, arête, to individuals of meritorious conduct, valour and courage; τὸ ἀγαθόν, the good, to individuals of honour, manners, and nobility. The classical pagan ethos thus celebrated such individuals, measured other individuals against them, with such virtues being defined - manifest - by such individuals. [3] However, the Christian ethos that dominated Europe for centuries measured individuals against 'the will of God' and against those individuals who were deemed to be examples of that will, with the supra-personal belief being that 'the will of God' could be found in the Scriptures and/or learned from those in positions of authority within the Christian Church who had themselves derived their understanding from particular interpretations of those Scriptures, either their own or, more often, those of others, past and present. [4]

The classical avoidance of ὕβρις (hubris) - expounded in works by Aeschylus, and in the Antigone and Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles - related the ancient apprehension, enshrined in ancestral tradition and born from centuries of personal experience, that certain deeds were unwise because they upset the natural and necessary cosmic balance and thus tended to result in misfortune for individuals or for families or for communities. In contrast, in Christianity "good" deeds and "bad" or "sinful" deeds were defined by God with his decision as to what is good and bad having been related to us in Scripture.

The classical appreciation of πάθει μάθος - described in the Agamemnon of Aeschylus [5] - related the understanding that pathei-mathos has a numinous (a divine) authority; which is that wisdom and understanding arises or can arise from one's own personal experience, from formative experiences that involve some hardship, some grief, some personal suffering. In contrast, in the Christian ethos numinous authority derives from God, can be found in Scripture, and learned from those in positions of authority within the Christian Church or from those who are believed to possess an understanding of the will of God.

An Appreciation Of Acausality

The classical appreciation of acausality - and thus an important metaphysical difference between the classical and the Christian approach - is perhaps best illustrated by stark examples of communal sacrifice of an individual or

individuals undertaken in order to try and re-establish the natural balance and thus bring good fortune for a community and dispel whatever misfortune has befallen them or may befall them.

As described in both classical myth and in the Agamemnon of Aeschylus, Agamemnon sacrifices his daughter Iphigenia:

ἔτλα δ' οὖν
θυτῆρ γενέσθαι θυγατρός,
γυναικοποιῶν πολέμων ἄρωγ' ἄν
καὶ προτέλεια ναῶν.
λιτὰς δὲ καὶ κληδόνας πατρώους
παρ' οὐδέν αἰῶ τε παρθένειον
ἔθεντο φιλόμαχοι βραβῆς [...]

τὰ δ' ἔνθεν οὔτ' εἶδον οὔτ' ἐννέπω:
τέχνη δὲ Κάλχαντος οὐκ ἄκραντοι.
Δίκα δὲ τοῖς μὲν παθοῦσ-
ιν μαθεῖν ἐπιρρέπει:
τὸ μέλλον δ', ἐπεὶ γένοιτ', ἄν κλύοις: πρὸ χαιρέτω:
ἴσον δὲ τῷ προστένειν.

So he dared
To become the sacrificer of his daughter
To aid a battle to avenge a woman
By so consecrating the ships.
Her warning of 'Father!', her supplications,
Her virgin state - were counted as nothing
By those commanders lusting for battle [...]

I did not see, and do not speak of, what followed these things.
But the art of Calchas was not so incomplete:
The goddess, Judgement, favours someone learning from adversity.
But I shall hear of what will be, after it comes into being:
Before then, I leave it,
Otherwise, it is the same as a premature grieving.

(Agamemnon, vv. 224-230, 248-250)

For this sacrifice and for other deeds, Agamemnon himself is later killed by his wife, Clytemnestra, who describes the sacrifice (v. 1420) of her beloved child as a pollution, and which pollution of the numinous could - according to custom - only be removed by the shedding of blood, usually and if possible that of the perpetrator. [6]

Centuries later, Plutarch and Livy recounted how Fabius Maximus, Pontifex of Rome, had - following the defeat of the Roman army by Hannibal at the battle of Cannae - sanctioned the sacrifice of a disgraced Vestal Virgin by having her

buried alive (stupri compertae et altera sub terra, uti mos est, ad portam Collinam necata fuerat, according to Livy, Book XXII). This particular sacrifice - and other sacrifices - seemed, unlike the sacrifice made by Agamemnon, to be successful since Hannibal did not attack Rome and was later defeated by Scipio Africanus at the battle of Zama.

Why the apparent disparity in the outcome to two similar acts of propitiation? Because such disparity - such a manifestation of acausality, of the intuition of there being no absolutely determinable or pre-determined causal outcome to a mortal deed - is an essential if somewhat neglected and rather obscure aspect of the classical paganus weltanschauung; an aspect described mythologically by Sophocles in *Antigone*, 1338:

ὥς πεπρωμένης οὐκ ἔστι θνητοῖς συμφορᾶς ἀπαλλαγή.

Mortals cannot be delivered from the misfortunes of their fate

Philosophically, it was described in a fragment (80, Diels-Kranz) attributed to Heraclitus:

εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἔόντα ξυνόν καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ
γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεῶν

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord δίκη, and that beings are naturally born by discord.

Also by Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book 5, 1015a,

καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐνυπάρχουσα
πῶς ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ

For physis is inherent change either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.

That is, there is no perfect, outside agency or primal cause which consciously and in a cause-and-effect manner directs such change:

ὥστε ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐνέργεια, μακαριότητι διαφέρουσα, θεωρητικὴ ἂν εἴη:
καὶ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων δὴ ἡ ταύτη συγγενεστάτη εὐδαιμονικωτάτη.
σημεῖον δὲ καὶ τὸ μὴ μετέχειν τὰ λοιπὰ ζῶα εὐδαιμονίας.
Nicomachean Ethics (Book X) 1178b.22

Therefore the activity of theos, excelling others in bliss, is wordless-awareness [θεωρέω] and the nearest thing to that among mortals arises from good-fortune [εὐδαιμονία]. *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book X, 1178b.22

In modern metaphysical terms, there is a mortal apprehension that Being, and

certain beings, are not or cannot be subject to, nor explainable, in terms of causality, in terms of a cause having a particular effect. Nor explained in terms of there being a primal cause which causes all effects. [7] However, such a belief in causality is the *raison d'être* of all religions and doctrines which posit a primal cause (such as an omnipotent creator-God) who brings-into-being and who governs and determines the changes, the changement - the *polemos*, the Destiny, the fate, the fortunes, the *wyrd* - of mortals and other beings.

Less metaphysically, Christianity - along with other religions or *weltanschauungen* which posit an omnipotent, unchanging, creator - assumes or projects a perfect form (ἰδέα/εἶδος) onto the cosmos which mortals have to strive to attain in order to gain some-thing (some ἰδέα/εἶδος) such as life everlasting in some-place (some ἰδέα/εἶδος) such as Heaven, and with their existing a definite, causal, eternal, means - such as scriptures or revelation or 'being chosen' - which describes or explains how such an ἰδέα/εἶδος can be attained. However, in the pagan *weltanschauung* of ancient Greece the activity of *theos* is not scriptures and revelations to his 'chosen people' but rather, as Aristotle noted, a wordless-awareness; and thus for mortals of there existing not the necessity of faith and belief in such scriptures and revelations but rather a personal quest - an *anados*, ἄνοδος - which by utilizing such things as λόγος (reason, discourse) and νοῦς (perceivation) is a quest for understanding and which understanding includes an appreciation of the numinous:

παραγίνομαι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ὁ Νοῦς τοῖς ὁσίοις καὶ ἀγαθοῖς καὶ καθαροῖς
καὶ ἐλεήμοσι, τοῖς εὐσεβοῦσι, καὶ ἡ παρουσία μου γίνεται βοήθεια,
καὶ εὐθὺς τὰ πάντα γνωρίζουσι καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἰλάσκονται
ἀγαπητικῶς καὶ εὐχαριστοῦσιν εὐλογοῦντες καὶ ὑμνοῦντες
τεταγμένως πρὸς αὐτὸν τῇ στοργῇ

I, perceivation, attend to those of respectful deeds, the honourable, the refined, the compassionate, those aware of the numinous; to whom my being is a help so that they soon acquire knowledge of the whole and are affectionately gracious toward the father, fondly celebrating in song his position. (Poemandres 22)

Which "fondly celebrating in song" the *theos* whose being (existence) is a help, is quite different from the Christian faith in and obedience to an unobserved, unobservable, omnipotent God.

A difference also apparent when one compares the sentiment expressed in tractate VIII of the *Corpus Hermeticum* - with its "influencing impression" and empathy and its three θεοὶ (gods) - with a saying by Jesus as narrated in the Gospel of John.

Tractate VIII, 5,

τὸ δὲ τρίτον ζῶιον, ὁ ἄνθρωπος κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ κόσμου γενόμενος, νοῦν κατὰ βούλησιν τοῦ πατρὸς ἔχων παρὰ τὰ ἄλλα ἐπίγεια ζῶια, οὐ μόνον πρὸς τὸν δεύτερον θεὸν συμπάθειαν ἔχων, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἔννοιαν τοῦ πρώτου· τοῦ μὲν γὰρ αἰσθεται ὡς σώματος, τοῦ δὲ ἔννοιαν λαμβάνει ὡς ἄσωμάτου καὶ νοῦ, τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ.

Now, as to the third living being, mortals, brought-into-being as eikon of Kosmos and who, because of the deliberations of the father and beyond the other living beings on Earth, have perceivance and also empathy with the second theos and perception of the first. For of the one there is apprehension as of the corporeal, while of the other there is an influencing impression as of the incorporeal and as of a noble perceivance.

John, 3:36,

ὁ πιστεύων εἰς τὸν υἱὸν ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον· ὁ δὲ ἀπειθῶν τῷ υἱῷ οὐκ ὄψεται ζωὴν, ἀλλ' ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ θεοῦ μένει ἐπ' αὐτόν.

Whomsoever trusts in the son shall have life everlasting but whomsoever does not trust the son shall not see that life; rather, the anger of Theos [God] abides on them.

A Mortal Wordless-Awareness

The mention of empathy - of a mortal wordless-awareness - and of Kosmos (κόσμος) and 'the father' (πατὴρ) in tractate VIII form a natural beginning for developing an ontology, an epistemology, and an understanding of ethics, that while having a foundation in the insights of the classical paganus weltanschauung may nevertheless represent an evolution of that weltanschauung. A natural beginning, since several of the tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum - for example, I (Poemandres), III, and XI - present or attempt to present that weltanschauung in a metaphysical way, beyond the deities of classical mythos. [8]

In VIII:5, mortals are described as 'eikon of Kosmos' and as having a συμπάθεια with this 'second theos'. In I:6 (Poemandres, section 6) and I:9, theos the father, the first theos, is well-described:

Οὕτω γινώθι· τὸ ἐν σοὶ βλέπον καὶ ἀκοῦον, λόγος κυρίου, ὁ δὲ νοῦς πατὴρ θεός. οὐ γὰρ διίστανται ἀπ' ἀλλήλων· ἔνωσις γὰρ τούτων ἐστὶν ἡ ζωὴ. I:6

Then know that within you - who hears and sees - is logos kyrios, although perceivance is theos the father. They are not separated, one from the other, because their union is Life.

ὁ δὲ Νοῦς ὁ θεός, ἀρρενόθηλυσ ὢν, ζωὴ καὶ φῶς ὑπάρχων, ἀπεκύησε λόγῳ ἕτερον Νοῦν δημιουργόν, ὃς θεὸς τοῦ πυρὸς καὶ πνεύματος ὢν, ἐδημιούργησε διοικητὰς τινὰς ἑπτὰ, ἐν κύκλοις περιέχοντας τὸν αἰσθητὸν κόσμον, καὶ ἡ διοίκησις αὐτῶν εἰμαρμένη καλεῖται. I:9

Theos, the perceivation, male-and-female, being Life and phaos, whose logos brought forth another perceivation, an artisan, who - theos of Fire and pneuma - fashioned seven viziers to surround the perceptible cosmic order in spheres and whose administration is described as fate.

Theos is not only perceivation (νοῦς) but also both male and female (ἀρρενόθηλυσ) and which bifurcation explains what, in many of the tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum, the term πατὴρ metaphysically implies. Which is not a literal, anthropomorphic father, but 'the numen of all beings' (qv. III:1, δόξα πάντων ὁ θεός) and the progenitor - the origin, the foundation - of all being, of all that exists (qv. III:1, ἀρχὴ τῶν ὄντων ὁ θεός, and XI:3, πηγὴ μὲν οὖν πάντων ὁ θεός) and who by logos (λόγος) forms, presences, all being (qv. I:31, ὁ λόγῳ συστησάμενος τὰ ὄντα).

Thus to equate, as some have done, the πατὴρ (the male-and-female theos) of the Corpus Hermeticum - or, to be pedantic, the πατὴρ of tractates I, III, IV, VI, VIII, XI, XII, XIII - with the Father (God) as described in the New Testament is in my view a profound mistake.

The description of the male-and-female theos as the father raises the important issue of denotatum [9], and thus the limitation of words and the matter of interpretation of words especially in translations, and thence to why a reliance on written texts, as in Christianity, may well be a mistake.

Moreover, since theos of the Hermetica is perceivation and since - as the tractates make clear - we mortals, we human beings, possess the ability, the faculty, of perceivation then we can utilize that ability together with a wordless-awareness (empathy) to discover the theos (ὁ θεός) within ourselves; a process which is described in the Poemandres tractate as an anados (ἀνοδος) which is the journey through and up the seven spheres which symbolize our material separation from the realms of the divine and thus our separation from immortality.

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Notes

[1] Qv. Pausanias, Book I, chapter 5, where he writes of Hadrian - whose virtues he extols - who crushed a rebellion by a Hebrew tribe:

Ἀδριανοῦ τῆς τε ἐς τὸ θεῖον τιμῆς ἐπὶ πλεῖστον ἐλθόντος καὶ τῶν
ἀρχομένων ἐς εὐδαιμονίαν τὰ μέγιστα ἐκάστοις παρασχομένου καὶ ἐς
μὲν πόλεμον οὐδένα ἐκούσιος κατέστη Ἑβραίους δὲ τοὺς ὑπὲρ Σύρων
ἐχειρώσατο ἀποστάντας

[2] In respect of ancient Greek culture, τὸ καλὸν refers, in terms of individuals, to not only physical beauty - the beautiful - but also to a particular demeanour indicative of a well-balanced, noble, personal character, qv. Xenophon, *Hellenica*, Book V, 3.9,

πολλοὶ δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ τῶν περιοίκων ἐθελονταὶ καλοὶ κάγαθοι
ἠκολούθουν, καὶ ξένοι τῶν τροφίμων καλουμένων, καὶ νόθοι τῶν
Σπαρτιατῶν, μάλα εὐειδεῖς τε καὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ πόλει καλῶν οὐκ ἄπειροι

[3] Qv. Seneca, *Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales*, LXXI, 4

Summum bonum est quod honestum est; et quod magis admireris:
unum bonum est, quod honestum est, cetera falsa et adulterina bona
sunt

The greatest good is that which is honourable. Also - and you may wonder at this - only that which is honourable is good, with all other 'goods' simply false and deceitful.

Cf. Cicero, *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*, II, 45f

Honestum igitur id intellegimus, quod tale est, ut detracta omni utilitate sine ullis praemiis fructibusve per se ipsum possit iure laudari. quod quale sit, non tam definitione, qua sum usus, intellegi potest, quamquam aliquantum potest, quam communi omnium iudicio et optimi cuiusque studiis atque factis, qui permulta ob eam unam causam faciunt, quia decet, quia rectum, quia honestum est, etsi nullum consecuturum emolumentum vident.

[4] There is a similarity between this Christian apprehension and that described in certain hermetic texts, such as the beginning of tractate VI of the Corpus Hermeticum:

τὸ ἀγαθόν, ᾧ Ἀσκληπιέ, ἐν οὐδενί ἐστιν, εἰ μὴ ἐν μόνῳ τῷ θεῷ,
μᾶλλον δὲ τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ θεὸς αἰεὶ· εἰ δὲ οὕτως, οὐσίαν
εἶναι δεῖ πάσης κινήσεως καὶ γενέσεως

Asclepius, the noble exists in no-thing: only in theos alone; indeed, theos is, of himself and always, what is noble. If so, then it can only be the quidditas of all changement and of geniture.

I incline toward the view that such hermetic weltanschauungen influenced the development of early Christianity, rather than vice versa.

[5]

Ζῆνα δέ τις προφρόνως ἐπινίκια κλάζων
τεύξεται φρενῶν τὸ πᾶν:
ὄν φρονεῖν βροτοὺς ὁδώ-
σαντα, τὸν πάθει μάθος
θέντα κυρίως ἔχειν.

If anyone, from reasoning, exclaims loudly that victory of Zeus,
Then they have acquired an understanding of all these things;
Of he who guided mortals to reason,
Who laid down that this possesses authority:
Learning from adversity.

Agamemnon, 174-183

The Appendix, *From Aeschylus To The Numinous Way: The Numinous Authority of πάθει μάθος*, places the quotation in context.

[6] An often unappreciated aspect of the drama is the defiance and strength shown by Clytemnestra, who is described as a "woman with a man's resolve" (v. 11), who presents herself as a "most ancient fierce Avenger," (1499) and who says, after her killing of Agamemnon, that only "he who can overcome me in a fight will command me." (1423)

[7] In a simplified way and in terms of mythos, this lack of a pre-determinable outcome - a lack of one primal causation - can be understood as the divergence of opinion and deeds among the classical gods in respect of mortals, with an apposite example occurring in The Odyssey with the goddess Athena supporting and helping Odysseus while Poseidon was unrelenting in his rage at Odysseus. In addition Zeus, Chief among the gods, does not act unilaterally in respect of Odysseus but - in typical Hellenic fashion - says to Athena (Book I, vv. 76-77) that there will a gathering of the gods in order to consider the matter of his return to his home, ἀλλ' ἄγεθ' ἡμεῖς οἶδε περιφραζώμεθα πάντες νόστον.

[8] I have, in my *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates* translated and written commentaries on those tractates which I consider are metaphysically important in respect of understanding this development beyond, yet which (unlike some tractates) retain the essence of, the mythos of the classical paganus weltanschauungen.

[9] I use the term denotatum - from the Latin, denotare - in accord with its general meaning which is "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted."

Chapter Three

That various tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum present a weltanschauung which is Greco-Roman and not something akin to Christianity is evident in tractate XI:3,

Ἡ δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ σοφία τί ἔστι;
Τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ καλὸν καὶ εὐδαιμονία καὶ ἡ πᾶσα ἀρετὴ καὶ ὁ αἰὼν.
[1]

But the Sophia of theos is what?
The noble, the beautiful, good fortune, arête, and Aion.

That is, the sophia, the sapientia [2], of theos is presented not in the 'word of God' (scriptures) but in the personal Greek virtues of τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, and ἀρετὴ, and in the metaphysical principle denoted by the term αἰών. [3] Aion brought Kosmos into being, and is the quidditas of all being (qv. XI:3, οὐσία δὲ ὁ αἰών) where by quidditas here is meant the ἀρχέτυπον of entities, the natural presencing of particular beings, and which natural (wordless) presencing is often perceived by mortals by means of - or as - a particular physis, whence our perception and understanding of the character or nature of a particular being or entity, with physis itself thus an eikon (εἰκὼν) of being (qv. I:31, οὗ πᾶσα φύσις εἰκὼν ἔφν). In addition, sapientia is a revealing of all beings (qv. III:1, σοφία εἰς δεῖξιν ἀπάντων ὧν) by means such as physis.

Given such metaphysical beginnings, and the problems associated with denotata, it is possible to suggest an ontology described by terms which are unrelated to gender, unrelated to past anthropomorphisms, and have no or few modern interpretations making them less liable to be the genesis of contemporaneous misunderstandings.

The Acausality Hypothesis

What has hitherto been denoted in the Corpus Hermeticum by the male-and-female theos, the progenitor - the origin, the foundation, the father, the artisan [4] - of all that exists, is Being, from whence beings come-into-being; a process described in XI:2 in terms of the metaphysical principles Aeon, Kosmos, and Kronos:

ὁ θεὸς αἰῶνα ποιεῖ, ὁ αἰὼν δὲ τὸν κόσμον, ὁ κόσμος δὲ χρόνον, ὁ χρόνος δὲ γένεσιν. τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ ὡς περ οὐσία ἐστὶ τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, ἡ εὐδαιμονία, ἡ σοφία· τοῦ δὲ αἰῶνος ἡ ταυτότης· τοῦ δὲ

κόσμου ἢ τάξις· τοῦ δὲ χρόνου ἢ μεταβολή· τῆς δὲ γενέσεως ἢ ζωῇ καὶ ὁ θάνατος.

Theos brought Aion into being; Aion: Kosmos; Kosmos, Kronos; Kronos, geniture. It is as if the quidditas of theos is actuality, honour, the beautiful, good fortune, Sophia. Of Aion, identity; of Kosmos, arrangement; of Kronos, variation; of geniture, Life and Death.

Kronos is brought into existence by Kosmos, with Kronos the origin of geniture - of the life, the spawning and propagation and variance of beings - and also of the death of those beings. [5]

If instead of the term Being we use the term 'acausal', then the acausal is the origin of - but distinct from - the causality that is denoted by Kronos and which causality is most evident to us in the limited duration of our mortal lives. Aion is the acausality of the perceived and perceivable Cosmos: limitless and encompassing all causality, past, present and future, and - in causal terms - never-ending. Living mortal beings, since they have acausality (the theos, ὁ θεὸς) within them, and are an eikon of the cosmos [6] and also possess the faculties, the abilities, of perceivance (νοῦς) and wordless-awareness (συμπάθεια) have a being which is both acausal and causal.

The paganus weltanschauung is thus one which posits that our being, and thence our physis, are a presencing of Being and an eikon, a microcosm, of the acausality and causality which constitutes the cosmos:

κόσμον δὲ θείου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ζώιου ἀθανάτου ζώιον θνητόν, καὶ ὁ μὲν κόσμος τῶν ζώιων ἐπλεονέκτει τὸ ἀείζωον, καὶ τοῦ κόσμου τὸν λόγον καὶ τὸν νοῦν. θεατῆς γὰρ ἐγένετο τοῦ ἔργου τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ ἄνθρωπος, καὶ ἐθαύμασε καὶ ἐγνώρισε τὸν ποιήσαντα.

A cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings, for just as the ever-living cosmic order had an advantage over them so did they have an advantage over other living beings in their cosmos because of Logos and Perceivance. Thus did mortals perceive the works of theos, admire them, gaining knowledge of their creator.

That is, human beings re-present, presence, the 'divine body' and are, of themselves, a reflection of the cosmic order itself. This, and the preceding line, express a fundamental part of ancient paganism and Renaissance hermeticism: human beings as a microcosm of the cosmic order and the divine. Hence why the twenty-sixth chapter of the book *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda* by Marsilii Ficini (published in 1489 CE) has as its heading: Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona, "How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because

cosmically aligned."

The acausality of the cosmos is manifest in Life, geniture, and in identity, in the variety, the type, and variation of living beings and their physis. Causality is manifest in the perceptable, the harmonious, the physical cosmic order and in the process that is the changement of that order and part of which changement is the inevitable death of physical living beings, with only we mortals, we human beings - so far as we know - having a physis such that we possess the capability - the gift - to become immortal:

ὅσοι δὲ τῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ δωρεᾶς μετέσχον, οὗτοι [...] κατὰ σύγκρισιν τῶν ἔργων ἀθάνατοι ἀντὶ θνητῶν εἰσι, πάντα ἐμπεριλαβόντες τῷ ἑαυτῶν νοί, τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς, τὰ ἐν οὐρανῷ, καὶ εἴ τί ἐστιν ὑπὲρ οὐρανόν· τοσοῦτον ἑαυτοὺς ὑψώσαντες, εἶδον τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ ἰδόντες συμφορὰν ἡγήσαντο τὴν ἐνθάδε διατριβήν· καταφρονήσαντες πάντων τῶν σωματικῶν καὶ ἀσωμάτων ἐπὶ τὸ ἐν καὶ μόνον σπεύδουσιν.

And yet [...] those who partake to that gift from theos become, when set against their deeds, immortal instead of mortal. For they with their perceivance apprehend the Earthly, the Heavenly, and what is beyond the Heavens. Having gone so far, they perceive what is honourable, and, having so perceived, they regard what preceded this as a delay, as a problem and, with little regard for whatever is embodied and disembodied, they strive toward the Monas. [7]

Understood thus, we are, ontologically, emanations of and presence Being, and are a connexion to the cosmos - to other presencings of Being - through, in terms of epistemology, not only reason (λόγος), perceivance (νοῦς) and wordless-awareness (συμπάθεια, empathy) but also through τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, and ἀρετή, through the beautiful and the well-balanced, the valourous and honourable, and those who possess arête, all of which are combined in one Greek phrase: καλὸς κάγαθός, which means those who conduct themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner and who thus manifest - because of their innate physis or through pathei-mathos or through a certain type of education or learning - nobility of character. Which Greek phrase expresses the ethics, the high personal standards, of the ancient paganus weltanschauung we have been discussing, and which standards naturally resulted in two things. First, in only a minority of individuals in a particular πόλις or civitas - community, tribe, clan, or society - manifesting such standards in their daily lives, with such a minority often forming a natural, and ruling, aristocracy. Second, that it was often a person who lived (and was prepared to die) by such high standards who, because of their character or based on a reputation established through valourous and noble deeds, became or was chosen as the leader or the chieftain of some community, tribe, clan, or society.

For the quintessence of such a weltanschauung, of the paganus ethos, is that ethics are presented in and by particular living individuals, not in some written

text whether philosophical or otherwise, not by some proposed schemata, and not in some revelation from some deity. Which pagan ethics, when evolved - combined with the pagan mysticism evident in the Corpus Hermeticum and the cultural pathei-mathos of the past two millennia [8] presented through the insight of empathy - leads us to a modern pagan weltanschauung.

ooo

Notes

[1] I follow the MSS, which have τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, and εὐδαιμονία, all of which Nock omits.

[2] The English term 'wisdom' is not, given its modern connotations, an appropriate translation here of the Greek σοφία. Especially as the suggestion, as often elsewhere in the Corpus Hermeticum (qv. I: 29, et seq) is of a metaphysical principle or 'archetype', as is the case with Aion (αἰών) here, in tractate XI.

[3] Thus once again we encounter the limitations of denotata; of assigning particular words, terms or expressions to describe something metaphysical and which words, terms or expressions, over causal time, may acquire meanings which are not or may not be relevant to the original metaphysical context, as occurred here in respect of both αἰών and οὐσία, conventionally translated and thus (mis)understood as 'eternity' and 'essence'. Hence my transliteration of αἰών and translation of οὐσία by the unusual term quidditas, which is 11th/12th century Latin, from whence the word 'quiddity', a word originally from medieval scholasticism which was then used to mean the natural (primal) nature or form of some-thing, similar to the German prefix *ur* which passed into English usage in the 19th century.

[4] In respect of theos as the artisan-creator, qv. IV:1,

Ἐπειδὴ τὸν πάντα κόσμον ἐποίησεν ὁ δημιουργός, οὐ χερσὶν ἀλλὰ λόγῳ, ὥστε οὕτως ὑπολάμβανε ὡς τοῦ παρόντος καὶ αἰεὶ ὄντος καὶ πάντα ποιήσαντος καὶ ἐνὸς μόνου, τῇ δὲ αὐτοῦ θελήσει δημιουργήσαντος τὰ ὄντα

Because the artisan crafted the complete cosmic order not by hand but through Logos, you should understand that Being as presential, as eternal, as having crafted all being, as One only, who by thesis formed all that is.

Regarding the above translation:

artisan. δημιουργόν. See Poemandres 9. The theme of an artisan-creator, and their artisements, is common to the third tractate (Ιερός Λόγος) as well. That the tractate begins by using the term artisan, rather than theos, is perhaps significant.

that Being. The conventional and grammatical interpretation is "you should understand him as..." although how such a human-type gender could be adduced from or manifest by how the 'body' of the artisan-creator is described in subsequent verses is an interesting and relevant metaphysical question. Can, or should, a 'body' that cannot be touched, that cannot be seen, that cannot be measured, that is not separable - οὐδὲ διαστατόν - and thus which is not conventionally 'human', be described as male? It is to suggest such metaphysical questions (and the limitations of ordinary language in describing and answering such metaphysical questions) that I have here departed from convention and used 'that Being' instead of 'him'. The term 'Being' also has the advantage that it avoids the gender bias implicit in translating θεός as 'god' given that 'god/God' implies a male entity.

There is also an interesting and perhaps relevant mention, in the second tractate of the Corpus, of the one, the being, who - like an artisan - constructs things: ὁ οὖν θεός <τὸ> ἀγαθόν, καὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ὁ θεός. ἡ δὲ ἑτέρα προσηγορία ἐστὶν ἡ τοῦ πατρός, πάλιν διὰ τὸ ποιητικὸν πάντων. πατὴρ γὰρ τὸ ποιεῖν. (Thus theos is the noble and the noble is theos, although another title is that of father because the artifex of all being. For it is of a father to construct.)

However, in terms of gender and Hellenic mythos and metaphysics, it is sometimes overlooked that Γαῖα, Earth Mother, in one of the Homeric hymns, Εἰς Γῆν Μητέρα Πάντων, is described as πρέσβιστος: the elder among beings, and the mother of the gods, θεῶν μήτηρ. Thus, while it might be of "a father to construct" it is "of a mother to bring forth life", to give birth to beings, including the gods themselves.

presential. πάρεμι. Presential - from the classical Latin praesentia - means "having or implying actual presence", as manifesting (as being presenced) in a locality or with an individual, and is thus more apposite here than the rather bland word 'present'. Cf. the use of 'presenced' in Ιερός Λόγος 2, et sequentia.

One only. ἐνὸς μόνου. A formulaic mystic phrase, implying uniqueness. Cf. ordinary usage in Plato, Crito 47, ἢ ἐνὸς μόνου ἐκείνου [...] ἐνὸς μόνου.

thelesis. θέλησις. Given what follows - τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστὶ τὸ σῶμα ἐκείνου, οὐχ ἄπτόν, οὐδὲ ὁρατόν, οὐδὲ μετρητόν, οὐδὲ διαστατόν - a transliteration to suggest something other than a human type 'will' or 'desire'; such as 'disposition'. That is, Being is predisposed to craft - to presence - being as beings: as immortals (deities), as mortals (humans) and otherwise, qv. Ιερός Λόγος, Poemandres 8 ff, and Poemandres 31: οὐ ἡ βουλὴ τελεῖται ἀπὸ τῶν ἰδίων δυνάμεων (whose purpose is accomplished by his own arts).

formed. As an artisan forms their artisements, and thus manifests their skill, their artistry, in what they produce. That is, the artisan-creator has formed, crafted, being (all existence) as beings.

[5] In the Corpus Hermeticum, and in ancient Greek culture in general, χρόνος is not 'time', which translation imposes medieval and modern concepts on this metaphysical principles such as a particular causal regularity quantifiable in terms of hours and minutes - measured by a mechanism such as a clock - and quantifiable by means of a set calendar which consists of regular days, weeks, months, and years.

Similarly, ὥρα (as for example in the Gospel of John, 5:39, ὥρα ἦν ὡς δεκάτη) when translated as 'hour' is misleading, since the term 'hour' now imputes a particular causal regularity quantifiable in terms of period lasting sixty minutes with twenty-four of these 'hours' marking the causal passing of one terran day. However, in the Roman governed milieu of that Gospel the day was divided into twenty-four durations or periods and which durations depended on the length of daylight (and thus the season) at the particular location in question, with there being twelve durations of daylight and twelve durations of night. Hence the 'tenth duration' mentioned in that verse - whether it be the tenth duration of the daylight hours or the tenth duration of the twenty-four - would not necessarily equate to what we would term 'ten o'clock' in the morning and certainly would not equate to a tenth 'hour' lasting sixty minutes. In addition, it depends on when the first duration was measured from: sunrise, or sunset, or from 'the mid-point of the night'. Which has led to debate among scholars as to whether or not John in this Gospel is, in respect of ὥρα, using Roman terminology for such periods, as well as to debates about whether the Roman durations were reckoned from 'the mid-point of the night' or from sunrise. If reckoned from sunrise, then allowing for latitude and seasonal variation, this 'tenth duration' was between mid to late afternoon. If reckoned from 'the mid-point of the night' then this 'tenth duration' was mid to late morning. Where the Roman 'mid-point of the night' does not equate to the modern 'midnight' (as measured by a clock) but to half-way between the hours of darkness at a particular location.

Hence it is apposite to generally translate χρόνος as either 'duration' or 'season', since those terms are appropriate in relation to ancient Greek texts where the duration between, for example, the season of Summer and the season of Autumn was determined by the observations (the appearance in the night sky) of certain constellations and stars, and where the duration of a day varied from place to place and from season to season even if it was linearly measured out in a particular location by means of a Greek or Roman sundial.

[6] Qv. VIII, 5, ὁ ἄνθρωπος κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ κόσμου γενόμενος. That is, as the Poemandres tractate describes in terms of seven spheres, our ψυχή (psyche) is a re-presentation, a presencing, of the cosmic order.

In respect of the seven spheres, and the melding of opposites, cf. XI:6-7,

θέασαι δὲ δι' ἐμοῦ τὸν κόσμον ὑποκείμενον τῇ σῇ ὥσει, τό τε κάλλος αὐτοῦ ἀκριβῶς κατανόησον, σῶμα μὲν ἀκήρατον καὶ οὐ παλαιότερον οὐδὲν ἔσται, διὰ παντὸς δὲ ἀκμαῖον καὶ νέον καὶ μᾶλλον ἀκμαιότερον.

ἴδε καὶ τοὺς ὑποκειμένους ἑπτὰ κόσμους κεκοσμημένους τάξει αἰωνίῳ καὶ δρόμῳ διαφόρῳ τὸν αἰῶνα ἀναπληροῦντας, φωτὸς δὲ πάντα πλήρη, πῦρ δὲ οὐδαμοῦ· ἡ γὰρ φιλία καὶ ἡ σύγκρασις τῶν ἐναντίων καὶ τῶν ἀνομοίων φῶς γέγονε, καταλαμπόμενον ὑπὸ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ ἐνεργείας παντὸς ἀγαθοῦ γεννήτορος καὶ πάσης τάξεως ἄρχοντος καὶ ἡγεμόνος τῶν ἑπτὰ κόσμων·

Correctly consider and observe Kosmos as suggested by me and thus the beauty thereof, a body undecayable and nothing more eldern and yet always vigorous and fresh, even more now than before. Observe also the septenary cosmos ordered in arrangement by Aion with its separate aeonic orbits. Everything replete with phaos but with no Fire anywhere. For fellowship, and the melding of opposites and the dissimilar, produced phaos shining forth in the activity of theos, progenitor of all that is honourable, archon and hegemon of the septenary cosmos.

A similar melding of opposites is described by Heraclitus in terms of enantiodromia,

πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα (Diogenes Laërtius, ix. 7)

All by genesis is appropriately apportioned [separated into portions] with beings bound together again by enantiodromia.

[7] Tractate IV:5. The Monas (μονάς) refers to The One, that is to the primal - the first - theos, the artisan who "crafted the complete cosmic order not by hand but through Logos."

In respect of the English word monas, qv. John Dee, *Testamentum Johannis Dee Philosophi summi ad Johannem Gwynn, transmissum 1568* - a text included (on page 334) in Elias Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum, Containing Severall Poeticall Pieces of our Famous English philosophers, who have written the Hermetique Mysteries in their owne Ancient Language*, published in London in 1652 - who wrote "our Monas trewe thus use by natures Law, both binde and lewse", and who also entitled one of his works *Monas Hieroglyphica* (Antwerp, 1564), in which work he described (in Theorem XVIII) a septenary system somewhat similar to that of the Poemandres tractate.

[8] Our human culture of pathei-mathos is evident in Studia Humanitatis and may be defined as the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals, world-wide, over thousands of years, as (i) described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts; as (ii) have inspired particular works of literature or poetry or drama; as (iii) expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and as (iv) manifest in more recent times by art-forms such as films and documentaries.

Epilogos

A Modern Paganus Weltanschauung

The paganus weltanschauung, ancestral to the lands of the West, that has emerged is one which, shorn of technical, Greek, and metaphysical terms, many may find familiar or already be intuitively aware of.

For it is a weltanschauung of we human beings having a connexion to other living beings, a connexion to the cosmos beyond, and a connexion to the source of our existence, the source of the cosmos, and the source - the origin, the genesis - of all living beings. Which source we cannot correctly describe in words, by any denotata, or define as some male 'god', or even as a collection of deities whether male or female, but which we can apprehend through the emanations of Being: through what is living, what is born, what unfolds in a natural manner, what is ordered and harmonious, what changes, and what physically - in its own species of Time - dies.

An awareness of all these connexions is awareness of, and a respect for, the numinous, for these connexions, being acausal, are affective: that is, we are inclined by our physis (whether we apprehend it or not) to have an influence on that which, or those whom, the connexion is to or from. For what we do or do not do, consciously or otherwise, affects or can affect the cosmos and thus the other living beings which exist in the cosmos, and it is a conscious awareness of connexions and acausal affects, with their causal consequences, which reason, perceiverance, and empathy make us - or can make us - aware of. Which awareness may incline us toward acting, and living, in a noble way, with what is noble known or experienced, discovered, through and because of (i) the personal virtue of honour, evident as honour is in fairness, manners and a balanced demeanour, and (ii) the wordless knowing of empathy, manifest as empathy is in compassion and tolerance.

For Being is also, and importantly, presenced - manifest to us, as mortals possessed of reason, empathy, and perceiverance - through certain types of individuals and thus through the particular ways of living that nurture or

encourage such individuals. These types of individuals are those who have empathy and who live and if necessary die by honour and thus who have nobility of character, with such character innate, or developed through *pathei-mathos*, or formed through a particular type of education, or through proximity to and/or admiration of those whose lives and deeds have revealed them to have such nobility of character. For it is the known living and the known deeds of individuals which reveal and/or which are the genesis of such noble character.

Such a developed *paganus weltanschauung* - in its ethos and its ontology, ethics, and epistemology, and thus with its virtues of personal honour and empathy combined with a respect for the numinous - is quite different from Christianity and other revealed religions, and certainly does, in its noble simplicity and practicality, seem to be more human in *physis*, more balanced, and could well be more productive of a healthy personal *ψυχή*, than Christianity and other revealed religions.

Such a modern *paganus weltanschauung* may also be a means to reconnect those in the lands of the West, and those in Western *émigré* lands and former colonies of the West, with their ancestral ethos, for them to thus become, or return to being, a living, dwelling, part - a connexion between the past and the future - of what is still a living, and evolving, culture. Perhaps the future of that culture depends on whether sufficient individuals can live by the high personal standards of such a modern *paganus weltanschauung*.

Appendix

From Aeschylus To The Numinous Way The Numinous Authority of πάθει μάθος

Pathei-Mathos

The Greek term πάθει μάθος (pathei-mathos) derives from The Agamemnon of Aeschylus (written c. 458 BCE), and can be translated as *learning from adversary*, and thus interpreted as implying that *wisdom arises from (personal) suffering* and that *personal experience is the genesis of true learning*.

However, this term should be understood in context [1], for what Aeschylus writes is that the Immortal, Zeus, guiding mortals to reason, has provided we mortals with a new law, which law replaces previous ones, and this new law – this new guidance laid down for mortals – is pathei-mathos. Thus, for we human beings, pathei-mathos possesses a numinous authority [2] – that is, the wisdom, the understanding, that arises from one's own personal experience, from formative experiences that involve some hardship, some grief, some personal suffering, is often more valuable than any doctrine, than any religious faith, than any impersonal words one might read in some book.

In many ways this is an enlightened – a very human – view, and is rather in contrast to the faith and revelation-centred view of revealed religions such as Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. In the former, it is the personal experience of learning from, and dealing with, personal suffering and adversity, that is paramount and which possesses authority; in the latter, it is faith that some written work or works is or are a sacred revelation from the supreme deity one believes in which is paramount, combined with a belief that this supreme deity has appointed or authorized some mortal being or beings, or some Institution, as their earthly representative, and who thus possess authority.

The Aeschylan view is that learning, and thus wisdom, arises from within us, by virtue of that which afflicts us (and which afflictions could well be the from the gods/Nature or from some supra-personal source) and from our own, direct, personal, practical, experience. The Aeschylan view – what we might call the way of pathei-mathos – can thus be considered to be numinous – that is, some-thing which lives, which is part of our own living, grounded in the personal reality of our immediacy of living, and thus is somewhat different from the religious attitude which asserts that wisdom, and indeed truth, can be found in revelation from some supreme deity, or imparted to or taught to us by someone in some position of authority, or discovered in or learnt from something 'dead', such as a book written by someone else.

Philosophy, Logic, and Politics

In essence, conventional philosophy seeks to find certain and particular causes for what exists, and to express certain general principles, by and through which knowledge and understanding of Reality, and existence, and thus wisdom, may be said to be obtained.

But, in a quite real way, conventional philosophy is founded upon the religious notion, the religious approach to wisdom mentioned above, for conventional philosophy is based upon abstractions [3]; upon abstract or idealized categories and ideas by and through which it is claimed we can acquire a knowing of what such categories and ideas are said to represent. All conventional philosophy has this approach - this ideation - by its very nature as an interior process of reflexion, by human beings, upon Reality and existence, and a process which requires the use of ideation and words and/or terms, and thence their collocation, to present to other human beings the result or results of such reflexion. Such ideation, such abstraction, is inherent in the finding of certain particular causes and general principles.

Exterior to this interior process, this ideation, there is logic, which may be defined as the dispassionate examination of the collocation or collocations of words and/or terms (or symbols) which relate, or which are said to relate, to what is correct (valid, true) or incorrect (invalid, false) and which collocation or collocations are considered to be or which are regarded as being, by their proponents, as representative of, or actually being, knowledge or a type of or a guide to knowing.

For logic, what is or what may be represented by such collocations (the content) is fundamentally irrelevant. What is relevant - what determines the logical validity of any any examined collocations - is the natural unfolding, or the form, behind and beyond all ideation.

Logic thus regards abstractions and ideas as irrelevant, as no guarantee of truth, and thus as no sure guide to a genuine knowing and to wisdom itself, and thus logic can be considered as a valid means whereby truth can be ascertained [4].

It may be objected, however, that the use of logic in philosophy makes philosophy a reasonable and a valid guide to Reality and thence to truth. However, what conventional philosophy does and has done is apply logic to theories that are derived from some abstraction or other, which application is basically irrelevant if the basal abstractions themselves are flawed. Furthermore, all such abstractions are in and of themselves flawed because they are, by their very nature, abstractions, divorced as they are from the numinous, from that which lives, and which unfolds in that natural way which Φύσις does. [5]

Thus, one can conclude that logic, rather than conventional philosophy, is a more valid means to truth and thence to knowledge, than the speculations and ideations of conventional philosophy.

Like philosophy, politics is founded upon abstractions – upon the religious way to knowledge and truth – but takes, and has taken, abstractionism much further, through the manufacture of ideologies, which are specific collocations of dogmatic abstractions.

In addition, politics is often or mostly based upon an appeal to the emotions, where individuals allow themselves to be persuaded by others (often through rhetoric or because of propaganda) and/or suspend their own judgement in favour of accepting that of someone else (some leader) or of some political organization or movement. That is, there is an identification with certain abstract political views, or some ideology, or some political organization or leader, in place of or instead of one's own judgement and in place of or instead of one's own unique, individual, identity deriving from one's own pathei-mathos.

In particular, there is or there comes to be, an immoral, an un-numinous, judgement of (and often a dislike or even hatred of) others based on what is perceived to be their political views, allegiance, or opinions, so that, for instance, a person is viewed not as an individual human being, but as an abstraction: as a Conservative, or as a fascist, or as a liberal, or as a Communist, and so on. This is same type of inhuman, immoral, prejudice that conventional religion often still produces and most certainly has produced, for millennia, and which ethnic, or racial, abstractions certainly still produce and encourage.

The Pathei-Mathos of Experimental Science

In contrast to philosophy, experimental science seeks to explain the natural world – the phenomenal world – by means of direct, personal, observation of it, and by making deductions, and formulating hypothesis, based on such direct observation, with the important and necessary proviso, beautifully expressed by Isaac Newton, in his *Principia*, that

"We are to admit no more causes of natural things than such as are both true and sufficient to explain their appearances. To this purpose the philosophers say that Nature does nothing in vain, and more is in vain when less will serve; for Nature is pleased with simplicity, and affects not the pomp of superfluous causes."

The *raison d'être* of experimental science – unlike philosophy, religion, and politics – is knowledge acquired in a personal, direct, manner, without the intervention of abstractions, and this, as is the knowledge obtained by pathei-mathos, is numinous: a re-presentation, *sans* abstractions, which is living, possessed of Life, and a practical guide to what actually is real, as opposed to

the assumed, the imaginary, the abstract un-living reality that conventional philosophy, religion and politics present to us.

Hence, experimental science may be said to complement and extend – as a guide to Reality, knowledge and wisdom – the personal way of pathei-mathos.

The essential difference between experimental science and philosophy is that of abstractions: for philosophy, unobservable (theoretical) abstractions are the beginning of, and indeed the necessary and required basis of, our enquiry into the nature of Reality, and existence, and meaning; whereas for experimental science such abstractions, or theories, which may arise or which are conjectured, do so only on the basis of direct observation, are only and ever conjectural, temporary, subject to falsification by further practical observations, and are always rational, that is subject to logic (the rules of reasoning).

In addition, in philosophy, authority is the authority of some individual or individuals recognized by others for their theoretical contributions(s), so that, for instance, a scholarly paper in philosophy is of necessity replete with what other philosophers have said or written or thought or conjectured. For experimental science, authority lies in the evidence of observations and the application of logic.

Toward A Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos

We may suggest a 'numinous way', a new philosophy – the philosophy of πάθει μάθος – which is that of the way of a personal pathei-mathos combined with the way of experimental science, where we obtain knowledge about Reality, and may move toward certain truths about ourselves and existence, through direct practical, scientific observation of the phenomenal world, through the learning that derives from pathei-mathos, through the application of logic, and through an appreciation of the knowledge that the natural faculty of empathy provides, and which empathic knowing is different from, but supplementary and complimentary to, that knowing which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials [6] of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

Such a new philosophy is, or could be considered to be, a guide to what we understand as σοφός.

David Myatt
2010
(Revised 2015)

Footnotes:

[1]

Ζῆνα δέ τις προφρόνως ἐπινίκια κλάζων
τεύζεται φρενῶν τὸ πᾶν:

ὄν φρονεῖν βροτοὺς ὁδῶ-
σαντα, τὸν πάθει μάθος
θέντα κυρίως ἔχειν.

If anyone, from reasoning, exclaims loudly that victory of Zeus,
Then they have acquired an understanding of all these things;
Of he who guided mortals to reason,
Who laid down that this possesses authority:
Learning from adversity.

Aeschylus: *Agamemnon*, 174-183

In many ways, *The Oresteia* represents the new wisdom that *pathei-mathos* can guide us toward; that the old cycle of tragedy and suffering can be escaped from by us appreciating, and acting upon, the understanding, the insight, that *pathei-mathos* provides.

[2] The numinous is what predisposes us not to commit ὕβρις. What manifests or can manifest or remind us of (what can reveal) the natural balance of ψυχή; a balance which ὕβρις upsets.

[3] Abstraction(ism) can be philosophically defined as the implementation, the practical application, of ὕβρις. An abstraction has its genesis in denotata, in naming 'a thing' which is considered to be separate, distinct, and representative of, or belonging to, some ideal 'form' or to some category of such named 'things'.

In respect of the numinous, and recalling *The Agamemnon* of Aeschylus, the *Antigone* and the *Oedipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles, we could say that the numinous is what predisposes us not to commit ὕβρις – to not overstep the due limits.

As Sophocles wrote in *Oedipus Tyrannus*:

ὕβρις φυτεύει τύραννον:
ὕβρις, εἰ πολλῶν ὑπερπλησθῇ μάταν,
ἂ μὴ 'πίκαιρα μηδὲ συμφέροντα,
ἀκρότατον εἰσαναβᾶσ'
αἶψος ἀπότομον ὥρουσεν εἰς ἀνάγκαν,
ἔνθ' οὐ ποδὶ χρησίμῳ
χρῆται

"Insolence plants the tyrant. There is insolence if by a great foolishness there is a useless over-filling which goes beyond the proper limits. It is an ascending to the steepest and utmost heights and then that hurtling toward that Destiny where the useful foot has no use..." (vv.872ff)

[4] In many ways, the λόγος that is logical reasoning [cf. Sophocles, Oedipus Tyrannus, 583, εἰ διδοίης γ' ὥς ἐγὼ σαυτῷ λόγον] could be considered to be the opposite of an idea, of an abstraction,

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος ἀεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ
πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκούσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον

Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists – human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. [Heraclitus, fragment 1]

[5] Cf. Aristotle Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015a

ἐκ δὴ τῶν εἰρημένων ἡ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἡ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὕλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικῇ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐνυπάρχουσά πως ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ.

"Given the foregoing, then principally – and to be exact – physis denotes the quidditas of beings having changeament inherent within them; for substantia has been denoted by physis because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changeaments predicated on it. For physis is inherent changeament either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is."

[6] These Aristotelian essentials are:

- (i) Reality (existence) exists independently of us and our consciousness, and thus independent of our senses;
 - (ii) our limited understanding of this independent 'external world' depends for the most part upon our senses, our faculties; that is, on what we can see, hear or touch; on what we can observe or come to know via our senses;
 - (iii) logical argument, or reason, is perhaps the most important means to knowledge and understanding of and about this 'external world';
 - (iv) the cosmos (existence) is, of itself, a reasoned order subject to rational laws.
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Tu Es Diaboli Ianua

Christianity, The Johannine Weltanschauung, And Presencing The Numinous

David Myatt

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Exordium

Given that the religion termed Christianity has, for over six centuries, been influential in respect of the ethos and spirituality of the culture of the West - often to the extent of having been described as manifesting that ethos and that spirituality - one of the metaphysical questions I have sought to answer over the past forty years is whether that religion is, given our thousands of years old human culture of *pathei-mathos*, a suitable presencing of the numinous. If it is not, then could that religion be reformed, by developing a Johannine *Weltanschauung* given that the Gospel According to John - τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον - arguably presents a somewhat different perspective on the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth than the three other synoptic Gospels. Would such a reformation be a suitable presencing of the numinous, and if not, then what non-Christian alternatives - such as a *paganus metaphysics* - exist, and what is the foundation of such an alternative?

This essay presents my answers to such questions and thus compliments my book *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*. As in that book, I have made extensive use of my translations of certain classical authors and of various hermetic texts as well as the Gospel of John, and given that those translations are currently quite accessible I have not except on a few occasions explained my interpretations of certain Greek or Latin terms since those interpretations are explained in the associated commentaries.

As noted elsewhere, I prefer the term *paganus* - a transliteration of the classical Latin, denoting as it does connection to Nature, to the natural, more rural, world - in preference to 'pagan' since *paganus* is, in my view and in respect of the Greco-Roman ethos, more accurate given what the term 'pagan' now often denotes.

The title of the essay, *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* - "You Are The Nexion Of The Deofel", literally, "You are nexion Diabolos " - is taken from Tertullian's *De Monogamia*, written at the beginning of the second century AD.

David Myatt
Winter Solstice 2017

I. The Johannine Weltanschauung And The Numinous

The Numinous

The religion [1] of Christianity is founded on, and regarded as being manifest in, the Greek texts that have become known as the Canonical New Testament, Καινή Διαθήκη, and the Greek texts known as the Septuagint (LXX, The Old Testament) with such texts being regarded as divinely inspired and thus, in the words of Tertullian, Divinum Instrumentum, [2] [3] the divine apparatus - the instrument - for understanding divine decree.

Writing in the early years of the Christian religion, Tertullian expressed the essence of the Christian ethos when he wrote:

Post vetera exempla originalium personarum aequae ad vetera transeamus instrumenta legalium scripturarum [...] quam Christus non dissolvit, sed adimplevit. [4]

Given the venerable examples of the ancient ones, consider the venerable apparatus of scriptural Law [...] which Christ did not nullify, but fulfilled.

Which reliance on such written words from 'the ancient ones' (the Prophets) and from the authors of the New Testament, and which understanding of those words as divinely inspired and thus as the definitive guide to what is sacred and what is profane, led not only to views such as the following but also to such views becoming a part of the Christian ethos and a part of Christian praxis for well over a thousand years:

Viuit sententia Dei super sexum istum in hoc saeculo: uiuat et reatus necesse est. Tu es diaboli ianua; tu es arboris illius resignatrix; tu es diuinae legis prima desertrix; tu es quae eum suasisti, quem diabolus aggredi non ualuit; tu imaginem Dei, hominem, tam facile elisisti; propter tuum meritum, id est mortem, etiam filius Dei mori habuit. [5]

The judgement of God on your gender is alive in this era, necessitating that you live with your offence. You are The Nexion of The Deofel. You are The Resignatrix of The Tree. You are The Archetypal Desertrix of Divine Decree. You are she who incited he

whom The Deofel could not attack. You effortlessly broke the representation of God: a man. And it is because of you - because of your loss - that even the Son of God had to die. [6]

Which rather harsh indictment of half of humanity, with its accusations, its sternness, and its apparent lack of empathy, inclines one to enquire into the nature of the numinous and thus into how we, as individuals and sans preconceptions, can distinguish the 'sacred' from the 'profane'.

My, admittedly fallible, understanding of the numinous is that it is a presencing, and an apprehension by us, of the divine, of the sacred. Which apprehension is of our physis [7] as human beings, and thus of our relation to other human beings, to other living beings, and to the Cosmos itself. An apprehension - a perceivment - that enables a supra-personal 'cosmic' perspective and which perspective can incline us as individuals toward humility and thus comprehend our mortality and our fallible nature. In effect, this apprehension is the genesis of mysticism since it is a personal intuitive insight about the nature of Reality where there is a wordless - and empathic, a contemplative - apprehension of there existing certain truths which transcend the temporal, the causal, and thus which are beyond the denotatum of words, categories, dogma, ideology, and thus beyond named ideas.

The Johannine Weltanschauung

Would a Christianity based only on the Gospel According to John - τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον - be different from, more numinous than, the Christianity derived from the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and the other texts included in what has become known as the Canonical New Testament, Καὶνὴ Διαθήκη? A Johannine Christianity where the Greek texts known as LXX, the Old Testament, were not regarded as 'the Word of God' - as divinely inspired and canonical - but rather as providing some historical background to the old, superseded, logos of Mosaic law and of 'the Prophets'. Would such a Johannine Christianity be a Weltanschauung - a particular and individual apprehension or interpretation of Reality - rather than a religion with all that a religion implies in terms of hierarchy and dogma? With the contrast being, in the words of Tertullian, *Post vetera exempla originalium personarum aequae ad vetera transeamus instrumenta legalium scripturarum*.

What emerges from my reading of τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον [8] is rather reminiscent of what individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox, and William Penn wrote and said about Jesus and the spiritual way that the Gospels in particular revealed. This is the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from supra-personal moralistic interpretations based on inflexible notions of 'sin' and thus on what is or has doctrinally been

considered 'good' and what is considered 'evil'.

A difference evident in many passages from the Gospel of John, such as the following two, one of which involves the Greek word πιστεύω, and which word is perhaps a relevant hermeneutical example. The conventional interpretation of meaning, in respect of New Testament texts, is 'believe', 'have faith in', so that John 3:16 is interpreted along the following lines:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (King James Bible)

Similarly in respect of other verses where πιστεύω occurs, so that the impression is of the necessity of believing, of having or acquiring faith.

Yet, and in regard to the aforementioned verse, if one interprets that particular (and another) Greek word in a more Hellenistic – a more Greek – way, then one has:

Theos so loved the world that he offered up his only begotten son so that all those trusting in him would not perish but might have life everlasting.

Not only is this personal, direct – as in personally trusting someone as opposed to a 'blind believing' – but there are no prior hermeneutic assumptions about 'God', derived as such assumptions are from over two thousand years of scriptural exegesis and preaching.

Example One. Chapter Three, 16-21

DWM:

Theos so loved the world that he offered up his only begotten son so that all those trusting in him would not perish but might have life everlasting. For Theos did not dispatch his son to the world to condemn the world, but rather that the world might be rescued through him. Whosoever trusts in him is not condemned while whomsoever does not trust is condemned for he has not trusted in the Nomen of the only begotten son of Theos.

And this is the condemnation: That the Phaos arrived in the world but mortals loved the darkness more than the Phaos, for their deeds were harmful. For anyone who does what is mean dislikes the Phaos and does not come near the Phaos lest their deeds be exposed. But whomsoever practices disclosure goes to the Phaos so that their deeds might be manifest as having been done through Theos. [9]

King James Bible:

God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

Example Two. Chapter Five, 1-16

DWM:

Following this, there was a Judaeen feast and Jesus went to Jerusalem. And there is in Jerusalem by the place of the sheep a pool, named in the language of the Hebrews as Bethesda, which has five colonnades in which were a large number of the infirm – the blind, the limping, the withered – awaiting a change in the water since on occasion an Envoy of Theos descended into the pool, stirring the water, and whomsoever after that stirring of the water was first to enter became complete, the burden of their affliction removed.

And there was a man there who for eight and thirty years had been infirm. Jesus, seeing him lying there and knowing of that lengthy duration, said to him: "Do you seek to be complete?"

The infirm one replied: "Sir, I do not have someone who when the water is stirred could place me in that pool, and, when I go, someone else has descended before me."

Jesus said to him: "Arise. Take your bedroll, and walk."

And, directly, the man became complete, took up his bedroll and walked around. And it was the day of the Sabbath.

Thus did the Judaeans say to the one who had been treated: "It is the Sabbath and it is not permitted for you to carry your bedroll."

To them he answered: "It was he who made me complete who said for me to take my bedroll and to walk around."

So they asked him: "Who is the man who said for you to take the bedroll and walk?"

But the healed one did not know, for there was a crowd there with Jesus having betaken himself away.

Following this, Jesus discovered him in the temple and said to him: "Behold, you are complete. No more missteps, lest something worse befalls you."

The man then went away and informed the Judaeans that it was Jesus who had made him complete, and thus did the Judaeans harass Jesus because he was doing such things on the Sabbath. [10][11]

King James Bible:

After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.

And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.

Summary

The first example seems to me to be revealing of the personal nature of the 'way of Jesus of Nazareth' – of a personal trust in a particular person, in this instance a trust in Jesus because of how he and his life are recounted by the Evangelist – contrasting with a rather impersonal demand to believe, to have faith, based on doctrine as codified by someone else or by some organized regulatory and supra-local hierarchy.

The second example seems to me to be revealing of the contrast between the then organized supra-personal religion of the Judaeans – with its doctrinal forbiddance, sometimes on pain of death, of certain personal deeds – and the empathy and compassion of an individual, as evident in Jesus in the immediacy of the moment healing a long-suffering infirm man and bidding him to take up and carry his bedroll, undoubtedly aware as Jesus was that he was doing and inciting what was forbidden because for him empathy and compassion were more important than some established doctrine.

Is this contrast between what seems to be a particular dogmatism, a particular religious (hubriatic) intolerance by the Judaeans, and an individual being empathic and compassionate in the immediacy of the moment, still relevant today? Personally, I do believe it is, leading me to conclude that τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον – The Gospel According To John – contains certain truths not only about our physis as human beings but also about our relation to Being, to the divine, to the numinous. For, as described in tractate III of the Corpus Hermeticum,

Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεὸς καὶ θεῖον καὶ φύσις θεία. ἀρχὴ τῶν ὄντων ὁ θεός, καὶ νοῦς καὶ φύσις καὶ ὕλη, σοφία εἰς δεῖξιν ἀπάντων ὧν· ἀρχὴ τὸ θεῖον καὶ φύσις καὶ ἐνέργεια καὶ ἀνάγκη καὶ τέλος καὶ ἀνανέωσις [...] τὸ γὰρ θεῖον ἢ πᾶσα κοσμικὴ σύγκρασις φύσει ἀνανεομένη· ἐν γὰρ τῷ θείῳ καὶ ἡ φύσις καθέστηκεν.

The numen of all beings is theos: numinal, and of numinal physis. The origin of what exists is theos, who is Perceiveration and Physis and Substance: the sapientia which is a revealing of all beings. For the numinal is the origin: physis, vigour, incumbency, accomplishment, renewance [...]

The divine is all of that mexion: renewance of the cosmic order through Physis, for Physis is presenced in the divine. [12]

II. A Paganus Apprehension

The particular truths revealed by the Gospel of John - that is, of a more personal way to apprehend the divine through an individual trust in a particular living person, the person of Jesus - are however dependant on three things. First, on accepting the veracity of a particular written text. Second, on an acceptance that certain signs (σημεῖα) - such as the Passion, the death and resurrection of Jesus, and his Ascension - indicate that he is, as the Evangelist narrates, the Son of Theos and thus can gift mortals with life everlasting. Third, that the person in question - Jesus - is alive and thus could be personally known and trusted on the basis of such a personal knowing.

If one accepts that the narration is a reasonably accurate portrayal of the life of a particular individual then one might be inclined to appreciate that Jesus - judged by our thousands of years old human culture of *pathei-mathos* [13] - presenced a certain wisdom, a certain understanding of the divine and of our human physis, manifest for example in compassion and in eschewing contemporary religious restrictions dogmatically imposed upon individuals.

Yet for we who live centuries after the narrated death of Jesus to extend this appreciation of a once living mortal to an acceptance of him as the Son of God, able thus to gift us with life everlasting because he is not a mere mortal, not dead, but rather a living, a resurrected, an immortal divinity, is not an act of trust based on a personal knowing of a living mortal but rather is an act of faith, a spiritual act of belief.

Thus a Christianity based only on the Gospel According to John would not, in its essence and in my fallible opinion, be very different from the Christianity derived from the Canonical New Testament, since the Gospel According to John would become *Divinum Instrumentum*, the divine apparatus for understanding divine decree - and become so regardless of whether or not such an apparatus included The Old Testament - with the attendant development of dogma and exegesis and thence the subsequent schisms based on the various interpretations suggested by such exegesis.

For the problem is - or so it seems to me - in impersonal written texts. Or, more precisely, in denotatum, and thus in assigning terms - in using words - to describe an apprehension of the numinous. Which leads us to the fundamental difference between a religious apprehension of the numinous - based on received and venerated texts, on exegesis - and the *paganus* apprehension of the numinous as manifest in Greco-Roman culture, based as it is on an

individual, and an intuitive, empathic and thus wordless, apprehension of the numinous. Which paganism will be examined for two reasons. Firstly, because it is manifest in a multiplicity of primary sources - from Homer to Hesiod to Cicero and beyond - and secondly because Greco-Roman culture is inextricably bound to the culture of the West and formed the basis for the European Renaissance that emerged in the 14th century, one aspect of which was a widespread appreciation of classical Art, of classical literature, and of texts such as the Corpus Hermeticum.

The Greco-Roman paganus apprehension is presented for us in mythoi - myths and legends - none of which were regarded as embodying a religious revelation from an omnipotent deity to his 'chosen people' and none of which embodied divine commands - divine laws - which mortals were commanded to obey on pain of punishment. Instead, these myths and legends - described by Homer, by Hesiod, and dramatised by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and others - were instructive examples of how the gods interacted with other divinities and with mortals, and how mortals should interact among themselves and with the gods.

Thus in Greek mythoi the divine chieftain, Zeus, in an instructive example of the ancient Greek principle of δημοκρατία, is depicted by Homer in Book I, vv. 76-77 of The Odyssey as saying to the goddess Athena that there will a gathering of the gods in order to discuss and consider the matter of the return of Odysseus to his home, ἀλλ' ἄγεθ' ἡμεῖς οἶδε περιφραζώμεθα πάντες νόστον.

Which mention of Athena illustrates two of the many fundamental differences between classical paganism and the monotheism of Christianity accepting as that monotheism does the beliefs of the ancient Hebrews as mentioned in the Gospel of John and as described in the Old Testament. A first difference is how some deities - such as Pallas Athena - would shapeshift and assume various forms, including human form, in order to directly interact with mortals, with the goddess Athena in the Odyssey assuming the form of a mortal man. A second difference is a polytheism which includes many female deities, with such female deities often considered by mortals as friends and companions and invoked for assistance, a personal, an intimate, apprehension beautifully expressed by Sappho:

Ποικιλόθρον' ἀθάνατ' Ἀφροδιτα,
παῖ Δίος, δολόπλοκε, λίσσομαί σε
μή μ' ἄσαισι μήτ' ὀνύιασι δάμνα,
πότνια, θῦμον

ἀλλὰ τυίδ' ἔλθ', αἵποτα κατέρωτα
τᾶς ἔμας αὐδῶς αἰοῖσα πήλγι
ἔκλυες πάτρος δὲ δόμον λίποισα
χρύσιον ἦλθες

ἄρμ' ὑποζεύξαια, κάλοι δέ σ' ἄγον

ῥκεσ στροϋθοι περὶ γᾶσ μελαίνας
πύκνα δινεϋντες πτέρ' ἀπ' ὠράνω
αἴθερος διὰ μέσσω

αἶψα δ' ἐχίκοντο, σὺ δ', ῥ μάσαιρα
μειδιάσαισ' ἀθάνατω προσώπῳ,
ἥρ' ὅττι δηϋτε πέπονθα κῶττι
δηγτε κάλημι

κῶττι μοι μάλιστα θέλω γένεσθαι
μαινόλα θύμῳ, τίνα δηϋτε πείθῳ
μαῖσ ἄγην ἐσ σὰν φιλότατα τίς τ, ῥ
Πσάπφ', ἀδίκηει

καὶ γάρ αἰ φεύγει, ταχέως διώξει,
αἰ δὲ δῶρα μὴ δέκετ ἀλλά δώσει,
αἰ δὲ μὴ φίλει ταχέως φιλήσει,
κῶκ ἐθέλοισα

ἔλθε μοι καὶ νῦν, χαλεπᾶν δὲ λῦσον
ἐκ μερίμναν ὅσσα δέ μοι τέλεσσαι
θῦμος ἱμέρρει τέλεσον, σὺ δ' αὐτὰ
σύμμαχος ἔσσο.

Deathless Aphrodite – Daughter of Zeus and maker of snares -
On your florid throne, hear me!
My lady, do not subdue my heart by anguish and pain
But come to me as when before
You heard my distant cry, and listened:
Leaving, with your golden chariot yoked, your father's house
To move beautiful sparrows swift with a whirling of wings
As from heaven you came to this dark earth through middle air
And so swiftly arrived.

Then you my goddess with your immortal lips smiling
Would ask what now afflicts me, why again
I am calling and what now I with my restive heart
Desired:

Whom now shall I beguile
To bring you to her love?
Who now injures you, Sappho?
For if she flees, soon shall she chase
And, rejecting gifts, soon shall she give.
If she does not love you, she shall do so soon
Whatsoever is her will.

Come to me now to end this consuming pain
Bringing what my heart desires to be brought:
Be yourself my ally in this fight.

Female deities could, like Athena, intervene in the life of mortals and so alter their fate even to the extent of guiding them toward their death. For it is not Zeus alone who - as a monotheistic omnipotent deity does - decides the fate of mortals, but also other gods, as described for instance by Homer:

ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, μοῦσα, πολύτροπον, ὃς μάλα πολλὰ
πλάγχθη, ἐπεὶ Τροίης ἱερὸν πτολίεθρον ἔπερσεν:
πολλῶν δ' ἀνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄστεα καὶ νόον ἔγνω,
πολλὰ δ' ὃ γ' ἐν πόντῳ πάθεν ἄλγεα ὃν κατὰ θυμόν,
ἀρνύμενος ἥν τε ψυχὴν καὶ νόστον ἐταίρων.
ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὥς ἐτάρους ἐρρύσατο, ἰέμενός περ:
αὐτῶν γὰρ σφετέρῃσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὄλοντο,
νήπιοι, οἳ κατὰ βοῦς Ὑπερίονος Ἥελίοιο
ἥσθιον: αὐτὰρ ὁ τοῖσιν ἀφείλετο νόστιμον ἦμαρ

The Muse shall tell of the many adventures of that man of the many stratagems
Who, after the pillage of that hallowed citadel at Troy,
Saw the towns of many a people and experienced their ways:
He whose vigour, at sea, was weakened by many afflictions
As he strove to win life for himself and return his comrades to their homes.
But not even he, for all this yearning, could save those comrades
For they were destroyed by their own immature foolishness
Having devoured the cattle of Helios, that son of Hyperion,
Who plucked from them the day of their returning. (Odyssey, Book I, v. 1-9)

In addition, and importantly, Γαῖα, Earth Mother, is described in the Homeric hymn Εἰς Γῆν Μητέρα Πάντων as πρέσβιστος, the elder among beings, the mother of the gods, θεῶν μήτηρ, who nourishes all living beings:

γαῖαν παμμήτειραν αἰέσομαι ἠυθέμεθλον
πρεσβίστην ἥ φέρβει ἐπὶ χθονὶ πάνθ' ὅπως ἔστίν

Even in the later mythoi associated with a monadic 'theos as creator' there is no divine law necessitating obedience and no humiliating fear of retribution by an omnipotent deity. Instead, as I noted in my *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* in reference to tractate XI:3 of the Corpus Hermeticum,

"the sophia, the sapientia, of theos is presenced not in the 'word of God' (scriptures) but in the personal Greek virtues of τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, and ἀρετή, and in the metaphysical principle denoted by the term αἰών."

Which leads to the understanding that in classical paganism mortals are

considered to be connected to the cosmos, to the divine, to the numinous, through

"not only reason (λόγος), perceivance (νοῦς) and wordless-awareness (συμπάθεια, empathy) but also through τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, and ἀρετὴ, through the beautiful and the well-balanced, the valourous and honourable, and those who possess arête, all of which are combined in one Greek phrase: καλὸς κάγαθός, which means those who conduct themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner."
[14]

One such example is recounted by Xenophon:

ἐκεῖνός γε μὴν ὑμῶν οὐποτ' ἔληγεν ὡς τοὺς θεοὺς οἶοιτο οὐδὲν ἥττον ὁσίοις ἔργοις ἢ ἀγνοῖς ἱεροῖς ἡδεσθαι ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ ὁπότε εὐτυχοίη οὐκ ἀνθρώπων ὑπερεφρόνει ἀλλὰ θεοῖς χάριν ἡδεῖ καὶ θαρρῶν πλείονα ἔθυεν ἢ ὀκνῶν ἡῤῃχετο εἴθιστο δὲ φοβούμενος μὲν ἱλαρὸς φαίνεσθαι εὐτυχῶν δὲ πρᾶος εἶναι [Agesilaus, 11.2]

this person, whom I praise, never ceased to believe that the gods delight in respectful deeds just as much as in consecrated temples, and, when blessed with success, he was never prideful but rather gave thanks to the gods. He also made more offerings to them when he was confident than supplications when he felt hesitant, and, in appearance, it was his habit to be cheerful when doubtful and mild-mannered when successful.

Those who conduct themselves in a refined, a gentlemanly or lady-like, manner are those who seek to avoid committing the error of hubris, ὕβρις, since they understand that hubris invites the attention of the Fates (Μοῖραι) and their ever heedful furies - Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἑρινύες - exemplifying as the female Fates and their Furies do an aspect of how mortals are connected to the cosmos, which cosmos is considered as living, as in Περὶ Εἰμαρμένης, attributed to Plutarch - τὸ φύσει διοικεῖσθαι τόνδε τὸν κόσμον σύμπνουν καὶ συμπαθῇ αὐτὸν αὐτῷ ὄντα (574e) - where the Kosmos is described as συμπαθῇ with itself and mutually breathing, σύμπνους.

In the classical mysticism described in tractate XIII of the Corpus Hermeticum [15], the pupil (τέκνον, son) is advised by his teacher (πάτερ, father) toward contemplation and thus toward a personal, an intimate, understanding of παλιγγενεσία, Palingenesis:

ἐπίσπασαι εἰς ἑαυτόν, καὶ ἐλεύσεται· θέλησον, καὶ γίνεται· κατάργησον τοῦ σώματος τὰς αἰσθήσεις, καὶ ἔσται ἡ γένεσις τῆς θεότητος· καθαροὶ σεαυτὸν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀλόγων τῆς ὕλης τιμωριῶν.

Τιμωροὺς γὰρ ἐν ἑμαυτῷ ἔχω, ὧ πάτερ; Οὐκ ὀλίγους, ὧ τέκνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ φοβεροὺς καὶ πολλοὺς. Ἀγνοῶ, ὧ πάτερ. Μία αὕτη, ὧ τέκνον, τιμωρία ἢ ἄγνοια· δευτέρα λύπη· τρίτη ἀκρασία· τετάρτη ἐπιθυμία· πέμπτη ἀδικία· ἕκτη πλεονεξία· ἑβδόμη ἀπάτη·

ὀγδόη φθόνος· ἐνάτη δόλος· δεκάτη ὀργή· ἐνδεκάτη προπέτεια·

δωδεκάτη κακία· εἰσὶ δὲ αὗται τὸν ἀριθμὸν δώδεκα· ὑπὸ δὲ ταύτας πλείονες ἄλλαι, ὧ τέκνον, διὰ τοῦ δεσμωτηρίου τοῦ σώματος αἰσθητικῶς πάσχειν ἀναγκάζουσι τὸν ἐνδιάθετον ἄνθρωπον· ἀφίστανται δὲ αὗται, οὐκ ἀθρώως, ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐλεηθέντος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ οὕτω συνίσταται ὁ τῆς παλιγγενεσίας τρόπος καὶ λόγος.

λοιπὸν σιώπησον, ὦ τέκνον, καὶ εὐφήμησον καὶ διὰ τοῦτο οὐ καταπαύσει τὸ ἔλεος εἰς ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ· χαῖρε λοιπὸν, ὦ τέκνον, ἀνακαθαιρόμενος ταῖς τοῦ θεοῦ δυνάμεσιν, εἰς συνάρθρωσιν τοῦ Λόγου. ἦλθεν ἡμῖν γνῶσις θεοῦ· ταύτης ἐλθούσης, ὦ τέκνον, ἐξηλάθη ἡ ἄγνοια. ἦλθεν ἡμῖν γνῶσις χαρᾶς· παραγεννομένης ταύτης, ὦ τέκνον, ἡ λύπη φεύζεται εἰς τοὺς χωροῦντας αὐτήν.

δύναμιν καλῶ ἐπὶ χαρᾷ τὴν ἐν κράτειαν· ὦ δύναμις ἡδίστη, προσλάβωμεν, ὦ τέκνον, αὐτὴν ἀσμενέστατα· πῶς ἅμα τῷ παραγενέσθαι ἀπώσατο τὴν ἀκρασίαν; τετάρτην δὲ νῦν καλῶ καρτερίαν, τὴν κατὰ τῆς ἐπιθυμίας δύναμιν. ὁ βαθμὸς οὗτος, ὦ τέκνον, δικαιοσύνης ἐστὶν ἔδρασμα· χωρὶς γὰρ κρίσεως ἴδε πῶς τὴν ἀδικίαν ἐξήλασεν· ἐδικαιώθημεν, ὦ τέκνον, ἀδικίας ἀποῦσης.

ἕκτην δύναμιν καλῶ εἰς ἡμᾶς, τὴν κατὰ τῆς πλεονεξίας, κοινωνίαν. ἀποστάσης δὲ ἔτι καλῶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν καὶ φεύγει ἀπάτη, ἀλήθεια παραγίνεται ἴδε πῶς τὸ ἀγαθὸν πεπλήρωται, ὦ τέκνον, παραγινομένης τῆς ἀληθείας· φθόνος γὰρ ἀφ' ἡμῶν ἀπέστη· τῇ δὲ ἀληθείᾳ καὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐπεγένετο, ἅμα ζωῇ καὶ φωτί, καὶ οὐκέτι ἐπῆλθεν οὐδεμία τοῦ σκότους τιμωρία, ἀλλ' ἐξέπτησαν νικηθεῖσαι ροίζω.

ἔγνωκας, ὦ τέκνον, τῆς παλιγγενεσίας τὸν τρόπον· τῆς δεκάδος παραγινομένης, ὦ τέκνον, συνετέθη νοερὰ γενέσις καὶ τὴν δωδεκάδα ἐξελαύνει καὶ ἐθεώθημεν τῇ γενέσει· ὅστις οὖν ἔτυχε κατὰ τὸ ἔλεος τῆς κατὰ θεὸν γενέσεως, τὴν σωματικὴν αἴσθησιν καταλιπὼν, ἑαυτὸν γνωρίζει ἐκ τούτων συνιστάμενον καὶ εὐφραίνεται

Ἀκλινὴς γενόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, ὦ πάτερ, φαντάζομαι, οὐχ ὁράσει ὀφθαλμῶν ἀλλὰ τῇ διὰ δυνάμεων νοητικῇ ἐνεργείᾳ. ἐν οὐρανῷ εἰμι, ἐν γῇ, ἐν ὕδατι, ἐν ἀέρι· ἐν ζώοις εἰμί, ἐν φυτοῖς· ἐν γαστρί, πρὸ γαστροῦ, μετὰ γαστέρα, πανταχοῦ.

Tractate XIII, 7-11

Go within: and an arriving. Intend: and an engendering. Let physical perceptibility rest, and divinity will be brought-into-being. Refine yourself, away from the brutish Alastoras of Materies. [16]

Alastoras are within me, then, father?

Not just a few, my son, but many and terrifying.

I do not apprehend them, father.

My son, one Vengeress is Unknowing; the second, Grief. The third, Unrestraint; the fourth, Lascivity. The fifth, Unfairness; the sixth, Coveter. The seventh, Deceit; the eighth, Envy. The ninth, Treachery; the tenth, Wroth. The eleventh, Temerity; the twelfth, Putridity.

In number, these are twelve but below them are numerous others who, my son, compel the inner mortal - bodily incarcerated - to suffer because of perceptibility. But they absent themselves - although not all at once - from those to whom theos is generous, which is what the Way and Logos of Palingenesis consists of.

Henceforward, speak quietly, my son, and keep this secret. For thus may the generosity of theos toward us continue.

Henceforward, my son, be pleased, having refinement through the cræfts of theos to thus comprehend the Logos.

My son, to us: arrivance of Knowledge of Theos. On arrival: Unknowing is banished. My son, to us: arrivance of Knowledge of Delightfulness: on arriving, Grief runs away to those who have the room.

The influence invoked following Delightfulness is Self-Restraint: a most pleasant influence. Let us, my son, readily welcome her: arriving, she immediately pushes Unrestraint aside.

The fourth invoked is Perseverance who is influxious against Lascivity. Which Grade, my son, is the foundation of Ancestral Custom: observe how without any deliberation Unfairness was cast out. My son, we are vindicated since Unfairness has departed.

The sixth influence invoked for us - against Coveter - is community. With that departed, the next invocation: Actualis, and thus - with Actualis presenced - does Deceit run away. Observe, my son, how with Actualis presenced and Envy absent, the noble has been returned. For, following Actualis, there is the noble, together with Life and Phaos.

No more does the retribution of Skotos supervene, for, vanquished, they whirlingly rush away.

Thus, my son, you know the Way of Palingenesis. By the Dekad brought-into-being, geniture of apprehension was produced, banishing those twelve; and by this geniture we are of theos.

Thus whomsoever because of that generosity obtains divine geniture, having gone beyond physical perceptibility, discovers that they consist of such, and are pleased.

With a quietude, father, engendered by theos, the seeing is not of the sight from the eyes but that through the noetic actus of the cræft. I am in the Heavens; on Earth; in Water; in Air. I am in living beings, in plants; in the womb, before the womb, after the womb. Everywhere.

Which understanding of Palingenesis is of a personal, an interior, "moving away from the brutish Alastoras" involving a casting out of unfairness, a return to nobility, and an appreciation of Ancestral Custom [17]. Which 'moving away' is an interior anados.

A Human Numinosity

The paganus, Greco-Roman, apprehension of the numinous is thus profoundly human, individual in its immanency, subject to reason, to change, and to development. There is no eternally governing omnipotent deity since in classical mythoi even a governing god could be overthrown and replaced, as Zeus overthrew Kronos and as Kronos himself displaced his own father.

There is, in classical spirituality, no persecution of 'heretics' in the name of this or that interpretation of mythoi; no dogmatic scorn of women as there is in Tertullian and, for well over a thousand years, as there is in other Christian exegesis; no required meekness of submission to something or someone regarded as omnipotent; no concept of 'sin' as a punishable transgression of some immutable divine law, for even Zeus after his triumph only gave mortals a certain guidance:

Ζῆνα δέ τις προφρόνως ἐπινίκια κλάζων
τεύξεται φρενῶν τὸ πᾶν:
ὄν φρονεῖν βροτοῦς ὁδώ-
σαντα, τὸν πάθει μάθος
θέντα κυρίως ἔχειν. Aeschylus: Agamemnon, 174-183

If anyone, from reasoning, exclaims loudly that victory of Zeus,
Then they have acquired an understanding of all these things;
Of he who guided mortals to reason,
Who laid down that this possesses authority:
Learning from adversity.

Which Zeus-given guidance - even though presencing his authority, and thus presencing the numinous in and for a certain Aeon - might be overturned, replaced, by a god or by a goddess who overthrew and replaced Zeus and who after their victory might well declaim a new Logos.

For the paganus, Greco-Roman, apprehension - and thus classical spirituality - was an apprehension, a spirituality, of evolution, of change, and of the necessity of harmonious balance, of avoidance of hubris. Of the virtue of ἀρετή understood as a μέσον (meson, median, a balance between 'being', actually existing, and 'not-being', a potentiality, as described by Aristotle (Metaphysics 9.1051a) and of perceiving, understanding, and seeking to be in balance with

the harmonious 'cosmic order' (κόσμος) as appreciated by Cicero as a knowing (scientia) of what is divine and what is mortal:

aequam igitur pronuntiabit sententiam ratio adhibita primum
divinarum humanarumque rerum scientia, quae potest appellari rite
sapientia, deinde adiunctis virtutibus, quas ratio rerum omnium
dominas, tu voluptatum satellites et ministras esse voluisti. De Finibus
Bonorum et Malorum, II, 37.

This balance is an aim of the anados, ἄνοδος - the mystical and individual journey of the mortal toward the numinous - described in the Poemandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, during which journey the mortal sheds those traits of personality which are injurious to such an attainment:

καὶ οὕτως ὁρμαῖ λοιπὸν ἄνω διὰ τῆς ἁρμονίας, καὶ τῇ πρώτῃ ζώνῃ
δίδωσι τὴν αὐξητικὴν ἐνέργειαν καὶ τὴν μειωτικὴν, καὶ τῇ δευτέρῃ
τὴν μηχανὴν τῶν κακῶν, δόλον ἀνενέργητον, καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ τὴν
ἐπιθυμητικὴν ἀπάτην ἀνενέργητον, καὶ τῇ τετάρτῃ τὴν ἀρχοντικὴν
προφανίαν ἀπλεονέκτητον, καὶ τῇ πέμπτῃ τὸ θράσος τὸ ἀνόσιον καὶ
τῆς τόλμης τὴν προπέτειαν, καὶ τῇ ἕκτῃ τὰς ἀφορμὰς τὰς κακὰς τοῦ
πλούτου ἀνενεργήτους, καὶ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ ζώνῃ τὸ ἐνεδρεῦον ψεῦδος.
Poemandres, 25

Thus does the mortal hasten through the harmonious structure, offering up, in the first realm, that vigour which grows and which fades, and - in the second one - those dishonourable machinations, no longer functioning. In the third, that eagerness which deceives, no longer functioning; in the fourth, the arrogance of command, no longer insatiable; in the fifth, profane insolence and reckless haste; in the sixth, the bad inclinations occasioned by riches, no longer functioning; and in the seventh realm, the lies that lie in wait.

What is injurious to such a harmonious balance is what is dishonourable, with τὸ ἀγαθὸν - Summum Bonum - thus understood as honestum, as what is honourable, noble:

summum bonum est quod honestum est; et quod magis admireris:
unum bonum est, quod honestum est, cetera falsa et adulterina bona
sunt. Seneca, Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales, LXXI, 4.

the greatest good is that which is honourable. Also - and you may wonder at this - only that which is honourable is good, with all other 'goods' simply false and deceitful.

An understanding also manifest in Cicero:

Honestum igitur id intellegimus, quod tale est, ut detracta omni
utilitate sine ullis praemiis fructibusve per se ipsum possit iure

laudari. quod quale sit, non tam definitione, qua sum usus, intellegi potest, quamquam aliquantum potest, quam communi omnium iudicio et optimi cuiusque studiis atque factis, qui permulta ob eam unam causam faciunt, quia decet, quia rectum, quia honestum est, etsi nullum consecuturum emolumentum vident. De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum, II, 45f.

For honestum is how hubris can be avoided and balance maintained, and is the essence of καλὸς κάγαθός which presences the numinous, the divine, in and among mortals:

εἰ δύνασαι νοῆσαι τὸν θεόν, νοήσεις τὸ καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθόν [...] ἐὰν περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ ζητῇς, καὶ περὶ τοῦ καλοῦ ζητεῖς μία γὰρ ἐστὶν εἰς αὐτὸ ἀποφέρουσα ὁδός, ἢ μετὰ γνώσεως εὐσέβεια. Tractate VI, 5

If you are able to apprehend theos you can apprehend the beautiful and the noble [...] Thus a quest for theos is a quest for the beautiful, and there is only one path there: an awareness of the numinous combined with knowledge.

Furthermore, as stressed by Cicero in many of his writings, and as indicated by the quotation from tractate XIII of the Corpus Hermeticum - "the sixth influence invoked for us, against Coveter, is community" - an aspect of the paganus, Greco-Roman, apprehension of the numinous, of καλὸς κάγαθός, is an awareness and acceptance of one's civic duties and responsibilities undertaken not because of any personal benefit (omni utilitate) that may result or be expected, and not because an omnioptent deity has, via some written texts, commanded it and will punish a refusal, but because it is the noble, the honourable - the gentlemanly, the lady-like, the human - thing to do.

ooo

III. Numinous Metaphysics

The ὑμνωδία κρύπτη λόγος Δ part of tractate XIII of the Corpus Hermeticum [18] provides a metaphysical insight into the paganus, Greco-Roman, apprehension of the numinous and thus into paganus spirituality.

Given in full in Appendix I, the song [19] begins with a polytheistic evocation: to Gaia, Earth, Trees, the Heavens, Air, and to Oceanus who brought "forth sweet water to where was inhabited and where was uninhabited to so sustain all mortals."

It addresses the Master Artisan, κτίσεως κύριον, the 'Founding Lord', who is τὸ πᾶν καὶ τὸ ἓν, 'all that exists' and 'The One', the monad, with τὸ πᾶν (literally, The All) a formulaic metaphysical phrase also occurring in tractate XII (τὸ πᾶν ἐν παντί) and in tractate XI which provides the metaphysical context:

Ἄκουε, ὦ τέκνον, ὡς ἔχει ὁ θεὸς καὶ τὸ πᾶν. θεός, ὁ αἰὼν, ὁ κόσμος, ὁ χρόνος, ἡ γένεσις. ὁ θεὸς αἰῶνα ποιεῖ, ὁ αἰὼν δὲ τὸν κόσμον, ὁ κόσμος δὲ χρόνον, ὁ χρόνος δὲ γένεσιν. τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ ὡς περ οὐσία ἐστὶ [τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, ἡ εὐδαιμονία,] ἡ σοφία· τοῦ δὲ αἰῶνος ἡ ταυτότης· τοῦ δὲ κόσμου ἡ τάξις· τοῦ δὲ χρόνου ἡ μεταβολή· τῆς δὲ γενέσεως ἡ ζωὴ καὶ ὁ θάνατος

Hear then, my son, of theos and of everything: theos, Aion, Kronos, Kosmos, geniture. Theos brought Aion into being; Aion: Kosmos; Kosmos, Kronos; Kronos, geniture. It is as if the quidditas of theos is actuality, honour, the beautiful, good fortune, Sophia. Of Aion, identity; of Kosmos, arrangement; of Kronos, variation; of geniture, Life and Death.

Which context is the harmonious, the ordered, structure of Reality, with ourselves as mortals connected to that-which is beyond us: in λόγος Δ to Gaia, Earth, Trees, the Heavens, and The One; and in tractate XI to Aion, Kronos, Kosmos, and importantly to geniture, to both Life and Death.

There is respect of (ancestral) custom; praise of virtues such as honesty; and a mortal gratitude:

You, mastery, sing; and you, respectful of custom,
Through me sing of such respect.
Sing, my companions, for All That Exists:
Honesty, through me, sing of being honest,
The noble, sing of nobility.

Phaos and Life: fond celebration spreads from us to you.

My gratitude, father: actusosity of those my Arts.
My gratitude, theos: Artisan of my actuosities;
Through me, the Logos is sung for you.
Through me, may Kosmos accept
Such respectful wordful offerings as this.

Thus the apprehension, the spirituality, is uncomplicated, personal, devoid of dogma, restrained. As it is in the poem to Aphrodite by Sappho, quoted in Part II.

Numinous Criteria

If the numinous is a presencing, and an apprehension by us, of the divine, of the sacred, then is divinity, is the sacred, the sole domain of, a presencing of, the masculous - or such that the masculous dominates - or is it the domain of the muliebral; or the domain of such a balance between masculous and muliebral as the culture of pathei-mathos seems to indicate it is and should be. My own pathei-mathos certainly indicates that the numinous is primarily a manifestation of the muliebral and can be apprehended through a personal, an interior, balance between masculous and muliebral.

A masculous presencing is and has been manifest in a predominance of male deities; or in a dominant male deity; and/or in legends and myths which celebrate masculous values, such as competitiveness, a certain harshness, a desire to organize/control, a perceived conflict between some-thing, some abstraction, denoted 'good' and some-thing, some abstraction, denoted as 'evil', and a following of or an adherence to abstractions in general (such as a perceived divine law or some interpretation of religiosity) over and above personal love. Considered exoterically - not interiorly, not esoterically - a masculous presencing is manifest in a religion, with the attendant organized worship and devotion, with there existing a hierarchy, a creed or an article or articles of faith, and usually some texts, whether written or aural, regarded as sacred and/or as divinely inspired and which invariably require interpretation.

A muliebral presencing is or would be manifest in a predominance of female deities; or in a dominant female deity; in legends and myths which celebrate muliebral virtues, such as empathy, sensitivity, gentleness, compassion; and in the perception that personal love should triumph over and above adherence to abstractions. Considered exoterically - not interiorly, not esoterically - a muliebral presencing is manifest in a personal, varied, worship and devotion; in a personal weltanschauung and not in a religion; has no hierarchy; no creed, no article or articles of faith; and no texts whether written or aural.

Historically, it seems that revealed religions such as Christianity, Islam, and Judaism primarily manifest a presencing of the masculous where there is a male omnipotent deity whether named as God, Allah, or Jehovah; where the revelation and the interpretation of texts is taught primarily by men; where there is an eschatology of 'good' verses 'evil' with the consequent and perceived necessary conflicts and battles; with sentiments such as those by Tertullian in *De Cultu Feminarum* and in *De Monogamia* developed, and with such a presencing aptly described as patriarchal. In the case of Christianity, while some interpretations of it have in the past century slowly evolved to be somewhat more balanced in respect of the muliebral, it is still primarily a patriarchal presencing.

Historically, while the paganus apprehension of Greco-Roman culture was also primarily masculous it did presence aspects of the muliebral, manifest for example in female deities such as Athena, Artemis, and Gaia, and thus was somewhat more balanced, more harmonious in terms of re-presenting our human physis, than Christianity.

Thus a necessary question is how can (what I consider to be) a numinous balance between masculous and muliebral be metaphysically expressed, given that the culture of pathei-mathos has moved us, or can move us, beyond anthropomorphic deities, whether male or female; beyond myths and legends; beyond reliance on texts regarded as sacred and/or as divinely inspired; and even beyond the need for denotatum and religion.

Starting from the paganus apprehension described above, and using our human culture of pathei-mathos as a guide, such a metaphysics is (i) an (often wordless) awareness of ourselves as a fallible mortal, as a microcosmic connexion to other mortals, to other life, to Nature, and to the Cosmos beyond our world, and (ii) a new civitas, and one not based on some abstractive law but on a spiritual and interior (and thus not political) understanding and appreciation of our own Ancestral Culture and that of others; on our 'civic' duty to personally presence καλὸς κἀγαθός and thus to act and to live in a noble way. For the virtues of personal honour and manners, with their responsibilities, presence the fairness, the avoidance of hubris, the natural harmonious balance, the gender equality, the awareness and appreciation of the divine, that is the numinous.

Footnotes

[1] By religion is meant organized worship, devotion, and faith, where there is: (i) a belief in some deity/deities, or in some supreme Being or in some supra-personal power who/which can reward or punish the individual, and (ii) a distinction made between the realm of the sacred/the-gods/God/the-revered and the realm of the ordinary or the human.

The term organized here implies an established institution, body or group - or a plurality of these - who or which has at least to some degree codified the faith and/or the acts of worship and devotion, and which is accepted as having some authority or has established some authority among the adherents. This codification is founded on accepting as authoritative certain writings (texts) and/or a certain book or books.

[2] *De Pudicitia*, X, 12.

[3] The archaeological - the physical - evidence seems to indicate that the Greek text of the Old Testament is older than the Hebrew text, with the earliest manuscript fragment being Greek Papyrus 458 currently housed in the Rylands Papyri collection - qv. Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, 20 (1936), pp. 219-45 - and which fragment was discovered in Egypt and has been dated as being from the second century BCE.

In contrast, the earliest fragments of the Old Testament in Hebrew date from c.150 BCE to c. 70 CE, and are part of what has come to be known as the Dead Sea Scrolls. In addition, the earliest known Greek - and almost complete - text of the Old Testament, Codex Vaticanus, dates from c.320 CE with the earliest complete Hebrew text of the Tanakh, the Aleppo Codex, dating from centuries later, around 920 CE.

While it is and has been a common presumption that the Hebrew version of the Old Testament is older than the Greek version, my inclination is to favour the extant physical evidence over and above presumption. Were physical evidence of Hebrew texts earlier than Greek Papyrus 458 discovered, and of there existing a complete Hebrew text dating from before Codex Vaticanus, my inclination would be to revise my opinion based on a study of the new evidence.

[4] *De Monogamia*, VII, 1.

[5] Tertullian, *De Cultu Feminarum*, I, 2.

[6] The Latin word translated by nexion is *ianua*, which implies a gateway, a door, an entrance. The Latin translated "You are The Resignatrix of The Tree" is *tu es arboris illius resignatrix*, with resignatrix here - as with the preceding *ianua* - suggestive of a title, of the woman who broke the seal affixed to the forbidden fruit of the Tree Of Knowledge. A more literal translation of the

following *tu es diuinae legis prima desertrix* is: You are the first to forsake Divine Decree.

The three phrases *tu es diaboli ianua*, *tu es arboris illius resignatrix*, *tu es diuinae legis prima desertrix*, read as if they might be some 'evil' heathen incantation, which might have been Tertullian's intent.

[7] As described in my 'philosophy of pathei-mathos', I use the term physis, φύσις, contextually to refer to:

- (i) the ontology of beings, an ontology - a reality, a 'true nature' - that is often obscured by denotatum and by abstractions, both of which conceal physis;
- (ii) the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being, which is of us - we mortals - as a nexion, an affective effluvium (or emanation) of Life (ψυχή) and thus of why 'the separation-of-otherness' is a concealment of that relationship;
- (iii) the character, or persona, of human beings, and which character - sans denotatum - can be discovered (revealed, known) by the faculty of empathy;
- (iv) the unity - the being - beyond the division of our physis, as individual mortals, into masculous and muliebral;
- (v) that manifestation denoted by the concept Time, with Time considered to be an expression/manifestation of the physis of beings.

I use the term denotatum - from the Latin, denotare - in accord with its general meaning which is "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted."

Thus understood, and used as an Anglicized term, denotatum is applicable to both singular and plural instances and thus obviates the need to employ the Latin plural denotata.

In respect of the term numinous, it derives from the classical Latin numen which denoted "a reverence for the divine; a divinity; divine power". Numen has been used in English since the 15th century, with 'numinous' dating from the middle of the 17th century and used to signify "of or relating to a numen; revealing or indicating the presence of a divinity; divine, spiritual."

As noted in my *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, I use it to additionally describe

"what manifests or can manifest or remind us of (what can reveal) the natural balance of ψυχή; a balance which ὕβρις upsets. This natural balance - our being as human beings - is or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful. In a practical way, it is what we regard or come to appreciate as 'sacred' and dignified; what expresses our developed

humanity and thus places us, as individuals, in our correct relation to ψυχή, and which relation is that we are but one mortal emanation of ψυχή."

[8] Volume I (chapters 1-4) of my translation of and commentary on the Gospel According To John was published in July 2017 with volume II (chapters 5-10) scheduled for publication in 2019.

A version in html – including chapter 5, which is subject to revision and updated as and when new verses and the associated commentary are available – is (as of October 2017) at <http://www.davidmyatt.info/gospel-john.html>

[9] What follows is a (slightly edited) extract from my commentary on John 3:16-21.

° *Nomos*. νόμος. A transliteration since as with 'logos' a particular metaphysical principle is implied and one which requires contextual interpretation; a sense somewhat lost if the English word 'law' is used especially given what the word 'law' often now imputes.

° *Phaos*. Given that φάος metaphorically (qv. Iliad, Odyssey, Hesiod, etcetera) implies the being, the life, 'the spark', of mortals, and, generally, either (i) the illumination, the light, that arises because of the Sun and distinguishes the day from the night, or (ii) any brightness that provides illumination and thus enables things to be seen, I am inclined to avoid the vague English word 'light' which all other translations use and which, as in the case of God, has, in the context of the evangel of Jesus of Nazareth, acquired particular meanings mostly as a result of centuries of exegesis and which therefore conveys or might convey something that the Greek word, as used by the author of this particular Greek text, might not have done.

Hence my transliteration – using the Homeric φάος instead of φῶς – and which transliteration requires the reader to pause and consider what phaos may, or may not, mean, suggest, or imply. As in the matter of logos, it is most probably not some sort of philosophical principle, neo-Platonist or otherwise.

Interestingly, φῶς occurs in conjunction with ζωή and θεός and ἐγένετο and Ἄνθρωπος in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, thus echoing the evangel of John:

φῶς καὶ ζωή ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατήρ, ἐξ οὗ ἐγένετο ὁ Ἄνθρωπος
(Poemandres, 1.21)

Life and phaos are [both] of Theos, The Father, Who brought human beings into existence

° *For their deeds were harmful*. ἦν γὰρ αὐτῶν πονηρὰ τὰ ἔργα. Harmful: that is, caused pain and suffering. To impute to πονηρός here the meaning of a moral abstract 'evil' is, in my view, mistaken. Similarly with the following φαῦλος in

v.20 which imparts the sense of being 'mean', indifferent.

Since the Phaos is Jesus, those who are mean, those who do harm, avoid Jesus because (qv. 2.25) he – as the only begotten son of Theos – knows the person within and all their deeds. Thus, fearing being exposed, they avoid him, and thus cannot put their trust in him and so are condemned and therefore lose the opportunity of eternal life.

° *whomsoever practices disclosure*. ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν. Literally, 'they practising the disclosing.' That is, those who disclose – who do not hide – who they are and what deeds they have done, and who thus have no reason to fear exposure. Here, as in vv.19-20, the meaning is personal – about the character of people – and not about abstractions such as "evil" and "truth", just as in previous verses it is about trusting in the character of Jesus. Hence why here ἀλήθεια is 'sincerity', a disclosing, a revealing – the opposite of lying and of being deceitful – and not some impersonal 'truth'.

[10] Note how Jesus does not disapprovingly preach about – does not even mention – the apparently superstitious practice of infirm individuals waiting by a 'miraculous' pool in order to be cured.

[11] A (slightly edited) extract from my commentary on John 5:1-16.

° *the place of the sheep*. Since the Greek προβατικός means "of or relating to sheep" and there is no mention of a 'gate' (or of anything specific such as a market) I prefer a more literal translation. It is a reasonable assumption that the sheep were, and had in previous times been, kept there prior to being offered as sacrifices, as for example sheep are still so held in particular places in Mecca during Eid al-Adha, the Muslim feast of sacrifice.

° *named in the language of the Hebrews*. ἐπιλεγομένη Ἑβραϊστὶ.

° *the infirm*. The Greek word ἀσθενέω implies those lacking normal physical strength.

° *awaiting a change in the water*. Reading ἐκδεχομένων τὴν τοῦ ὕδατος κίνησιν with the Textus Receptus, omitted by NA28, but included in the Anglo-Saxon version, by Tyndale and Wycliffe.

° *Envoy of Theos*. Reading ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου κατὰ καιρῶν κατέβαινεν (qv. Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on John, Book II, V, 1-4, Migne Patrologia Graeca 73) and ἐν τῇ κολυμβήθρᾳ, καὶ ἐτάρασσεν τὸ ὕδωρ· ὁ οὖν πρῶτος ἐμβὰς μετὰ τὴν παραχὴν τοῦ ὕδατος, ὑγιὴς ἐγένετο, ᾧ δὴποτε κατειχέτο νοσήματι with the Textus Receptus. The verse is omitted by NA28, but included in ASV, Tyndale, and Wycliffe.

a) *envoy*. As noted in the commentary on 1:51, interpreting ἄγγελος as 'envoy' (of theos) and not as 'angel', particularly given the much

later Christian iconography associated with the term 'angel'.

b) *Theos*. Regarding ἄγγελος γάρ κυρίου, qv. Matthew 28.2 ἄγγελος γάρ κυρίου καταβὰς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, "an envoy of [the] Lord/Master descended from Empyrean/the heavens." Since here κύριος implies Theos (cf. John 20.28 where it is used in reference to Jesus), an interpretation such as "envoy of Theos" avoids both the phrase "envoy of the Master" – which is unsuitable given the modern connotations of the word 'master' – and the exegetical phrase "angel/envoy of the Lord" with all its associated and much later iconography both literal, by means of Art, and figurative, in terms of one's imagination. An alternative expression would be "envoy of the Domine," with Domine (from the Latin Dominus) used in English as both a respectful form of address and as signifying the authority of the person or a deity.

c) *became complete*. ὑγιὴς ἐγένετο. The suggestion is of the person becoming 'whole', complete, *sanus*, and thus ceasing to be 'broken', incomplete, infirm.

° *bedroll*. κράβατος (Latin, grabatus) has no suitable equivalent in English since in context it refers to the portable bed and bedding of the infirm. The nearest English approximation is bedroll.

° *And, directly, the man became complete*. καὶ εὐθέως ἐγένετο ὑγιὴς ὁ ἄνθρωπος. Metaphysically, the Evangelist is implying that 'completeness' – wholeness – for both the healthy and the infirm (whether infirm because of sickness or a physical infirmity) arises because of and through Jesus.

° *treated*. Taking the literal sense of θεραπεύω here. Hence: cared for, treated, attended to. As a healer or a physician might care for, treat, or attend to, someone.

° *no more missteps*. μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε. That is, make no more mistakes in judgement or in deeds. Qv. the Introduction [to Volume I of the translation] regarding translating ἁμαρτία in a theologically neutral way as 'mistake' or 'error' instead of by the now exegetical English word 'sin'. Cf. 1.29, 8.7, et seq.

° *Judaeans*. Qv. my essay *A Note On The Term Jews In The Gospel of John*, which is included here as an appendix

° *harass*. διώκω. Cf. the Latin *persequor*, for the implication is of continually 'following' and pursuing him in order to not only try and worry or distress him but also (as becomes evident) to find what they regard is evidence against him in order to have him killed, qv. 5.18, 7.1, 7.19 et seq.

[12] *Ἱερός Λόγος: An Esoteric Mythos*. Included in: David Myatt, *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates: Translation and Commentary*, 2017.

[13] The culture of *pathei-mathos* is described in Appendix III.

[14] Myatt, David. *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*. 2017. p.27.

[15] This hermetic tractate, as so many others, employs a technical - an esoteric - vocabulary. Thus terms such as νοερός, ἀσφίγγωτος, ἐνέργεια, ἐνδιάθετον ἄνθρω - to name but a few - require contextual interpretation and avoidance of such common English words (for example, 'intellectual', and energy) as may impose modern meanings on such an ancient text.

The commentary which accompanies my translation of tractate XIII - in *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates* - provides the relevant context and an explanation of my translating choices such as Actualis and cræft.

[16] As noted in the commentary on my translation I have chosen to personify τιμωρία, partly in reference to Clytemnestra as depicted by Aeschylus:

alastoras. Since the Greek word τιμωρία is specific and personal, implying vengeance, retribution, and also a divine punishment, it seems apposite to try and keep, in English, the personal sense even though no specific deeds or deeds are mentioned in the text, but especially because of what follows: Τιμωροὺς γὰρ ἐν ἑμαυτῷ ἔχω, ὦ πάτερ. Hence my interpretation, "the brutish *alastoras* of Materies," using the English term *alastoras* - singular, *alastor*, from the Greek ἀλάστωρ, an avenging deity, and also a person who avenges certain deeds. Qv. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 1497-1508.

materies. ὕλη. A variant form of the Latin *materia*, thus avoiding the English word 'matter' which now has connotations, derived from sciences such as Physics, that are not or may not be relevant here. In addition, the term requires contextual, metaphysical, interpretation, for as used here it may or may not be equivalent to the ὕλη of Poemandres 10, of III:1, καὶ τὰ λοιπά. Hence why I have here chosen 'materies' rather than - as in those other tractates - 'substance'.

[17] The goddess Δίκη - qv. Hesiod, Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι, vv 213-218 - is the goddess of Fairness and of Tradition manifest as Tradition is in Ancestral Custom(s). The usual translation of δίκη is Justice or Judgement which English terms, with their various post Greco-Roman and modern abstractive and legal connotations, are in my view rather misleading.

[18] I incline toward the view that the song, begun in section 17, ends in section 18, an ending signalled by the expression at the beginning of section 19, "such is what the Arts within me loudly call out," ταῦτα βοῶσιν αἱ δυνάμεις αἱ ἐν ἐμοί. Sections 19-21 thus being a personal exegesis.

[19] Crucial in understanding the paganus nature of the song are the term

ὕμνος and the lines οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ τοῦ νοῦ ὀφθαλμός, καὶ δέξαιτο τῶν δυνάμεων μου τὴν εὐλογία. αἱ δυνάμεις αἱ ἐν ἐμοί, ὑμνεῖτε τὸ ἐν καὶ τὸ πᾶν.

Given that the English term 'hymn' is now commonly associated with Christianity it is in my view an unsatisfactory translation of ὕμνος in this as in other tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum especially as ὕμνος was used by Homer in The Odyssey (VIII, 428-9) in association with enjoying a splendid feast, τὰ οἱ Φαίηκες ἀμύμονες ἐνθάδ' ἔνεικαν δαιτί τε τέρπηται καὶ ἀοιδῆς ὕμνον ἀκούων, where 'song' is an appropriate translation, as it is in this tractate.

To appreciate the aforementioned lines in the apposite cultural and textual context, is to understand that δυνάμεων is not, in this tractate and in some others, suggestive of 'power' possessed by an individual - as in the egoistic 'my powers' - but rather a skill, an ability, craft, an art, that has been cultivated and learnt as in a person learning the art of chanson.

Hence my reading of those lines as:

May the one who is the eye of perception accept this fond
celebration

From my Arts.

Let those Arts within me sing for The One and for All That Exists.

Which is in contrast to the conventional interpretation, which is along the following lines: "He is the mind's eye. May he accept praise from my powers. Powers with me sing a hymn to the one and to the universe."

Appendix I

Logos Δ. The Esoteric Song

Cantio Arcana

ὑμνωδία κρύπτη λόγος Δ

πᾶσα φύσις κόσμου προσδεχέσθω τοῦ ὕμνου τὴν ἀκοήν. ἀνοίγηθι γῆ, ἀνοιγῆτω μοι πᾶς μοχλὸς ὄμβρου, τὰ δένδρα μὴ σειέσθε. ὑμνεῖν μέλλω τὸν τῆς κτίσεως κύριον, καὶ τὸ πᾶν καὶ τὸ ἐν. ἀνοίγητε οὐρανοί, ἄνεμοί τε στῆτε. ὁ κύκλος ὁ ἀθάνατος τοῦ θεοῦ, προσδεξάσθω μου τὸν λόγον· μέλλω γὰρ ὑμνεῖν τὸν κτίσαντα τὰ πάντα, τὸν πῆξαντα τὴν γῆν καὶ οὐρανὸν κρεμάσαντα καὶ ἐπιτάξαντα ἐκ τοῦ ὠκεα νοῦ τὸ γλυκὺ ὕδωρ εἰς τὴν οἰκουμένην καὶ ἀοίκητον ὑπάρχειν εἰς διατροφήν καὶ κτίσιν πάντων τῶν ἀνθρώπων, τὸν ἐπιτάξαντα πῦρ

φανῆναι εἰς πᾶσαν πρᾶξιν θεοῖς τε καὶ ἀνθρώποις. δῶμεν πάντες ὁμοῦ αὐτῷ
τὴν εὐλογίαν, τῷ ἐπὶ τῶν οὐρανῶν μετεώρῳ, τῷ πάσης φύσεως κτίστη.

οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ τοῦ νοῦ ὀφθαλμός, καὶ δέξαιτο τῶν δυνάμεων μου τὴν εὐλογίαν.
αἱ δυνάμεις αἱ ἐν ἐμοί, ὑμνεῖτε τὸ ἐν καὶ τὸ πᾶν· συνάσατε τῷ θελήματί μου
πᾶσαι αἱ ἐν ἐμοὶ δυνάμεις. γνώσις ἀγία, φωτισθεὶς ἀπὸ σοῦ, διὰ σοῦ τὸ νοητὸν
φῶς ὑμῶν χαίρω ἐν χαρᾷ νοῦ. πᾶσαι δυνάμεις ὑμνεῖτε σὺν ἐμοί. καὶ σύ μοι,
ἐγκράτεια, ὕμνει. δικαιοσύνη μου, τὸ δίκαιον ὕμνει δι' ἐμοῦ. κοινωνία ἡ ἐμή, τὸ
πᾶν ὕμνει δι' ἐμοῦ· ὕμνει ἀλήθεια τὴν ἀλήθειαν. τὸ ἀγαθόν, ἀγαθόν, ὕμνει· ζωὴ
καὶ φῶς, ἀφ' ὑμῶν εἰς ὑμᾶς χωρεῖ ἡ εὐλογία. εὐχαριστῶ σοι, πάτερ, ἐνέργεια
τῶν δυνάμεων. εὐχαριστῶ σοι, θεέ, δύναμις τῶν ἐνεργειῶν μου· ὁ σὸς Λόγος δι'
ἐμοῦ ὕμνει σέ. δι' ἐμοῦ δέξαι τὸ πᾶν λόγῳ, λογικὴν θυσίαν.

Let every Physis of Kosmos favourably listen to this song.
Gaia: be open, so that every defence against the Abyss is opened for me;
Trees: do not incurvate;
For I now will sing for the Master Artisan,
For All That Exists, and for The One.

Open: you Celestial Ones; and you, The Winds, be calm.
Let the deathless clan of theos accept this, my logos.
For I shall sing of the maker of everything;
Of who established the Earth,
Of who affixed the Heavens,
Of who decreed that Oceanus should bring forth sweet water
To where was inhabited and where was uninhabited
To so sustain all mortals;
Of who decreed that Fire should bring light
To divinities and mortals for their every use.

Let us all join in fond celebration of who is far beyond the Heavens:
That artisan of every Physis.

May the one who is the eye of perceivance accept this fond celebration
From my Arts.

Let those Arts within me sing for The One and for All That Exists
As I desire all those Arts within me to blend, together.

Numinous knowledge, from you a numinal understanding:
Through you, a song of apprehended phaos,
Delighted with delightful perceivance.
Join me, all you Arts, in song.

You, mastery, sing; and you, respectful of custom,
Through me sing of such respect.

Sing, my companions, for All That Exists:
Honesty, through me, sing of being honest,
The noble, sing of nobility.

Phaos and Life: fond celebration spreads from us to you.

My gratitude, father: actusity of those my Arts.
My gratitude, theos: Artisan of my actusities;
Through me, the Logos is sung for you.
Through me, may Kosmos accept
Such respectful wordful offerings as this.

Appendix II

A Note On The Term Jews In The Gospel of John

In the past century or so there has been much discussion about the term 'the Jews' in standard English translations of the Gospel of John and thus whether or not the Gospel portrays Jews in a negative way given such words about them as the following, from the translation known as the Douay-Rheims Bible:

You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and he stood not in the truth; because truth is not in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof. (8.44)

In the Gospel of John the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι first occurs in verse 19 of chapter one:

ὅτε ἀπέστειλαν πρὸς αὐτὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερεῖς καὶ
Λευίτας ἵνα ἐρωτήσωσιν αὐτόν

In the Douay-Rheims Bible this is translated as: "when the Jews sent from Jerusalem priests and Levites to him." In the King James Bible: "when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him."

In my translation of John - a work in progress [1] - I translated as: "when the Judaeans dispatched priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him."

For, after much consideration, I chose - perhaps controversially - to translate Ἰουδαία by Judaeans, given (i) that the English terms Jews and Jewish (deriving from the 13th/14th century words gyv/gyw and Iewe) have acquired connotations (modern and medieval) which are not relevant to the period under consideration; and (ii) that the Greek term derives from a place name, Judaea (as does the Latin iudaeus); and (iii) that the Anglo-Saxon version (ASV) retains

the sense of the Greek: here (iudeas) as elsewhere, as for example at 2.6, æfter iudea geclensunge, "according to Judaeans cleansing."

Such a translation not only dispenses with the "portraying Jews in a negative way" discussion but also reveals a consistent narrative, with the Evangelist not writing that "the Jews" sought to kill Jesus, but only that some Judaeans desired to do so. In addition, as the story of the Samaritan (Samaritan) woman in chapter 4 makes clear, it places into perspective the difference between Judaea, Samaria, and Galilee, and why the Evangelist narrates that it was "necessary" for Jesus to pass through Samaria on the way to Galilee, Ἔδει δὲ αὐτὸν διέρχεσθαι διὰ τῆς Σαμαρείας.

Given what follows (chapter 4 vv.9-10) this suggests a certain historical antipathy between the people of Judaea and the people of Samaria even though the Samaritans – as is apparent from the Gospel – shared many, but not all, of the religious traditions of the Judaeans, as did most of the people of Galilee, including Jesus. Since the Evangelist specifically writes that it was Judaeans who sought to kill Jesus (5.18; 7.1; 7.19 et seq) it seems as if the antipathy by Judaeans to Jesus of Nazareth in particular and to Samaritans in general – with the Evangelist stating that Judaeans would not share or make use of (συγχράομαι) Samaritan things – arose from Judaeans in general believing that their religious practices based on their particular interpretation of the religion of Moses and the Prophets were correct and that they themselves as a result were 'righteous' – better than Samaritans – with Jesus the Galilean considered by many Judaeans, and certainly by the priestly authorities, as having committed (qv. 10.33) 'blasphemy' (βλασφημία) and thus should be killed.

Such differing religious traditions, such internecine feuds, such religious fanaticism and intolerance on behalf of some Judaeans – an intolerance exemplified also when (qv. 10.22) one of the guards of Caiaphas the High Priest (Καϊάφαν τὸν ἀρχιερέα) physically assaults Jesus for not showing the High Priest "due deference" – exemplifies why in this Gospel ἰουδαία should be translated not by the conventional term 'Jews' but rather by Judaeans.

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In respect of the term ἰουδαία, it is interesting to consider two writings by Flavius Josephus, and one by Cassius Dio Cocceianus (dating from c.230 CE). The two works by Josephus are conventionally entitled 'Antiquities of the Jews' (c. 93 CE) and 'The Jewish Wars' (c. 75 CE) although I incline toward the view that such titles are incorrect and that the former – entitled in Greek, Ἰουδαϊκῆς ἀρχαιολογίας – should be 'Judaeans Antiquities', while the latter – entitled in Greek, Ἱστορία Ἰουδαϊκοῦ πολέμου πρὸς Ῥωμαίων – should be 'History of the Conflict Between Judaeans and Romaeans', and this because of how Josephus, in those works, describes himself and that conflict.

Ιουδαικής αρχαιολογίας

In this work Josephus wrote:

1.4 τούτων δὴ τῶν προειρημένων αἰτιῶν αἱ τελευταῖαι δύο κάμοι συμβεβήκασιν· τὸν μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον ἡμῖν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις γενόμενον [...]

1.5 διάταξιν τοῦ πολιτεύματος ἐκ τῶν Ἑβραϊκῶν μεθρημηνευμένην γραμμάτων [...]

1.6 δηλῶσαι τίνες ὄντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ἰουδαῖοι

a) 1.4. τὸν μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον ἡμῖν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις γενόμενον, "how that conflict between Romaeans and we Judaeans came about."

To be pedantic, Ῥωμαίους – Romaeans – implies those "of Rome". That is, the word suggests those associated with a particular place, as does the term Judaeans. Which association of people with a particular place or region is historically germane.

b) 1.5. διάταξιν τοῦ πολιτεύματος τῶν Ἑβραϊκῶν μεθρημηνευμένην γραμμάτων, "the decrees of our civitatum as expounded in the writings of the Hebrews." Less literally, "the laws of our communities as expounded in the writings of the Hebrews."

Thus he does not write about the "Jewish scriptures" or about "the scriptures of the Jews", even though the consensus is that γραφή here – as throughout the New Testament – has the meaning 'scripture' rather than its normal sense of 'that which is written', with the English word 'scripture' (usually written with a capital S) having the specific meaning "the writings of the Old and/or of the New Testament". However, this specific meaning only dates back to c.1300 and was used by Wycliffe in his 1389 translation, from whence, via Tyndale, it was used in the King James version. Prior to 1300, the ASV has *gewrite* – 'what was written', writing, inscription – with the Latin of Jerome having *scripturae*, as does Codex Palatinus of the earlier Vetus Latina. [2] Classically understood, the Latin has the same meaning as the Greek γραφή: writing, something written, an inscription. [3]

c) 1.6 δηλῶσαι τίνες ὄντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ἰουδαῖοι, "to make known how Judaeans came about."

Ἱστορία Ἰουδαϊκοῦ πολέμου πρὸς Ῥωμαίους

In the Προοίμιον of this book Josephus wrote:

a) Ἰώσηπος Ματθίου παῖς ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερέυς

That is, Josephus describes himself as "the son of Matthias, a priest, from Jerusalem." He does not write that he is "Jewish" and nor does he write that he is from Judaea.

b) σχεδὸν δὲ καὶ ὧν ἀκοῇ παρειλήφαμεν ἢ πόλεων πρὸς πόλεις ἢ ἔθνων ἔθνεσι συρραγέντων.

A conventional translation would have πόλις as 'city' and ἔθνος as 'nation' so that the latter part would conventionally be translated along the following lines: "cities would have fought against cities, or nations against nations."

However, the terms 'nation' and 'city' are or can be misleading, given their modern connotations, whereas a historical approximation for ἔθνος would be 'tribe', 'people', or 'community', and for πόλις – understood here as referring to a particular named place with a history of settlement – town, fortified town, burg, borough, municipality. Such choices would produce a translation such as: "municipality would have fought municipality, community with community." The evocation is thus more parochial, more regional, as befits the historical past and the context: here, an insurrection, a conflict between the people of Judaea and the armed forces commanded by Roman citizens (those "of Rome") duly appointed to positions of power.

Regarding The Term Ἰουδαϊκός

While the term is conventionally cited as meaning Jewish – although LSJ provides no sources, with the English words 'Jew' and 'Jewish' not existing until the 13th/14th century CE – the sense of the term in Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία by Cassius Dio Cocceianus (for example, 67.14.2, 68.1.2) is Judaeian, referring to the people of Judaea and their customs and way of life, Ἰουδαϊκοῦ βίου, τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἥθη:

ὅφ' ἥς καὶ ἄλλοι ἐς τὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἥθη ἐξοκέλλοντες πολλοὶ
κατεδικάσθησαν καὶ οἱ μὲν ἀπέθανον οἱ δὲ τῶν γούν οὐσιῶν
ἐστερήθησαν (67.14.2)

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Conclusion

As noted in the Preface to my translation of The Gospel of John, I have endeavoured to avoid reading into the text the meanings that some of the English words conventionally used in other translations – and given in lexicons – may now suggest, or do suggest often as a result of over a thousand years of exegesis. In the matter of Ἰουδαία the translation by the relatively recent term 'Jews' has suggested meanings which, at least in my fallible opinion, are irrelevant to the milieu of the Gospels and which thus distorts, or which can distort, the narrative of the Gospel of John.

[1] As of July 2017, the translation of and a commentary on chapters one to four of The Gospel of John have been completed, which partial translation and commentary is available at: <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/gospel-according-to-john/>

[2] For context, the verse in the Latin version of Jerome is: cum ergo resurrexisset a mortuis recordati sunt discipuli eius quia hoc dicebat et crediderunt scripturae et sermoni quem dixit iesus.

The Latin of Codex Palatinus, Vetus Latina: Cum ergo resurrexit a mortuis commonefacti sunt discipuli eius quoniam hoc dicebat et crediderunt scripturae et sermoni quem dixit IHS.

The Latin of Codex Brixianus, Vetus Latina: cum ergo resurrexisset a mortuis recordati sunt discipuli eius quia hoc dixerat et crediderunt scripturae et sermoni quem dixit IHS.

[3] Qv. Tacitus: "non diurna actorum scriptura reperio ullo insigni officio functam." *Annals*, Book III, 3.

Appendix III

Suffering And The Human Culture Of Pathei-Mathos

This is an extract from a written reply, in September 2013, to a personal correspondent. It has been revised for inclusion here, with some footnotes added in an effort to elucidate some parts of the text.

In respect of the question whether I am optimistic about our future as a species, I vacillate between optimism and pessimism, knowing as I - and so many - do from experience that the world contains people who do good things [1], people who do bad things, and people who when influenced or led or swayed by some-thing or someone can veer either way; and given that it seems as if in each generation there are those - many - who have not learned or who cannot learn from the pathei-mathos of previous generations, from our collective human πάθει μάθος that has brought-into-being a culture of pathei-mathos thousands of years old. Historically - prior to, during after the time of Cicero, and over a thousand years later during and after the European Renaissance - this culture was evident in Studia Humanitatis, and is now

presented in works inspired by or recollecting personal pathos and described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts; in particular works of literature, poetry, and drama; in non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and by art-forms such as films and documentaries.

This culture of pathos reveals to us the beauty, the numinosity, of personal love; the numinosity of humility, and compassion; and the tragic lamentable unnecessary suffering caused by hubris, dishonour, selfishness, inconsiderance, intolerance, prejudice, hatred, war, extremism, and ideologies [2]. A world-wide suffering so evident, today, for example in the treatment of and the violence (by men) toward women; in the continuing armed conflicts - regional and local, over some-thing - that displace tens of thousands of people and cause destruction, injury, and hundreds of thousands of deaths; and evident also in the killing of innocent people [3] by those who adhere to a harsh interpretation of some religion or some political ideology.

Do good people, world-wide, outweigh bad ones? My experiences and travels incline me to believe they may do, although it seems as if the damage the bad ones do, the suffering they cause, sometimes and for a while outweighs the good that others do. But does the good done, in societies world-wide, now outweigh the bad done, especially such large-scale suffering as is caused by despots, corruption, armed conflict, and repressive regimes? Probably, at least in some societies. And yet even in such societies where, for example, education is widespread, there always seem to be selfish, dishonourable, inconsiderate, people; and also people such as the extremist I was with my hubriatic certitude-of-knowing inciting or causing hatred and violence and intolerance and glorifying war and Kampf and trying to justify killing in the name of some abstraction or some belief or some cause or some ideology. People mostly, it seems, immune to and/or intolerant of the learning of the culture of pathos; a learning available to us in literature, music, Art, memoirs, in the aural and written recollections of those who endured or who witnessed hatred, violence, intolerance, conflict, war, and killing, and a learning also available in the spiritual message of those who taught humility, goodness, love, and tolerance. Immune or intolerant people who apparently can only change - or who could only possibly change for the better - only when they themselves are afflicted by such vicissitudes, such personal misfortune and suffering, as is the genesis of their own pathos.

Thus, and for example, in Europe there is the specific pathos that the First and the Second World Wars wrought. A collective learning regarding the destruction, the suffering, the brutality, the horror, of wars where wretched machines and mass manufactured weapons played a significant role.

All this, while sad, is perhaps the result of our basic human nature; for we are jumelle, and not only because we are "deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal" [4] but also because it seems to me that what is good and bad resides in us all [5], nascent or alive or as part of our personal past, and that it is just so

easy, so tempting, so enjoyable, sometimes, to indulge in, to do, what is bad, and often harder for us to do what is right. Furthermore, we do seem to have a tendency - or perhaps a need - to ascribe what is bad to being 'out there', in something abstract or in others while neglecting or not perceiving our own faults and mistakes and while asserting or believing that we, and those similar to us or who we are in agreement with, are right and thus have the 'correct', the righteous, answers. Thus it is often easier to find what is bad 'out there' rather than within ourselves; easier to hate than to love, especially as a hatred of impersonal others sometimes affords us a reassuring sense of identity and a sense of being 'better' than those others.

Will it therefore require another thousand, or two thousand, or three thousand years - or more or less millennia - before we human beings en masse, world-wide, are empathic, tolerant, kind, and honourable? Is such a basic change in our nature even possible? Certainly there are some - and not only ideologues of one kind or another - who would argue and who have argued that such a change is not desirable. And is such a change in our nature contingent, as I incline to believe, upon the fair allocation of world resources and solving problems such as hunger and poverty and preventing preventable diseases? Furthermore, how can or could or should such a basic change be brought about - through an organized religion or religions, or through individual governments and their laws and their social and political and economic and educational policies, or through a collocation of governments, world-wide; or through individuals reforming themselves and personally educating others by means of, for example, the common culture of pathei-mathos which all humans share and which all human societies have contributed to for thousands of years? Which leads us on to questions regarding dogma, faith, and dissent; and to questions regarding government and compulsion and 'crime and punishment' and whether or not 'the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few'; and also to questions regarding the efficacy of the reforming, spiritual, personal way given that spiritual ways teaching love, tolerance, humility, and compassion - and virtuous as they are, and alleviating and preventing suffering as they surely have - have not after several thousand years effected such a change in humans en masse.

I have to admit that I have no definitive or satisfactory answers to all these, and similar, questions; although my own pathei-mathos - and my lamentable four-decade long experience as an extremist, an ideologue, and as a selfish opinionated inconsiderate person - incline me to prefer the reforming, spiritual, personal way since I feel that such an approach, involving as it does a personal study of, a personal transmission of, the culture of pathei-mathos - and a personal knowing and a living of the humility that the culture of pathei-mathos teaches - is a way that does not cause nor contribute to the suffering that still so blights this world. A personal preference for such a numinous way even though I am aware of three things: of my past propensity to be wrong and thus of the necessary fallible nature of my answers; of the limited nature and thus the long time-scale (of many millennia) that such a way implies; and that it is possible,

albeit improbable except in Science Fiction, that good people of honourable intentions may some day find a non-suffering-causing way by which governments or society or perhaps some new form of governance may in some manner bring about that change, en masse, in our human nature required to evolve us into individuals of empathy, compassion, and honour, who thus have something akin to a 'prime directive' to guide them in their dealings with those who are different, in whatever way, from ourselves.

Were I to daydream about some future time when such a galactic 'prime directive' exists, directing we spacefaring humans not to interfere in the internal affairs of non-terrans who are different, in whatever way, from ourselves, then I would be inclined to speculate that unless we by then have fundamentally and irretrievably changed ourselves for the better then it would not be long before some human or some human authority, somewhere, manufactured some sly excuse to order to try and justify ignoring it. For that is what we have done, among ourselves, for thousands of years; making then breaking some treaty or other; making some excuse to plunder resources; having some legal institution change some existing law or make some new law to give us the 'right' to do what it is we want to do; or manufacture some new legislative or governing body in order to 'legalize' what we do or have already done. Always using a plethora of words - and, latterly, legalese - to persuade others, and often ourselves, that what we do or are about to do or have already done is justified, justifiable, necessary, or right.

Perhaps the future excuse to so interfere contrary to a prime directive would be the familiar one of 'our security'; perhaps it would be an economic one of needing to exploit 'their' resources; perhaps it would be one regarding the threat of 'terrorism'; perhaps it would be the ancient human one, hallowed by so much blood, of 'our' assumed superiority, of 'their system' being 'repressive' or 'undemocratic' or of they - those 'others' - being 'backward' or 'uncivilized' and in need of being enlightened and 're-educated' by our 'progressive' ideas. Or, more probable, it would be some new standard or some new fashionable political or social or even religious dogma by which we commend ourselves on our progress and which we use, consciously or otherwise, to judge others by.

The current reality is that even if we had or soon established a terran 'prime directive' directing we humans not to interfere in the internal affairs of other humans here on Earth who are different, in whatever way, from ourselves, it is fairly certain it "would not be long before some human or some human authority, somewhere, manufactured some sly excuse to order to try and justify ignoring it..."

Which mention of a terran 'prime directive' leads to two of the other questions which cause me to vacillate between optimism and pessimism in regard to our future as a species. The question of increasing population, and the question of the finite resources of this Earth. Which suggests to me, as some

others, that - especially as the majority of people now live in urban areas - a noble option is for us, as a species, to cooperate and betake ourselves to colonize our Moon, then Mars, and seek to develop such technology as would take us beyond our Solar System. For if we do not do this then the result would most probably be, at some future time, increasing conflict over land and resources, mass migrations (probably resulting in more conflict) and such governments or authorities as then exist forced by economic circumstance to adopt policies to reduce or limit their own population. Global problems probably exasperated still further by the detrimental changes that available evidence indicates could possibly result from what has been termed 'climate change' [6].

But is the beginning of this noble option of space colonization viable in the near future? Possibly not, given that the few countries that have the resources, the space expertise and the technology necessary - and the means to develop existing space technology - do not consider such exploration and colonization as a priority, existing as they seem to do in a world where nation-States still compete for influence and power and where conflict - armed, deadly, and otherwise - is still regarded as a viable solution to problems.

Which leads we human beings, with our jumelle character, confined to this small planet we call Earth, possibly continuing as we have, for millennia, continued: a quarrelsome species, often engaged (like primates) in minor territorial disputes; in our majority unempathic; often inconsiderate, often prejudiced (even though we like to believe otherwise); often inclined to place our self-interest and our pleasure first; often prone to being manipulated or to manipulating others; often addicted to the slyness of words spoken and written and heard and read; often believing 'we' are better than 'them'; and fighting, raping, hating, killing, invading here, interfering there. And beset by the problems wrought by increasing population, by dwindling resources, by mass migrations, by continuing armed conflicts (regional, local, supranational, over something) and possibly also affected by the effects of climate change.

Yet also, sometimes despite ourselves, we are beings capable of - and have shown over millennia - compassion, kindness, gentleness, tolerance, love, fairness, reason, and a valourous self-sacrifice that is and has been inspirational. But perhaps above all we have, in our majority, exuded and kept and replenished the virtue of hope; hoping, dreaming, of better times, a better future, sometime, somewhere - and not, as it happens, for ourselves but for our children and their children and the future generations yet to be born. And it is this hope that changes us, and has changed us, for the better, as our human culture of pathos so eloquently, so numinously, and so tragically, reveals.

Thus the question seems to be whether we still have hope enough, dreams enough, nobility enough, and can find some way to change ourselves, to thus bring a better - a more fairer, more just, more compassionate - future into-being without causing or contributing to the suffering which so blights, and which has

so blighted, our existence on Earth.

Personally, I am inclined to wonder if the way we need - the hope, the dream, we need - is that of setting forth to explore and colonize our Moon, then Mars, and then the worlds beyond our Solar System, guided by a prime directive.

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Notes

[1] I understand 'the good' as what alleviates or does not cause suffering; what is compassionate; what is honourable; what is reasoned and balanced. Honour being here, and elsewhere in my recent writings, understood as the instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous.

[2] I have expanded, a little, on what I mean by 'the culture of pathei-mathos' in my tract *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God*.

[3] As defined by my 'philosophy of pathei-mathos', I understand innocence as "an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us, are therefore unjudged us by and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence of others - until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise - is the fair, the reasoned, the numinous, the human, thing to do. Empathy and πάθει μάθος incline us toward treating other human beings as we ourselves would wish to be treated; that is they incline us toward fairness, toward self-restraint, toward being well-mannered, and toward an appreciation and understanding of innocence."

[4] Pœmandres (Corpus Hermeticum), 15 - διὰ τοῦτο παρὰ πάντα τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς ζῶα διπλοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ ἄνθρωπος

As I noted in my translation of and commentary on the Pœmandres tract, "Jumelle. For διπλοῦς. The much underused and descriptive English word jumelle - from the Latin gemellus - describes some-thing made in, or composed of, two parts, and is therefore most suitable here, more so than common words such as 'double' or twofold."

[5] qv. Sophocles, Antigone, v.334, vv.365-366

πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ κούδεν ἄνθρώπου δεινότερον πέλει...
σοφόν τι τὸ μηχανόεν τέχνας ὑπὲρ ἐλπίδ' ἔχων
τοτέ μὲν κακόν, ἄλλοτ' ἐπ' ἐσθλὸν ἔρπει

There exists much that is strange, yet nothing
Has more strangeness than a human being...
Beyond his own hopes, his cunning
In inventive arts - he who arrives

Now with dishonour, then with chivalry

[6] Many people have a view about 'climate change' - for or against - for a variety of reasons. My own view is that the scientific evidence available at the moment seems to indicate that there is a change resulting from human activity and that this change could possibly be detrimental, in certain ways, to us and to the other life with which we share this planet. The expressions 'seems to indicate' and 'could possibly be' are necessary given that this view of mine might need to be, and should be, reassessed if and when new evidence or facts become available.

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Concerning ἀγαθός and νοῦς in the Corpus Hermeticum

Three of the many Greek terms of interest in respect of understanding the varied weltanschauungen outlined in the texts that comprise the Corpus Hermeticum are ἀγαθός and νοῦς and θεός, with conventional translations of these terms as 'good' and 'Mind' and 'god' (or God) imparting the sense of reading somewhat declamatory sermons about god/God and 'the good' familiar from over a thousand years of persons preaching about Christianity interspersed with definitive philosophical statements about 'Mind', as if a "transcendent intelligence, rationality," or a "Mental or psychic faculty" or both, or something similar, is meant or implied.

Thus the beginning of tractate VI - τὸ ἀγαθόν, ὃ Ἀσκληπιέ, ἐν οὐδενί ἐστιν, εἰ μὴ ἐν μόνῳ τῷ θεῷ, μᾶλλον δὲ τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ θεὸς αἰεὶ - and dealing as it does with both ἀγαθός and θεός, has been translated, by Mead, as "Good, O Asclepius, is in none else save God alone; nay, rather, Good is God Himself eternally," [1] and by Copenhaver as "The good, Asclepius, is in nothing except in god alone, or rather god himself is always the good." [2]

In respect of νοῦς, a typical example is from Poemandres 12 - ὁ δὲ πάντων πατήρ ὁ Νοῦς, ὦν ζωὴ καὶ φῶς, ἀπεκύησεν ἄνθρωπον αὐτῷ ἴσον, οὗ ἡράσθη ὡς ἰδίου τόκου· περικαλλὴς γάρ, τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς εἰκόνα ἔχων· ὄντως γὰρ καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἡράσθη τῆς ἰδίας μορφῆς, παρέδωκε τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πάντα δημιουργήματα. The beginning of this is translated by Mead as "But All-Father Mind, being Life and Light, did bring forth Man co-equal to Himself, with whom He fell in love, as being His own child for he was beautiful beyond compare," and by Copenhaver as "Mind, the father of all, who is life and light, gave birth to a man like himself whom he loved as his own child. The man was most fair: he had the father's image."

Similarly, in respect of Poemandres 22 - παραγίνομαι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ὁ Νοῦς τοῖς ὁσίοις καὶ ἀγαθοῖς καὶ καθαροῖς καὶ ἐλεήμοσι, τοῖς εὐσεβοῦσι, καὶ ἡ παρουσία μου γίνεται βοήθεια, καὶ εὐθὺς τὰ πάντα γνωρίζουσι καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἱλάσκονται ἀγαπητικῶς καὶ εὐχαριστοῦσιν εὐλογοῦντες καὶ ὕμνοῦντες τεταγμένως πρὸς αὐτὸν τῇ στοργῇ - which is translated by Mead as "I, Mind, myself am present with holy men and good, the pure and merciful, men who live piously. [To such] my presence doth become an aid, and straightway they gain gnosis of all things, and win the Father's love by their pure lives, and give Him thanks, invoking on Him blessings, and chanting hymns, intent on Him with ardent love," and by Copenhaver as "I myself, the mind, am present to the blessed and good and pure and merciful - to the reverent - and my presence becomes a help; they quickly recognize everything, and they propitiate the father lovingly and give thanks, praising and singing hymns affectionately and in the order appropriate to him."

As explained in various places in my commentary on tractates I, III, IV, VIII, and XI, and in two appendices [3], I incline toward the view that - given what such English terms as 'the good', Mind, and god now impute, often as a result of two thousand years of Christianity and post-Renaissance, and modern, philosophy - such translations tend to impose particular and modern interpretations on the texts and thus do not present to the reader the ancient ethos that forms the basis of the varied weltanschauungen outlined in the texts of the Corpus Hermeticum.

To avoid such impositions, and in an endeavour to express at least something of that ancient (and in my view non-Christian) ethos, I have - for reasons explained in the relevant sections of my commentary - transliterated θεός as theos [4], νοῦς as perceiveration, or according to context, perceiverance; and ἀγαθός as, according to context, nobility, noble, or honourable [5]. Which is why my reading of the Greek of the three examples above provides the reader with a somewhat different impression of the texts:

° Asclepius, the noble exists in no-thing: only in theos alone; indeed, theos is, of himself and always, what is noble. [6]

° Perceiveration, as Life and phaos, father of all, brought forth in his own likeness a most beautiful mortal who, being his child, he loved.

° I, perceiveration, attend to those of respectful deeds, the honourable, the refined, the compassionate, those aware of the numinous; to whom my being is a help so that they soon acquire knowledge of the whole and are affectionately gracious toward the father, fondly celebrating in song his position.

But, as I noted in respect of ἀγαθός in the *On Ethos And Interpretation* appendix, whether these particular insights of mine are valid, others will have to decide. But they - and my translations of the tractates in general - certainly, at least in my fallible opinion, convey an impression about ancient Hermeticism which is rather different from that conveyed by other translations.

David Myatt
March 2017

Extract from a letter in reply to a correspondent who, in respect of the Corpus Hermeticum, enquired about my translation of terms such as ἀγαθός and νοῦς. I have, for publication here, added a footnote which references my translations of and commentaries on five tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum.

Notes

[1] G.R.S Mead. *Thrice-Greatest Hermes*. Theosophical Society (London). 1906.

[2] B. Copenhaver. *Hermetica*. Cambridge University Press. 1992

[3] My translation of and commentary on tractates I, III, IV, and XI - and the two appendices - is available in pdf format at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/03/08/corpus-hermeticum-i-iii-iv-xi/>

My translation of and commentary on tractate VIII is available in pdf format at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/03/20/corpus-hermeticum-viii/>

[4] To be pedantic, when θεός is mentioned in the texts it often literally refers to 'the' theos so that at the beginning of tractate VI, for example, the reference is to 'the theos' rather than to 'god'.

[5] In respect of 'the good' - τὸ ἀγαθόν - as 'honourable', qv. Seneca, *Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales*, LXXI, 4, "summum bonum est quod honestum est. Et quod magis admireris: unum bonum est, quod honestum est, cetera falsa et adulterina bona sunt."

[6] The suggestion seems to be that 'the theos' is the origin, the archetype, of what is noble, and that only through and because of theos can what is noble be presented and recognized for what it is, and often recognized by those who are, or that which is, an eikon of theos. Hence why in tractate IV it is said that "the eikon will guide you,"; why in tractate XI that "Kosmos is the eikon of theos, Kosmos [the eikon] of Aion, the Sun [the eikon] of Aion, and the Sun [the eikon] of mortals," and why in the same tractate it is said that "there is nothing that cannot be an eikon of theos," and why in Poemandres 31 theos is said to "engender all physis as eikon."

As I noted in my commentary - qv. especially the mention of Maximus of Constantinople in respect of Poemandres 31 - I have transliterated εἰκὼν.

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On Translating Ancient Greek

Given that I have numerous times over the past ten or so years been asked by various individuals (including Greek scholars) about my Greek translations, and given that it seems some of my translations (such as parts of the Corpus Hermeticum) are regarded as "iconoclastic and controversial", it seems fitting to provide a rather more detailed explanation of my methodology over and above my few, short, previous remarks.

When studying New Testament Greek while a monk in a Christian monastery in the 1970s - and being already familiar (from schooldays and later studies including at that monastery) with Homer's Greek and the way that Aeschylus often omitted 'the article' and invented new words to express his meaning - I began to wonder, in respect of translations, about what I have since termed 'retrospective re-interpretation'. As I mentioned in my essay *Some Examples Regarding Translation and Questions of Interpretation*, included as an Appendix to my Poemandres translation and commentary:

"I incline toward the view that in translations into English it is often best to avoid words that impose or seem to impose a meaning on an ancient text especially if the sense that an English word now imputes is the result of centuries of assumptions or opinions or influences and thus has acquired a modern meaning, or an interpretation, somewhat at variance with the culture, the milieu, of the time when the text that is being translated was written. Especially so in the matter of religious or spiritual texts where so many people rely or seem to rely on the translations, the interpretations, of others and where certain interpretations seem to have become fixed.

Thus, it may be helpful if one can suggest, however controversial or iconoclastic they may seem in their time, reasoned alternatives for certain words important for a specific and a general understanding of a particular text, and helpful because such alternatives might enable a new appreciation of such a text, as if for instance one is reading it for the first time with the joy of discovery.

For example, one of the prevalent English words used in translations of the New Testament, and one of the words now commonly associated with revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam, is sin. A word which now imputes and for centuries has imputed a particular and at times somewhat strident if not harsh moral attitude, with sinners starkly contrasted with the righteous and the saved, and with sin, what is evil, what is perverse, to be shunned and shudderingly avoided."

I then proceeded to give various quotations and argued that the original sense of the English word 'sin' was

"the sense of doing what was wrong, of committing an error, of making a mistake, of being at fault; at most of overstepping the bounds, of transgressing limits imposed by others, and thus being 'guilty' of such an infraction, a sense which the suggested etymology of the word *syn* implies: from the Latin *sons, sontis*."

Hence why in translating John 8.7 I eschewed the much overused and now often pejorative word *sin*:

So, as they continued to ask [for an answer] he straightened himself, saying to them: Let he who has never made a mistake [Ἀναμαρτητος] throw the first stone at her.

ὥς δὲ ἐπέμενον ἐρωτῶντες αὐτόν, ἀνέκυψεν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὁ ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν πρῶτος ἐπ' αὐτὴν βαλέτω λίθον.

While such a translation may well be controversial, to me it imparts something important regarding the teachings, and the life, of Jesus of Nazareth: something quite human, something rather different from a stern preacher preaching about 'sin'; something which to me seems to express what the Beatitudes express, and something which individuals such as George Fox and William Pen many centuries later tried to say and write about Christianity and about the teachings and the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

This seeking after meaning beyond what a particular English word now often denoted - in common usage or otherwise - I applied to my translations of some fragments of Heraclitus, to my translations of three tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum, and am applying to my on-going (as of 2016) translation of and commentary on the Gospel of John. I also used this principle, albeit then in a mostly intuitive way, when undertaking my translations, decades before, of Sophocles and Aeschylus.

Thus I sought to try and understand - to apprehend, both intuitively and by scholarly means - what the author was expressing or sought to express all those centuries ago; which necessitated understanding the milieu, the ethos, the culture, of the time and the place where the author lived. My approach was therefore more than strictly grammatical; more than lexicographical.

Why is why, in the Hermetic tractates the translation of such words as ἀγαθός and εὐσεβέω and θεός were considered in the necessary context. {1}

What, for example, did θεός mean and imply in the Hellenic times that the texts were written? My view is that to translate as 'god' is to miss the variety of possible meanings, since 'god' to so many people in the West imparts the sense of, if not the God of Christianity, then of 'the one deity' of neo-pythagoreanism and gnosticism. This then leads and has led to speculation as whether God and 'the one deity' are the same and whether the texts are neo-pythagorean and/or gnostic and/or possibly influenced by early Christianity. The texts under consideration, however, are unclear as to exactly what and who θεός is, especially given (i) that in the Poemandres tractate θεός is described as being both male and female (ἀρρενόθηλυσ) and

(ii) that 'archetypes'/deities from classical Greek culture are mentioned, from Psyche to Hermes, and (iii) that Poemandres is described as 'changing their form/appearance' (shapeshifting) in the manner of Greek divinities such as Athena in The Odyssey and Demeter in mythological poems and legends, and (iv) the mention of 'daimons'. This θεός might thus refer to a deity in a classical sense, with the texts describing a mysticism that is essentially a development of existing and past Greek ideas.

To translate θεός as god is therefore, in my view, not helpful given that 'god' is not, in our milieu, a neutral word and therefore tends to impose a certain meaning on the text. In contrast, the transliteration 'theos' is neutral and also aids the curiosity of the reader who might well then ask: what and who, here, is theos?

In regard to εὐσεβέω, is what is meant what we understand by terms such as reverent and pious? Again, given the influence of Christianity over the past two millennia, what such terms now so often denote is redolent of that religion so that such words are not neutral in respect of understanding the spirituality of such ancient Greek texts. Hence why my choice was for an expression: 'awareness of the numinous', which expression encompasses - or seems to me to encompass - an essential aspect of all spirituality, from ancient Greece to Greco-Roman times to Christianity and beyond. There is therefore, yet again, no retrospective re-interpretation of the text resulting from a poor choice of English words.

In considering ἀγαθός my basic guide was ἀγαθός contrasted with κακός in ancient Greece and Greco-Roman times with the sense being not some abstract god-given 'what is good' and 'what is evil', nor of some impersonal idea of 'good' contrasted with some other impersonal idea of 'evil', but rather the difference between good (noble) and bad (rotten) individuals, and which difference (according to so many authors of those times) was revealed, became known, through the deeds done by individuals. An interesting passage illustrating ἀγαθός contrasted with κακός occurs in section eight of the fourth tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum:

τούτων δὲ οὕτως ἔχόντων, ὦ Τάτ, τὰ μὲν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῖν τε
ὑπῆρξε καὶ ὑπάρξει· τὰ δὲ ἀφ' ἡμῶν ἀκολουθησάτω καὶ μὴ
ὑστερήστω· ἐπεὶ ὁ μὲν θεὸς ἀναίτιος, ἡμεῖς δὲ αἴτιοι τῶν κακῶν,
ταῦτα προκρίνοντες τῶν ἀγαθῶν

Nearly all past translations have opted to use the English words 'good' and 'evil', as did John Everard and G.R.S. Mead whose respective translations are,

These things being so, O Tat, that things have been, and are so
plenteously ministered to us from God; let them proceed also from
us, without any scarcity or sparing. For God is innocent or guiltless,
but we are the causes of Evil, preferring them before the Good.

This being so, O Tat, what comes from God hath been and will be
ours; but that which is dependent on ourselves, let this press

onward and have no delay; for 'tis not God, 'tis we who are the cause of evil things, preferring them to good.

A more recent translation is that of Brian Copenhaver,

Since this is so, Tat, what proceeds from god has been and will be available to us. May what comes to us be suited to it and not deficient. And the evils for which we are responsible, who chose them instead of good things, are no responsibility of god's.

In contrast, I interpret as,

Because of this, then - Thoth - what is from theos can be and has been ours
So let what accompanies us be that now instead of later.
For it is we who select dishonour rather than honour
With theos blameless in this.

Which interpretation emphasises the personal origin of what is done and why what is bad, in personal terms, is - as the author of the text later writes, αὕτη διαφορὰ τοῦ ὁμοίου πρὸς τὸ ἀνόμοιον, καὶ τῷ ἀνομοίῳ ὑστέρημα πρὸς τὸ ὅμοιον - a privation of what is good:

This is the distinction between what is akin and what is different
With what is different having a privation of what is akin.

Which contrast between personal honour (a nobility of character) and dishonour (a doing of rotten deeds) is rather different from abstract "evil things", and well expresses an important aspect of the ethos of ancient Greece and of Greco-Roman culture; an aspect well-expressed by Sophocles:

πόλεμος οὐδέν' ἄνδρ' ἐκὼν αἰρεῖ πονηρόν ἀλλὰ τοὺς χρηστοὺς αἰεὶ

battle does not willingly take cowards, but - as of old - the honourable

Philoctetes, v.437

This interpretation of ἀγαθός - in the personal terms of such an ethos, rather than as some abstract existent external to the individual as posited by Plato, ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα - is why the author of text also writes,

ὁρᾷς, ὦ τέκνον, πόσα ἡμᾶς δεῖ σώματα διεξελθεῖν, καὶ πόσους χοροὺς δαιμόνων καὶ συνέχειαν καὶ δρόμους ἀστέρων ἵνα πρὸς τὸν ἕνα καὶ μόνον σπεύσωμεν; ἀδιάβατον γὰρ τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ ἀπέραντον καὶ ἀτελές, αὐτῷ δὲ καὶ ἄναρχον, ἡμῖν δὲ δοκοῦν ἀρχὴν ἔχειν τὴν γνῶσιν. οὐκ αὐτοῦ οὖν ἀρχὴ γίνεται ἡ γνῶσις

Do you, my son, apprehend how many celestial bodies we have to traverse -
How many groups of Daimons and sequential constellations -
So that we hasten to the Monas.
For the honourable is unpassable, without limit, and unending
Even though to us its origin appears to be the knowledge.
But even though such knowledge is not the origin of it
It yields to us the origin of our knowing. {2}

For Plato's explanation requires a questioning, a philosophical search for ἀληθεία, a type of anados, resulting in a knowing of 'the good', ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα, and which knowing - which knowledge - is the source, the origin, of all other knowing. Here, the opposite is clearly stated: that such knowledge of 'the good', of what is honourable, is not 'the knowledge' - the conclusion of our anados - but instead only the source of what we know about ourselves and about others.

This understanding of 'the good', of ἀγαθός, is indeed somewhat controversial - the opposite of what Plato et al theorized and what some seem to have assumed regarding the Corpus Hermeticum - but one which presents an alternative (a somewhat paganus) understanding of such hermeticism as is described in the three tractates under consideration. And an interesting alternative that, to my knowledge, has been long neglected, given the various and the numerous assumptions made regarding the meaning of certain Greek words in texts such as the Corpus Hermeticum.

David Myatt
2016

{1} In order to elucidate my methodology I for brevity only consider here three Greek terms.

{2} As I noted in my commentary on tractate IV:

Reading ἀδιάβατον, which implies that what is honourable is always there, always around, always noticeable when it is presenced by someone. In other words - given the following καὶ ἀπέραντον καὶ ἀτελής - there are always some mortals who will (qv. sections 5 and 8) select honour rather than dishonour: who will (as described in section 4) "receive the perceivation," having won that prize gifted by theos [...]

The expression ἡμῖν δὲ δοκοῦν ἀρχὴν ἔχειν τὴν γνῶσιν is interesting given that it refers to 'the knowledge', which some have construed to refer to the gnosis of certain pagan weltanschauungen. However, since what this particular knowledge is, is not specified, to translate as 'the Gnosis' would be to impose a particular and modern interpretation on the text given what the term gnosticism now denotes. All that can be adduced from the text is that this particular knowledge may refer to and be the knowledge imparted in the text itself: the knowledge that Hermes is here imparting to Thoth.

On Minutiae And The Art Of Revision

Over forty years ago, many hours on many days on many months were spent in the library of a monastery reading many books that I now only vaguely recollect. But one of those which does still linger in memory was a work by John Chrysostom concerning the Gospel of John [1], homilies given toward the end of the fourth century Anno Domini, probably in Antioch, and over one and half thousand years before I sat down in a religious environment to read them. This continuity of religious tradition, of language, resonated with me then in a pleasing way as did the scholarly minutiae, sparsely scattered among the preaching, in which he explained some matters such as the use of the definite article in the phrase – from verse 1 of chapter one of the Gospel – θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος, Theos was the Logos.

Such minutiae make the process of translation – at least for me and in respect of the Gospel of John – somewhat slow, partly because they can change the meaning; or rather, provide a possible alternative interpretation as is the case in the matter of θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. Why, for example, is θεὸς here not ὁ θεός (pedantically, the Theos/the God) as at verse 24 of chapter four, πνεῦμα ὁ θεός? Which apparently pedantic question formed part of a somewhat acrimonious theological dispute before, during, and after the time of John Chrysostom; a dispute centred around a possible distinction between (i) The God and (ii) God, father of Jesus, and thus whether Jesus was, like The God, eternally-living. Those who affirmed such a distinction, and who thus came to believe that both Jesus and the πνεύματος ἁγίου (the Holy Spirit) were not equal to The God, were termed ‘Arians’ (after the Alexandrian priest Arius) and were repeatedly condemned as heretics.

In respect of certain words or phrases it is, as so often, a personal choice between following what has become or is regarded as the scholarly consensus or undertaking one’s own research and possibly arriving at a particular, always disputable, interpretation. Such research takes time – days, weeks, months, sometimes longer – and may lead one to revise one’s own particular interpretation, as occurred recently in respect of my interpretation of θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος, which initially and in respect of grammar was a minority one (qv. Jean Daillé) of *The Logos was Theos* rather than the conventional Theos [God] was the Logos [Word].

In the matter of θεὸς and ὁ θεός the current consensus is that there is in the Gospel of John no distinction between them. However, the arguments used to support this – from Chrysostom on – are theological and devolve around the use of such terms by John, by other Evangelists, by early Christians such as Paul of Tarsus, and even by the authors of LXX. That is, arguments are made regarding, for example, why the Evangelist wrote ὁ λόγος (the logos) rather than just λόγος: because, it is argued, to distinguish Jesus (identified as the logos) from everyone else. In addition, the Evangelist, and thus his Gospel, are often considered to be divinely-inspired – guided by the Holy Spirit, with the Evangelist thus aware of τὰ βῆθη τοῦ θεοῦ [2] – so that there are in that Gospel, as in the others, meanings beyond what an ordinary person might express in Hellenistic Greek.

Over forty years ago I, subsequent to some doubts, accepted such theological arguments and therefore had little interest – beyond disputations concerning the actual meaning of words such as λόγος in classical and Hellenistic Greek – in further questioning the accuracy of conventional interpretations of the Gospel of John such as that of the Douay–Rheims version.

Now, as someone with a rather paganus weltanschauung, brought-into-being by πάθει μάθος, but respectful still of other manifestations of the numinous, I strive to understand that Gospel in the cultural milieu of the ancient Roman Empire and thus as a work, written in Hellenistic Greek, by a man who either had known Jesus and participated in his life, or who had known and was close to someone who did. That is, I approach the text as I did the tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum and the extant writings of Sophocles and Aeschylus; as an original work, possibly a self-contained one, where the author conveys something derived from their knowledge, learning, and personal experience, and where the meanings of certain words or passages may sometimes be explained or placed into context by comparison with other authors writing in the same language in the same or in a similar cultural milieu.

Thus, when I consider a phrase such as πνεῦμα ὁ θεός I wonder about the meaning of πνεῦμα, of θεός, and of ὁ θεός, not in terms of later explanations – in this instance ‘the Holy Spirit’, God, the God – and not in terms of assuming the author is learned concerning and referring to or quoting or paraphrasing texts such as LXX, but rather as terms, ideas, germane to the world, the place, in which the author lived. Understood thus, θεός is just theos; πνεῦμα is just pneuma or ‘spiritus’; with words such as those and other words such as λόγος possibly becoming explained or placed into context by the narrator as the narrative proceeds.

In the matter of my interpretation of the Gospel of John [3], revision is therefore inevitable as I proceed, slowly, hopefully studiously, from verse to verse and from chapter to chapter, for I really have no preconceptions about what such slow studious progress will or might reveal about what has already been interpreted (or misinterpreted) by me, especially as minutiae can take one on various detours, and which detours sometimes cause one to travel far away from the Judaea that existed when Pontius Pilate was Praefectus of that Roman province.

David Myatt
July 2017

[1] *Homiliae in Ioannem*, volume 59 of the Migne Patrologia Graeca series.

[2] "The profundities of Theos." *First Epistle To The Corinthians*, 2.10. Wycliffe, and the King James Bible: "The deep

things of God."

[3] <http://www.davidmyatt.info/gospel-john.html>

A Note Concerning Θειότης

The Greek term *θειότης* occurs in tractate XI (section 11) of the Corpus Hermeticum – *θειότητα μίαν* – where I translated the term as "divinity-presenced." [1]

Plutarch, in *De Pythiae Oraculis* – qv. 407a, 398a-f – uses the word in relation to the oracle at Delphi with divinity-presenced also a suitable translation there.

The context of *θειότης* in tractate XI is:

καὶ ὅτι μὲν ἔστι τις ὁ ποιῶν ταῦτα δῆλον· ὅτι δὲ καὶ εἷς, φανερώτατον· καὶ γὰρ μία ψυχὴ καὶ μία ζωὴ καὶ μία ὕλη. τίς δὲ οὗτος; τίς δὲ ἄν ἄλλος εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός; τίς γὰρ ἄλλωι ἄν καὶ πρέποι ζῶια ἔμψυχα ποιεῖν, εἰ μὴ μόνωι τῷ θεῷ; εἷς οὖν θεός. †γελοιότατον†· καὶ τὸν μὲν κόσμον ὠμολόγησας ἀεὶ εἶναι καὶ τὸν ἥλιον ἓνα καὶ τὴν σελήνην μίαν καὶ *θειότητα μίαν*, αὐτὸν δὲ τὸν θεὸν πόστον εἶναι θέλεις [2]

It is evident someone is so creating and that he is One; for Psyche is one, Life is one, Substance is one.

But who is it?

Who could it be if not One, the theos? To whom if not to theos alone would it belong to presence life in living beings?

Theos therefore is One, for having accepted the Kosmos is one, the Sun is one, the Moon is one, and divinity-presenced is one, could you maintain that theos is some other number?

The "one" referred to in tractate XI is most probably the *μονάς*, Monas (Monad) as in tractate IV. As I noted in my Introduction to that tractate [1], John Dee used the term monas in his *Testamentum Johannis Dee Philosophi summi ad Johannem Gwynn, transmissum 1568*, a text included in Elias Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, published in 1652.

An interesting part of tractate IV is:

μονὰς οὗσα οὖν ἀρχὴ πάντα ἀριθμὸν ἐμπεριέχει, ὑπὸ μηδενὸς ἐμπεριεχομένη, καὶ πάντα ἀριθμὸν γεννᾷ ὑπὸ μηδενὸς γεννωμένη ἐτέρου ἀριθμοῦ.

The Monas, since it is the origin, enfolds every arithmos without itself being enfolded by any, begetting every arithmos but not begotten by any.

In respect of arithmos, ἀριθμὸς, as I noted in my commentary on tractate IV:10 and on XII:15, [1] the usual translation is 'number' but which translation is, in those instances in the Corpus Hermeticum, somewhat inappropriate and unhelpful.

Similar to – but conveying a different meaning to – *θειότης* is the Greek term *θεότης*. Different, because *θειότης* relates to *θεῖος* (divine, divinity), and *θεότης* to *θεός* (theos, the god).

The word *θειότης* also occurs – and only once – in the New Testament, in Paul's *Epistle to the Romans*, 1.20, where it led to some theological discussions regarding how and *in what* God is manifest, since some commentators apparently mistakenly equated *θειότης* with *θεότης*. The Latin of Jerome is:

invisibilia enim ipsius a creatura mundi per ea quae facta sunt intellecta conspiciuntur sempiterna quoque eius virtus et divinitas

which translates the Greek *θειότης* by the Latin *divinitas*, a word used by Cicero.

The Greek text of Romans, 1.20, as in NA28, [3] is:

τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα καθορᾶται, ἢ τε αἰδὶος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ *θειότης*

The Wycliffe translation:

For the invisible things of him, that be understood, be beheld of the creature of the world, by those things that be made, yea, and the everlasting virtue of him and the Godhead.

King James Bible:

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead

Douay-Rheims, Catholic Bible:

For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; his eternal power also, and divinity

In contradistinction to such translations, were I to temerarily venture my own 'interpretation of meaning' of the Greek – that is, my non-literal translation – it would be along the following lines:

Through the foundation of the Kosmos, those unseen beings of that Being were visible, apprehensible by the beings which that Being produced, as also the sempiternal influence of that Being, and divinity-presenced.

In which interpretation I have endeavoured to express the metaphysical – the ontological – meaning, and have taken αὐτοῦ – literally, "of him/his" – as "of that Being" thus avoiding "gender bias", qv. the appendix – *Concerning Personal Pronouns* – to my commentary on tractate VI. [1] Also, δύναμις is – at least in my fallible opinion – more subtle than the strident "might" or "power" translations impute, suggesting instead "influence" as in tractate III:1, where it interestingly occurs in relation to θεῖος:

δυνάμει θεῖαι ὄντα ἐν χέει, by the influence of the numen

My translation of tractate III:1 is as follows:

The numen of all beings is theos: numinal, and of numinal physis. The origin of what exists is theos, who is Perceivation and Physis and Substance: the sapientia which is a revealing of all beings. For the numinal is the origin: physis, vigour, incumbency, accomplishment, renewance. In the Abyss, an unmeasurable darkness, and, by the influence of the numen, Water and delicate apprehending Pnuema, there, in Kaos. Then, a numinous phaos arose and, from beneath the sandy ground, Parsements coagulated from fluidic essence. And all of the deities <particularize> seedful physis.

Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεὸς καὶ θεῖον καὶ φύσις θεία. ἀρχὴ τῶν ὄντων ὁ θεός, καὶ νοῦς καὶ φύσις καὶ ὕλη, σοφία εἰς δεῖξιν ἀπάντων ὧν· ἀρχὴ τὸ θεῖον καὶ φύσις καὶ ἐνέργεια καὶ ἀνάγκη καὶ τέλος καὶ ἀνανέωσις. ἦν γὰρ σκότος ἄπειρον ἐν ἀβύσσῳ καὶ ὕδωρ καὶ πνεῦμα λεπτὸν νοερόν, δυνάμει θεῖαι ὄντα ἐν χέει. ἀνείθη δὴ φῶς ἅγιον καὶ ἐπάγη τὸ φ' ἁμμωτ' ἐξ ὑγρᾶς οὐσίας στοιχεῖα καὶ θεοὶ πάντες τκαταδιερῶσιτ φύσεως ἐνσπόρου.

Which, for me at least, seems to place the use of θεϊότης in Paul's *Epistle to the Romans* into the correct Hellenic – Greco-Roman – metaphysical context.

David Myatt
28.iii.18

This article is a revised version of part of a personal reply sent to a life-long friend in answer to a specific question.

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[1] D. Myatt. *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*. Translations And Commentaries. CreateSpace. 2017. ISBN 978-1976452369.

[2] The Greek text is from A.D. Nock & A-J. Festugiere, *Corpus Hermeticum*, Paris, 1972.

[3] Nestle-Aland. *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th revised edition. Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart. 2012.

Greek Bible text from: Novum Testamentum Graece, 28th revised edition, Edited by Barbara Aland and others, copyright 2012 Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart.

Some Conjectures Concerning Our Nexible Physis

Given that we human beings are a sentient species, an interesting question is whether we have, over the past three thousand years, fundamentally changed. Changed in physis sufficient to enable us to avoid what our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos informs us is unwise. For example, around 700 BCE Hesiod wrote:

σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης, μὴ δ' ὕβριν ὄφελλε:
ὕβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῷ βροτῷ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς
215 ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύναται, βαρύθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς
ἐγκύρσας ἄτησιν: ὁδὸς δ' ἐτέρηφι παρελθεῖν
κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ Ὑβριος ἴσχει
ἐς τέλος ἐξελθοῦσα: παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω

You should listen to [the goddess] Fairness and not oblige Hubris
Since Hubris harms unfortunate mortals while even the more fortunate
Are not equal to carrying that heavy a burden, meeting as they do with Mischief.
The best path to take is the opposite one: that of honour
For, in the end, Fairness is above Hubris
Which is something the young come to learn from adversity. [1]

Certainly, in the many intervening centuries, some individuals - from adversity, or otherwise - have learned to avoid hubris and be fair, as is evident in our ever-growing human culture of pathei-mathos. But have we as a species, en masse, learned anything physis-changing - and learned by ourselves or by virtue of being instructed or educated - from the likes of Hesiod, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Herodotus, Thucydides, Aristotle, Pliny, and Cicero; from the Rig-Veda; from the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama and Lao Tzu; from the gospel narratives of the life and crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth; from the music of JS Bach; from the art of Botticelli, Hokusai, and van Gogh; from the literature of the likes of Jane Austen, Solzhenitsyn, and Mariama Bâ; from the thousands and thousands and thousands of armed conflicts, wars, and invasions, of the past three thousand years; from the individual stories of suffering - of rape, torture, murder, starvation, theft, humiliation - traumatically recounted year after year, decade following decade, and century after century?

If we human beings - we mortals - have in sufficient numbers so learned and so changed, is that change qualifiable? My own, admittedly fallible, view is that it is qualifiable; with my tentative suggestion - the conclusion of some years considering the matter - being that it is by how we as individuals perceive, how we understand, and how we humans as a result of such a new perceiviation externally manifest (in terms of, for example, our societies, our attitudes, and our laws) the muliebral virtues and thus the position of women and gender roles in general. Qualifiable in this way because - at least according to my own learning, and my understanding of the culture of pathei-mathos - of our nexible physis.

For our physis - our being, as mortals, and thus our character as individuals - is not only subject to enantiodromia:

"[to] the revealing, the process, of perceiving, feeling, knowing, beyond causal appearance and the separation-of-otherness and thus when what has become separated - or has been incorrectly perceived as separated - returns to the wholeness, the unity, from whence it came forth. When, that is, beings are understood in their correct relation to Being, beyond the causal abstraction of different/conflicting ideated opposites, and when as a result, a reformation of the individual, occurs. A relation, an appreciation of the numinous, that empathy and pathei-mathos provide, and which relation and which appreciation the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals over millennia have made us aware of or tried to inform us or teach us about," {2}

but also, as I have mentioned elsewhere, because my thesis is that

"it is the muliebral virtues which evolve us as conscious beings, which presence sustainable millennial change. Virtues such as empathy, compassion, humility, and that loyal shared personal love which humanizes those masculous talking-mammals of the Anthropocene, and which masculous talking-mammals have - thousand year following thousand year - caused so much suffering to, and killed, so many other living beings, human and otherwise." {3}

Considered in such qualifiable terms, there do appear to be some promising signs: for it does seem that several modern societies are - via more and more individuals acquiring a new perceiviation and thence a new understanding - slowly moving toward that equality between men and women, that rejection of stereotypical gender roles, and that recognition of the importance - of the necessity - of the muliebral virtues; which, combined, manifest an enantiodromiacal change in our human physis and which change, which balancing of the masculous with the muliebral, consequently could evolve us beyond the patriarchal ethos, and the masculous societies, which have been such a feature of human life on this planet for the past three thousand years, genesis as that ethos and those societies have been of so much grieving.

Which leads to interesting questions, to which I admit I have no answers. Questions such as whether we can, en masse, so change, and whether - if we can so change or are so slowly changing - it will take us another three thousand years, or more, or less, to live, world-wide, in societies where fairness, peace, and compassion, are the norm because the males of our species - perhaps by heeding Fairness and not obliging Hubris, perhaps by learning from our shared human culture of pathei-mathos - have personally, individually, balanced within themselves the masculous with the

muliebral and thus, because of sympatheia, follow the path of honour. Which balancing would naturally seem to require a certain conscious intent.

What, therefore, is our intent, as individual human beings, and can our human culture of pathei-mathos offer us some answers, or perchance some guidance? As an old epigram so well-expressed it:

θνητοῖσιν ἀνωίστων πολέων περ οὐδὲν ἀφραστότερον πέλεται νόου ἀνθρώποισι

"Of all the things that mortals fail to understand, the most incomprehensible is human intent." {4}

Personally, I do believe that our human culture of pathei-mathos - rooted as it is in our ancient past, enriched as it has been over thousands of years by each new generation, and informing as it does of what is wise and what is unwise - can offer us both some guidance and some answers.

David Myatt
September 2014

Notes

1. Hesiod, Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι [Works and Days], vv 213-218. My translation. Some notes on the translation:

- a. δίκη. The goddess of Fairness/Justice/Judgement, and - importantly - of Tradition (Ancestral Custom). In this work, as in Θεογονία (Theogony), Hesiod is recounting and explaining part of that tradition, one important aspect of which tradition is understanding the relation between the gods and mortals. Given both the antiquity of the text and the context, 'Fairness' - as the name of the goddess - is, in my view, more appropriate than the now common appellation 'Justice', considering the modern (oft times impersonal) connotations of the word 'justice'.
- b. Μischief. The sense of ἄτησιν here is not of 'delusion' nor of 'calamities', per se, but rather of encountering that which or those whom (such as the goddess of mischief, Ἄτη) can bring mischief or misfortune into the 'fortunate life' of a 'fortunate mortal', and which encounters are, according to classical tradition, considered as having been instigated by the gods. Hence, of course, why Sophocles [Antigone, 1337-8] wrote ὥς πεπρωμένης οὐκ ἔστι θνητοῖς συμφορᾶς ἀπαλλαγὴ (mortals cannot be delivered from the misfortunes of their fate).
- c. δίκαιος. Honour expresses the sense that is meant: of being fair; capable of doing the decent thing; of dutifully observing ancestral customs. A reasonable alternative for 'honour' would thus be 'decency', both preferable to words such as 'just' and 'justice' which are not only too impersonal but have too many inappropriate modern connotations.
- d. νήπιος. Literal - 'young', 'uncultured' (i.e. un-schooled, un-educated in the ways of ancestral custom) - rather than metaphorical ('foolish', ignorant).

2. *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, 2013.

3. *Some Questions For DWM*, 2014.

4. Vitae Homeri, Epigrammata V. My (poetic, non-literal) translation.

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Further Reading

[Education And The Culture of Pathei-Mathos](#)

Concerning Roman Catholicism

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Prefatory Note

Collected here are five essays written between 2015 and 2019 which concern Catholicism and spirituality in general. Several of the essays contain reminiscences about my Catholic upbringing and my time as a Catholic monk. The internet links in the footnotes were valid as of January 2019.

David Myatt
January 2019

In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church

Part One

Listening to *Messe De La Nativité: Gaudeamus Hodie; Puer Natus Est Nobis* - performed by Ensemble Gilles Binchois - I am so reminded how the Roman Catholic Church inspired such numinosity, such beauty, century following century. For it is as if such music presenced the Divine to thus remind us, we fallible error-prone mortals, of another realm beyond the material and beyond our own mortal desires.

Such presencing of the Divine - such a numinous reminder of our fallibility, century following century, as for example in *Kyrie Orbis Factor* as performed by Ensemble Organum - seems to have become somewhat lost in all the recent Media propaganda about how some Catholic priests and monks have allowed their personal desires to overwhelm such a presencing of the numinous and which presencing of the divine is and was manifest in compassion, empathy, and a personal humility.

Lost, in all the Media propaganda, because I from personal experience know that such incidents are perpetrated by a minority of individuals and that the vast majority of Catholic priests and monks are good individuals who strive, who often struggle, each in their own way and according to their physis, to manifest the virtues of compassion, empathy, and humility. That so many writers and readers of such Media propaganda in this our modern world seem to commit the fallacy of *a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter* no longer, unfortunately, surprises me.

In respect of personal experience I have to admit that I was somewhat dismayed by a recent report issued by a government sponsored Inquiry Panel. For I personally had known two of the individuals mentioned in that report, knowing from personal experience in a certain monastery that they, and the few others like them over the years, were the exception out of dozens and dozens of other monks and priests there. I was also somewhat dismayed by what I felt was the personal opinion of the authors of that report - stated in their "Conclusions" - that those involved in placing their personal desires before compassion, empathy, and humility, are "likely to be considerably greater than numbers cited in the convictions" since no evidence was presented to substantiate such an opinion. Another example of individuals committing the fallacy of *a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter*? Probably.

But why does someone who has developed a somewhat paganus weltanschauung – the mystical individualistic numinous way of pathemathos – now defend a supra-personal organization such as the Roman Catholic Church? Because I from personal experience appreciate that for all its many faults – recent and otherwise – and despite my disagreement regarding some of its teachings it still on balance does, at least in my fallible opinion, presence – as it has for centuries presenced – aspects of the numinous and which presencing has over centuries, again in my fallible opinion, had a beneficial affect on many human beings.

As I wrote some years ago in respect of visiting my father's grave in Africa:

"Once I happened to be travelling to an area which colonial and imperialist Europeans formerly described as part of 'darkest Africa'. Part of this travel involved a really long journey on unpaved roads by bus from an urban area. You know the type of thing – an unreliable weekly or sporadic service in some old vehicle used by villagers to take themselves (and often their produce and sometimes their livestock) to and from an urban market and urban-dwelling relatives. On this service, to a remote area, it [seemed to be] the custom – before the journey could begin – for someone to stand at the front and say a Christian prayer with every passenger willingly joining in.

It was quite touching. As was the fact that, at the village where I stayed (with a local family) near that grave, everyone went to Church on a Sunday, wearing the best clothes they could, and there was a real sense (at least to me) of how their faith helped them and gave them some guidance for the better, for it was as if they, poor as they were, were in some way living, or were perhaps partly an embodiment of, the ethos expressed by the Sermon of the Mount, and although I no longer shared their Christian faith, I admired them and respected their belief and understood what that faith seemed to have given them.

Who was – who am – I to try and preach to them, to judge them and that faith? I was – I am – just one fallible human being who believes he may have some personal and fallible answers to certain questions; just one person among billions aware of his past arrogance and his suffering-causing mistakes." [1]

Is to not judge others without a personal knowing of them, to not commit fallacies such as *a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter*, and to allow for personal expiation, perhaps to presence the numinous in at least one small and quite individual way? Personally, I am inclined to believe it is.

Pietatis fons immense, ἐλέησον
Noxas omnes nostras pelle, ἐλέησον [2]

2.x.18

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[1] <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2012/10/30/just-my-fallible-views-again/>

[2] "Immeasurable origin of piety, have mercy. Banish all our faults, have mercy." Kyrie Orbis Factor.

Although the Greek phrase Κύριε ἐλέησον is considered to be a Christian doxology, deriving from the Old Testament, it is possible that it was a common phrase in Greco-Roman culture, with origins dating back to the classical period, for it occurs in the Discourses of Epictetus – Book II, vii, 13 – in relation to a discussion about divination,

καὶ τὸν θεὸν ἐπικαλούμενοι δεόμεθα αὐτοῦ κύριε ἐλέησον

and in our invocations to the theos our bidding is: Master, have mercy.

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Part Two

Expiation And Penance

Two of the guiding practical principles of living as a Roman Catholic seem to me, on the basis of personal experience and fallible understanding, to be expiation and penance, related as they are to what was termed the Sacrament of Confession – now re-named the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation – and thence related to one of the founding principles of the Roman Catholic Church: that an ordained Priest has the religious

authority [1] to give absolution for the "sins" [2] a person has committed, and the authority to specify what penance is required for expiation, but which absolution is dependant on the person making a full and truthful confession and being repentant.

Such personal confession, penance, and expiation, are evidential of how a practising Catholic interacts with the Divine and is thus personally reminded of what is spiritual, eternal, numinous, and beyond the causal everyday world. As I wrote in my essay *Numinous Expiation*,

"One of the many problems regarding both The Numinous Way and my own past which troubles me – and has troubled me for a while – is how can a person make reparation for suffering caused, inflicted, and/or dishonourable deeds done [...]

One of the many benefits of an organized theistic religion, such as Christianity or Islam or Judaism, is that mechanisms of personal expiation exist whereby such feelings can be placed in context and expiated by appeals to the supreme deity. In Judaism, there is Teshuvah culminating in Yom Kippur, the day of expiation/reconciliation. In Catholicism, there is the sacrament of confession and penance. In Islam, there is personal dua to, and reliance on, Allah Ar-Rahman, Ar-Raheem, As-Salaam.

Even pagan religions and ways had mechanisms of personal expiation for wrong deeds done, often in the form of propitiation; the offering of a sacrifice, perhaps, or compensation by the giving or the leaving of a valuable gift or votive offering at some numinous – some sacred and venerated – place or site." [3]

This personal – and via the Confessional, this priestly – connexion to the Divine, with the attendant penitence, penance, personal expiation, seems to me to have been somewhat neglected when non-Catholics, and even some Catholics criticize the Roman Catholic Church for their past response to those accused of placing their personal (often sexual) desires before compassion, empathy, and humility.

That is, such criticism is secular; based on what is temporal, causal, such as some secular law or some personal emotive reaction, with the spiritual – the eternal – dimension to mortal life unconsidered. Which spiritual dimension is for Catholics based on allowing for personal expiation by spiritual means such as confession, penitence, and penance.

This allowance for such personal expiation by such spiritual means is what, according to my fallible understanding, informed the treatment by the Catholic hierarchy of many of those accused of placing their personal desires before obedience to their God.

For judgement according to such a spiritual dimension was, rightly or wrongly, often considered more important than secular recompense and secular punishment. Understood thus, there were no – to use a vernacular term – "cover-ups", just the application of certain spiritual considerations, considerations which are the foundations of the Catholic faith based as such considerations are on the belief in the Eternal Life – in Heaven or in Hell – which awaits all mortals, one portal to such an Eternal Life in Heaven being, according to Catholic faith, the sacrament of confession.

Another aspect of this Catholic priority of the spiritual over the secular is the sanctity (the seal) of the confessional and which sanctity is adjudged to be more important than secular laws relating, for example, to disclosure of or information regarding actions deemed to be criminal.

As for my personal opinions on the matter, I have none, for who am I – with my decades of hubris, my knowledge of my plenitude of mistakes – to judge others, to judge anyone? I have tried to rationally understand both the secular and the spiritual dimensions involved, having personal experience of both, and as so often these days remain somewhat perplexed by our human nature and by the need so many humans, myself included, still have for a belief in a spiritual dimension whereby we can connect ourselves to the numinous, to the Divine – however the Divine is presented to and in us – enabling us to perhaps find some peace, some happiness, some solace, some answers, among the turmoil, the suffering, the chngement, of the secular world.

My portal to the spiritual remains 'the way of pathei-mathos', the way of striving to cultivate, striving to live by, the virtues of humility, empathy, compassion, honour, non-interference, and self-restraint. A very individual way devoid of mythoi and anthropomorphic deities.

Perhaps it would be easier to believe in God, to accept again the Catholic expiation of the sacraments of Confession and the Mass. It would perhaps be even easier to accept some tangible votive wordless means in the form of offering some paganus propitiation, some libation, some talismata left, at some numinous paganus site.

But as Aeschylus so well-expressed it,

ἔστι δ' ὅπη νῦν
ἔστι: τελεῖται δ' ἐς τὸ πεπρωμένον:
οὔθ' ὑποκαίων οὔθ' ὑπολείβων
οὔτε δακρύων ἀπύρων ἱερῶν
ὀργὰς ἀτενεῖς παραθέλξει [4]

What is now, came to be
As it came to be. And its ending has been ordained.
No concealed laments, no concealed libations,
No unburnt offering
Can charm away that firm resolve.

Which type of sentiment I feel philosophers such as Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius also sought to express.

4.x.18

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[1] Qv. John 20:22-23,

λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἃν τινων ἀφῆτε τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἀφέωνται
αὐτοῖς ἃν τινων κρατῆτε κεκράτηνται

Receive Halig Spiritus: if you release anyone from their errors,
they are released; if you hold onto them, they are held onto.

In regard to the term Spiritus, in my commentary on John 1:31 I wrote:

τὸ πνεῦμα. Almost without exception, since Wycliffe's Bible the Greek here has been translated as "the spirit", although the ASV [the Anglo-Saxon Version] has gast (gast of heofenum), whence the later English word 'ghost'. However, given what the terms 'spirit' and 'ghost' – both in common usage, and as a result of over a thousand years of Christian exegesis – now impute, it is apposite to offer an alternative and one which is germane to the milieu of the Gospels or which at least suggests something of the numinosity presenced, in this instance, via the Gospel of John. Given that the transliteration pneuma – with its modern association with terms such as pneumatic – does not

unequivocally suggest the numinous, I have chosen spiritus, as referenced in respect of gast in Wright's *Anglo-Saxon And Old English Vocabularies*.

In regard to the translation Halig Spiritus, in my commentary on John 5:33 I wrote:

I have here used the Old English word Halig – as for example found in the version of John 17.11 in the Lindisfarne Gospel, 'Du halig fæder' – to translate ἅγιος rather than the later word 'holy' derived as that is from halig and used as it was by Wycliffe in his 1389 translation of this phrase, "in the Hooly Gost", which itself echoes the ASV, "on Halgum Gaste."

The unique phrase *in Halig Spiritus* – in place of the conventional 'with the Holy Spirit' – may thus express something of the numinosity, and the newness, of the original Gospel, especially as the word 'holy' has been much overused, imputes particular meanings from over a thousand years of exegesis, and, latterly in common parlance, has become somewhat trivialized.

[2] As I have noted in several essays, and in my translation of the Gospel of John, I prefer to translate the Greek term ἀμαρτία not by the conventional 'sin' but rather by 'error' or 'mistake'. As I wrote in the essay *Exegesis and Translation*,

One of the prevalent English words used in translations of the New Testament, and one of the words now commonly associated with revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam, is sin. A word which now imputes and for centuries has imputed a particular and at times somewhat strident if not harsh moral attitude, with sinners starkly contrasted with the righteous, the saved, and with sin, what is evil, what is perverse, to be shunned and shudderingly avoided.

One of the oldest usages of the word sin – so far discovered – is in the c. 880 CE translation of the c. 525 CE text *Consolatio Philosophiae*, a translation attributed to King Ælfred. Here, the Old English spelling of syn is used:

Ʒæt is swiðe dyslic & swiðe micel syn Ʒæt mon Ʒæs

wenan scyle be Gode

The context of the original Latin of Boethius is cogitare, in relation to a dialogue about goodness and God, so that the sense of the Latin is that it is incorrect – an error, wrong – to postulate/claim/believe certain things about God. There is thus here, in Boethius, as in early English texts such as Beowulf, the sense of doing what was wrong, of committing an error, of making a mistake, of being at fault; at most of overstepping the bounds, of transgressing limits imposed by others, and thus being 'guilty' of such an infraction, a sense which the suggested etymology of the word syn implies: from the Latin sons, sontis.

Thus, this early usage of the English word syn seems to impart a sense somewhat different from what we now associate with the word sin, which is why in my translation of John, 8.7 I eschewed that much overused and pejorative word in order to try and convey something of the numinous original:

So, as they continued to ask [for an answer] he straightened himself, saying to them: "Let he who has never made a mistake [Αναμαρτητος] throw the first stone at her."

ὥς δὲ ἐπέμενον ἐρωτῶντες αὐτόν, ἀνέκυψεν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὁ ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν πρῶτος ἐπ' αὐτὴν βαλέτω λίθον.

Jesus here is not, in my view, sermonizing about sin, as a puritan preacher might, and as if he is morally superior to and has judged the sinners. Instead, he is rather gently and as a human pointing out an obvious truth about our human nature; explaining, in v.11, that he has not judged her conduct:

ἡ δὲ εἶπεν· οὐδεὶς, κύριε. εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· οὐδὲ ἐγὼ σε κατακρίνω· πορεύου, ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε

[And] she answered, No one, my Lord. Whereupon Jesus replied "Neither do I judge [κατακρίνω] you, therefore go, and avoid errors such as those."

The essay is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2013/04>

/26/exegesis-and-translation/ and was included as an Appendix to my *Mercvrii Trismegisti Pymander* (ISBN 978-1495470684)

[3] The essay is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/numinous-expiation/>

[4] Agamemnon, 67-71

Persecution And War

A Remembering

Reared as a Roman Catholic, educated for a while at a Catholic preparatory school and then – again for a while – at a Catholic boarding school, I remember the history taught by our teachers and Priests of the centuries-long persecution of English and Irish Catholics that began in the 16th century. There were stories of martyrs; of recusants; of secret Masses; of anti-Catholic polemics and propaganda; and of the monks who – after the suppression of the monasteries, the theft of monastic lands and wealth, begun by a tyrannos named Henry – escaped to France and founded monasteries such as the one at Dieulouard in Lorraine.

There thus was engendered in we Catholic children a feeling of difference, aided by the fact that our Mass was in Latin, by our sacrament of confession, by the practice of Gregorian chant, and by the singing of hymns such as Faith Of Our Fathers with its memorable verses

Faith of our Fathers living still
In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword [...]
We will be true to thee till death [...]

Our Fathers, chained in prisons dark,
Were still in heart and conscience free [...]
Faith of our Fathers, Mary's prayers
Shall win our country back to thee

This feeling of difference was forcefully remembered when I in the early 1970's – during The Troubles – ventured to visit Northern Ireland; when I in the mid-1970's and as a Catholic monk spent several weeks staying at a Presbytery in Dublin; and when I in the mid-1990's – before the Good Friday Agreement – visited Derry.

Forcefully remembered because I listened to accounts of the burning of Catholic homes by Protestant mobs in 1969 and the subsequent flight of hundreds of Catholic families to the Irish Republic where they were housed in refugee camps; listened to witness accounts of the killing of eleven Catholics, including a Priest, by the British Army in Ballymurphy in 1971; listened to witness accounts of the killing of fourteen Catholics, again by the British Army, in Derry in 1972; and listened to stories of the persecution of Irish Catholics under British rule.

Such a remembering, such a childhood feeling of difference, formed part of the years-long personal and philosophical reflexion that occupied me for several years as I, between 2006 and 2009, developed my 'numinous way' and then between 2011 and 2012 gradually refined it into the 'way of pathei-mathos', with the core of that reflexion concerning matters such as extremism, my own extremist past, war, prejudice, intolerance, and persecution.

War And Combat

Familiar as I was with ancient works by Thucydides, Herodotus, Livy, and others; with many works concerning more recent European history by modern historians, as well as with personal accounts of those who had fought for both the Allies and the Axis during World War Two, I recalled some words of Cicero:

"Aliis ego te virtutibus, continentiae, gravitatis, iustitiae, fidei, ceteris omnibus."

"because of your other virtues of self-restraint, of dignity, of fairness, of honesty, and all other such qualities..." [1]

Which led me to consider making a distinction between war and a more personal combat, between a modern *krieg* and the Old Germanic *werra*, given that war, from my reading of and admittedly fallible understanding of history, seemed to me to involve – by its very nature of necessitating killing and causing injury – intolerance, hatred, a divisive sense of difference often involving "us" believing we were "better" (or more civilized) than them, our enemies, thus leading to a dehumanization of "the enemy". A divisive sense of difference and a dehumanization often aided (particularly in modern times) by polemics, rumour, and propaganda; and a divisive sense of difference, a dehumanization, together with polemics, rumour, and propaganda, which I knew from my

own decades of political and religious activism formed a core part of all types of extremism.

The distinction I considered was that personal combat unlike war did not involve large armies fighting against each other because of some diktat or personal agenda by some tyrannos or because of some ideology or religion or policy of some State or government. Instead, combat involved small groups – such as clans or tribes or neighbours – fighting because of some personal quarrel or some wrong or some perceived grievance.

But the more I considered this supposed distinction between combat and war the more I realized that in practice there was no such distinction since both involved principles similar to those of the Ancient Roman *Leges Regiae* – qv. the *Jus Papirianum* attributed to Sextus Papirius – where someone or some many possess or have acquired (through for example force of arms) or have assumed authority over others, and who by the use of violence and/or by the threat of punishment and/or by oratory or propaganda, are able to force or persuade others to accept such authority and obey the commands of such authority.

This acceptance by individuals of a supra-personal authority – or, more often, the demand by some supra-personal authority that individuals accept such a supra-personal authority – was manifest in the Christian writings of Augustine (b.354 CE, d.430 CE), such as his *De Civitate Dei contra Paganos* where in Book XIX, chapter xiii, he wrote of the necessity of a hierarchy in which God is the supreme authority, with peace between human beings and God requiring obedience to that authority; with peace between human beings, and civil peace, also of necessity requiring obedience to an order in which each person has their allotted place, "Ordo est parium dispariumque rerum sua cuique loca tribuens dispositio."

Which hierarchy and acceptance of authority led Augustine to describe – in book XXII of *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* – the concept that war requires the authority of a person (such as a monarch) who has such "necessary" authority over others. This concept regarding war has remained a guiding principle of modern Western nations where the authority to inaugurate and prosecute a war against perceived enemies resides in the State, and thus in modern potentates who have seized power or in elected governments and their representatives such as Presidents and Prime Ministers.

Authority And Society

In the nations of the West, such a hierarchy of authority applies not only to war and its prosecution but also to changes, to reform, in society [2] for there is, as I mentioned in *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*,

"a hierarchy of judgement involved, whatever political 'flavour' the government is assigned to, is assumed to represent, or claims it represents; with this hierarchy of necessity requiring the individual in society to either (i) relinquish their own judgement, being accepting of or acquiescing in (from whatever reason or motive such as desire to avoid punishment) the judgement of these others, or (ii) to oppose this 'judgement of others' either actively through some group, association, or movement (political, social, religious) or individually, with their being the possibility that some so opposing this 'judgement of others' may resort to using violent means against the established order." [3]

In the way of pathei-mathos authority is personal, based on individual empathy and a personal pathei-mathos; both of which have a local horizon so that what is

"beyond our personal empathic knowing of others, beyond our knowledge and our experience [our pathei-mathos], beyond the limited (local) range of our empathy and that personal (local) knowledge of ourselves which pathei-mathos reveals – is something we rationally, we humbly, accept we do not know and so cannot judge or form a reasonable, a fair, a balanced, opinion about. For empathy, like pathei-mathos, lives within us; manifesting, as both empathy and pathei-mathos do, the always limited nature, the horizon, of our own knowledge and understanding." [4]

In practical terms this means trying to cultivate within ourselves the virtues mentioned by Cicero – self-restraint, dignity, fairness, honesty – and implies we have no concern for or we seek to cultivate no concern for supra-personal hierarchies and supra-personal authority – whether political, religious, or otherwise – and thus move away from, try to distance ourselves from, the consequences of such supra-personal hierarchies and supra-personal authority manifest as the consequences are and have been, throughout our history, in war, prejudice, intolerance,

unfairness, extremism, and persecution in the name of some ideology, some religion, or because someone has commanded us to persecute those that they and others have declared are "our" enemies, and which war and persecutions are often, especially in modern times, accompanied by propaganda and lies.

Thus in the case of my Catholic remembering, those soldiers in Ballymurphy and in Derry shot and killed civilians, women included, because those soldiers believed them to be "enemies", because propaganda had dehumanized those enemies; because those soldiers were part of and obeyed a hierarchical, supra-personal, chain-of-command by being there armed and prepared to use deadly force and violence against individuals they did not personally know; and because in the aftermath of those killings, and for years afterwards, they were not honest and hence did not contradict the propaganda stories, the lies, about those events which some of their superiors and others circulated in an attempt to justify such acts of inhumanity.

Yet for me the real tragedy is that events similar to those of my very personal remembering have occurred on a vaster scale millennia after millennia and are still occurring, again on a vaster scale and world-wide, despite us having access to the wisdom of the past, manifest as such wisdom is, for those reared in the West, in the Agamemnon of Aeschylus, in the Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles, in the mythos of Μοῖραι τρίμορφαι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες [5], in many of the writings of Cicero, in Τὰ εἰς ἑαυτόν by Marcus Aurelius, in the numinous beauty of Gregorian chant, in the music of JS Bach, and in so many, many, other writers and artists ancient and modern.

Đa sceolde se hearpere weorðan swa sarig
þæt he ne meahte ongemong oðrum mannum bion
(XXXV, 6)

9.ix.18

ooo

[1] M. Tullius Cicero, *Pro Murena Oratio*, 23. My translation.

[2] By 'society' in the context of this essay and the way of pathei-mathos

is meant a collection of individuals who dwell, who live, in a particular area and who are subject to the same laws and the same institutions of authority. Modern society is thus a manifestation of some State, and States are predicated on individuals actively or passively accepting some supra-personal authority, be it governmental (national) or regional (county), or more usually both.

[3] "Society, Politics, Social Reform, and Pathei-Mathos". *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. Fifth edition. ISBN 978-1484096642.

[4] *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*. 2015.

[5] "Trimorphed Moirai with their ever-heedful Furies." Aeschylus (attributed), *Prometheus Bound*, 516

Two Metaphysical Contradictions Of The Modern West

The letter written by Pope Francis, dated 1° de enero de 2019 and sent to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, seems to me to encapsulate two of the metaphysical contradictions of the modern Western world in regard to the numinous and the profane.

For in the letter Pope Francis, commenting on what the Media has described as "the scandal of clerical abuse" within the Roman Catholic Church, wrote that

La credibilidad de la Iglesia se ha visto fuertemente cuestionada y debilitada por estos pecados y crímenes, pero especialmente por la voluntad de querer disimularlos y esconderlos. [1]

and also used Biblical quotations in support of his arguments.

The use of the phrase pecados y crímenes - sins and crimes - seems to indicate an acceptance of the metaphysical equality of Church and State: of a sin, as defined by the teachings of the Church, and of a crime as defined in laws made by some State [2].

Sins And Crimes: Sacred And Secular

Pope Francis provides the context for one metaphysical contradiction, for in respect of the response he believes is required regarding such "sins

and crimes" he writes

Hoy se nos pide una nueva presencia en el mundo conforme a la Cruz de Cristo, que se cristalice en servicio a los hombres y mujeres de nuestro tiempo [3]

That is, there should be a change, a new presencing, and one that serves the people now; the people of our epoch, of our age, of the 'times' in which we now live.

This is the epoch in which the Media, using such expressions as a "culture of abuse" - cultura del abuso - can question the credibility of the Roman Catholic Church, and by repetition of particular instances of abuse and the reporting of other ones, demand not only a response from the hierarchy of the Church but a response that conforms to the popular, or to the Media created, expectations of the epoch. Which expectations are that secular justice - as understood and as implemented by the State - has a higher priority than *judicium divinum*, the divine justice of God or of the gods.

Which divine justice was, at least according to my fallible understanding and as I noted in part two of my *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*, "often considered more important than secular recompense and secular punishment" especially as personal confession to a Priest, personal penitence, and undertaking the penance prescribed were, in the Roman Catholic Church, a connexion to the Divine. Hence why many of those who, via the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, confessed to abuse were not "publicly named and shamed" by the Catholic hierarchy, were not brought to the attention of State authorities, but instead given penance and, in some instances, quietly moved and expected to begin a new penitential life in the service of God.

That Pope Francis uses the expression cultura del abuso and writes that la credibilidad de la Iglesia se ha visto fuertemente cuestionada y debilitada por estos *pecados y crímenes* suggests to me at least two things. First, that the move toward the change he suggests is in part at least placatory, in conformity with our epoch with its powerful secular Media and its powerful modern secular States; and second that the religious, the numinous, the spiritual, balance presenced for millennia by aspects of the Roman Catholic Church [4] - the devotion to the sacred over and above the secular - is continuing to be lost within the Roman

Catholic Church, with *judicium divinum* and the secular justice of some State now apparently considered by the Pope as metaphysically equal. Hence why in a speech to the Roman Curia in December 2018 he said that those who abused children should "hand themselves over to human justice." [5]

A Revealed Religion

The second metaphysical contradiction, between the sacred and the profane in the modern world, which the Papal letter reveals is the unsurprising and traditional use of Biblical quotations in support of, and to frame, the presented suggestions and argument.

This reliance on written texts and reliance on their exegesis and thus on the varied interpretations that result [6] is an implicit part of all revealed religions from Judaism, to Christianity, to Islam. Since these interpretations can vary and have varied over the centuries the result is schism, reformation and counter-reformation, leading as these did in the past to such things as the suppression of the monasteries, the theft of monastic lands and wealth, and the persecution and martyrdom of Catholics, by a tyrannos named Henry; and leading as they have in more modern times, to the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, and to the proliferation of Christian sects and denominations who have diverse views about such matters as same-gender love and abortion.

Such reliance on such texts, such varying interpretations, are as I have noted elsewhere the fundamental weakness of revealed religions [7] with, in my fallible view, the sacred - the numinous - unable to fully be presenced by such religions.

Thus it does not surprise me that the Roman Catholic Church apparently now considers *judicium divinum* and the secular justice of some State as metaphysically equal since the conflict between varying interpretations, the apparent desire for placatory reforms - of being "a new presence in the world" - as a consequence of Media attention, and the increasing move away "in this epoch" from a belief in the superiority of *judicium divinum* (the primacy of the sacred) are necessary consequences of the dialectic of exegesis.

Which is one reason why my personal spiritual belief is now not that of Catholicism even though I sense that Catholicism does still presence

some aspects of the numinous.

Instead, I incline toward an apprehension of the divine, the sacred, which is paganus and thus individual, undogmatic, and empathic, since my paganus metaphysics is that of

(i) an (often wordless) awareness of ourselves as a fallible mortal, as a microcosmic connexion to other mortals, to other life, to Nature, and to the Cosmos beyond our world, and (ii) a new civitas, and one not based on some abstractive law but on a spiritual and interior (and thus not political) understanding and appreciation of our own Ancestral Culture and that of others; on our 'civic' duty to personally presence καλὸς κάγαθός and thus to act and to live in a noble way. For the virtues of personal honour and manners, with their responsibilities, presence the fairness, the avoidance of hubris, the natural harmonious balance, the gender equality, the awareness and appreciation of the divine, that is the numinous. [8]

7.i.19

Extract from a reply to someone
who enquired about a Papal Letter in relation to my text
In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church

ooo

[1] "The credibility of the Church has been seriously questioned and undermined by these sins and crimes but especially by a desire to hide or to disguise them."

The official Vatican translation is "The Church's credibility has been seriously undercut and diminished by these sins and crimes, but even more by the efforts made to deny or conceal them."

[2] By the term State is meant the concept of both (i) organizing and controlling – over a particular and large geographical area – land (and resources); and (ii) organizing and controlling individuals over that same geographical particular and large geographical area.

[3] "Today, what is asked of us is to be a new presence in the world that, in conformity with the Cross of Christ, is made clear in service to the men and women of our epoch."

The official Vatican translation is "What is being asked of us today is a new presence in the world, conformed to the cross of Christ, one that takes concrete shape in service to the men and women of our time."

[4] As I noted in part one of my *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*,

"Listening to Messe De La Nativité: Gaudeamus Hodie; Puer Natus Est Nobis - performed by Ensemble Gilles Binchois - I am so reminded how the Roman Catholic Church inspired such numinosity, such beauty, century following century. For it is as if such music presented the Divine to thus remind us, we fallible error-prone mortals, of another realm beyond the material and beyond our own mortal desires."

[5] Catholic News Agency, December 21, 2018.

[6] Qv. my *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*, and *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*.

[7] Qv. (i) *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God*; (ii) *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*; (iii) *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*.

[8] *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*.

Catholic Still In Spirit?

Perhaps I remain, partially at least, a Catholic in spirit – in my heart – though not, most of the time, in words and deeds. For while I intellectually and empathically disagree with the teachings of the Catholic Church on many matters – such as homosexuality, contraception, and on divorcées who have remarried being excluded from Holy Communion (unless they have resorted to a Papal Annulment) – I still find myself in my inner weakness not only sometimes frequenting the Lady Chapel of my nearest RC Church – lighting a candle, kneeling, and in reverent silent contemplative prayer remembering, in the felt presence of The Blessed Virgin Mary, those now dead loved ones such as my mother and father and Sue and Francis, and those other women hurt by my selfishness – but also traveling several times a year to where Gregorian chant is sung and where the Tridentine Mass is celebrated, bringing as such Latin chant and such a Latin Mass still do, in me, a renewed awareness of the numinous and a renewal of such humility as I strive – and sometimes still so often fail – to remember and feel.

There seems to me no intricate and difficult interior problem here derived from my somewhat pagan way of *pathei-mathos*, for that way is essentially – for me, even born as it is from my own *pathei-mathos* – rather intellectual, a *perceivation*, lacking as it does something outward, practical, supra-personal, and communal, to presence the numinous and thus affect one's very being in a spiritual way. So I seem to now exist – and have for several years existed – between two worlds: apparently emotionally needing something practical, living, and spiritual beyond myself and my intellectualism, and yet knowing in a rather unemotional manner that it is the way of *pathei-mathos*, and not Catholicism, which is my *weltanschauung*.

No intricate and difficult interior problem, no inner dichotomy, because I know the many flaws in my *weltanschauung* and in myself; and one cannot intellectually create some-thing – manufacture some-thing devoid of $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$ – to presence the numinous. For it seems to me that such a presencing has to evolve, organically, over causal time, because it has been wordlessly presenced in other mortals and then kept alive because also felt by some of a newer generation. Will – can – such a presencing of the numinous arise from that way of *pathei-mathos*? Most probably not, intellectual and so very personal as it is.

So the need for some inner, numinous, sustenance remains; for fulfilling as a lot of classical music – such as the Cantatas of JS Bach – is and are, and fulfilling as walks alone in wild and rural Nature are, I sense a yearning in me for something more: some wordless intimation of the Divine which betakes me so far away from my still egoistic self that I am both awed and humbled again, as I often was in Winter wandering a darkened cloister as a monk in that quiet contemplative time between Matins and Lauds.

2015

Extract From A Letter To A Friend

cc David Wulstan Myatt 2015-2019

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One Perceivration

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Preface

Following suggestions from several readers of both my translations of and commentaries on eight tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum [1] and my book *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, [2] I have collected here several essays of mine, published between 2012 and 2019, concerning my methodology in regard to translating and employing certain Ancient Greek words.

Hopefully this collection will go some way toward revealing to readers the reasoning behind why I, for example, use σωφρονεῖν in preference to σωφρονέω/σωφροσύνη and attribute to that Greek word a particular philosophical meaning - "a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement" (that is, thoughtful reasoning, or wisdom) - rather than the English meaning now associated with the transliteration sophrosyne which is "soundness of mind, moderation", thus avoiding the English word "mind" with all its post-classical and modern interpretations philosophical and otherwise.

Another example is pathei mathos - πάθει μάθος - which is used not in accord with Greek grammatical (inflective) usage, but in accord with the English language use of an expression, with my writings thus employing expressions such as "a pathei-mathos", "that pathei-mathos", "which pathei-mathos", "our accumulated pathei-mathos", "my pathei-mathos", and of course "the philosophy of pathei-mathos".

A further example is σοφόν in preference to σοφός, when the sense implied is not the usual "skilled", or "learned" or "wise" but rather what lies beyond and

what was/is the genesis of those denotata: which is the quiddity, the physis, with the denotata (σοφός: skill, learning, wisdom) a presencing [3] in an individual of that wordless quiddity, [4] that physis. [5]

In these and other instances the words are used in an Anglicized, non-inflective, way to suggest a specific philosophical term or concept different from what the original Greek does or might suggest, ancient or modern, as in the matter of σωφρονέω/σωφροσύνη. That is, they are intended to be assimilated into the English language either in their transliterated form (for instance sophronein) or in their Greek form (for instance σωφρονεῖν) and refer not to some supra-personal "idea" or ideation - ἰδέα/εἶδος - or abstraction but rather to individuals.

I attempted to explain the philosophical principles behind my methodology and weltanschauung in my book *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, and in my two monographs *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* [6] and *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*. [7] Which principles are (i) emphasising the individual, the personal, the unique and empathic nature of perceivance - of apprehending and understanding Being and beings, and our own physis - over and above abstractions and ideations and thus over and above denotata - and (ii) that the classical principles or virtues of τὸ καλόν, ἀρετή, and τὸ ἀγαθόν related to and were defined by the deeds, the lives, of individuals and not to something supra-personal such as some idea or ideation or dogma or faith or ideology, and were well-expressed in the term καλὸς κάγαθός, which implies those who conduct themselves in a certain manner and who thus manifest - because of their innate physis or through pathei-mathos or through a certain type of education or learning - a particular personal character.

But as I noted in one of the essays included here: does my idiosyncratic use of Ancient Greek and Latin terms make my philosophy confusing, difficult to understand and difficult to appreciate? Perhaps.

However, in regard to translations such as tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum and the Gospel of John, when I have used an original phrase - for example "quidditas of semblance" in the Pœmandres tractate, and, in the Gospel of John, translated οὐρανός as Empyrean rather than the conventional Heaven, to give just two examples from the many - I have explained my interpretation in the associated commentary.

For reasons which the essays included here may make clear, I have added a slightly revised version of my *Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos: Vocabulary, Definitions, and Explanations*, and also the *Introduction* to my translation of and commentary on chapters I-V of the Gospel of John. [8]

David Myatt
2020
Second Edition

[1] *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*. 2017 ISBN 978-1976452369

[2] *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. ISBN 978-1484096642

[3] Presencing: from the classical Latin *praesentia* - meaning "having or implying actual presence", as manifesting (as being presenced) in a locality or an individual. Qv. my commentary on *Ἱερός Λόγος* 2, et sequentia, of the *Corpus Hermeticum*.

[4] The scholastic term quiddity derives from the 11th/12th century post-classical Latin *quidditas*, and avoids using the term "essence" (οὐσία) which has post-classical and modern connotations. As I noted in my commentary on tractate XI:2 of the *Corpus Hermeticum*,

In respect of οὐσία, qv. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book 5, 1015α:

ἐκ δὴ τῶν εἰρημένων ἡ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγόμενη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἡ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὅλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικῇ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐνυπάρχουσα πῶς ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ.

Given the foregoing, then principally - and to be exact - *physis* denotes the quidditas of beings having change inherent within them; for *substantia* has been denoted by *physis* because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changes predicated on it. For *physis* is inherent change either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.

See also my *Some Notes on Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015α*, at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/aristotle-metaphysics-1015α/>

[5] In respect of *physis*, refer to Appendix I: The Concept Of *Physis*

[6] *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*. 2017. ISBN 978-1979599023

[7] *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*. 2017. ISBN 978-1982010935

[8] The translation of and commentary is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/gospel-according-to-john/>

On Translating Ancient Greek

Given that I have numerous times over the past ten or so years been asked by various individuals (including Greek scholars) about my Greek translations, and given that it seems some of my translations (such as parts of the *Corpus Hermeticum*) are regarded as "iconoclastic and controversial", it seems

fitting to provide a rather more detailed explanation of my methodology over and above my few, short, previous remarks.

When studying New Testament Greek while a monk in a Christian monastery in the 1970s - and being already familiar (from schooldays and later studies including at that monastery) with Homer's Greek and the way that Aeschylus often omitted 'the article' and invented new words to express his meaning - I began to wonder, in respect of translations, about what I have since termed 'retrospective re-interpretation'. As I mentioned in my essay *Some Examples Regarding Translation and Questions of Interpretation*, included as an Appendix to my Poemandres translation and commentary:

"I incline toward the view that in translations into English it is often best to avoid words that impose or seem to impose a meaning on an ancient text especially if the sense that an English word now imputes is the result of centuries of assumptions or opinions or influences and thus has acquired a modern meaning, or an interpretation, somewhat at variance with the culture, the milieu, of the time when the text that is being translated was written. Especially so in the matter of religious or spiritual texts where so many people rely or seem to rely on the translations, the interpretations, of others and where certain interpretations seem to have become fixed.

Thus, it may be helpful if one can suggest, however controversial or iconoclastic they may seem in their time, reasoned alternatives for certain words important for a specific and a general understanding of a particular text, and helpful because such alternatives might enable a new appreciation of such a text, as if for instance one is reading it for the first time with the joy of discovery.

For example, one of the prevalent English words used in translations of the New Testament, and one of the words now commonly associated with revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam, is sin. A word which now imputes and for centuries has imputed a particular and at times somewhat strident if not harsh moral attitude, with sinners starkly contrasted with the righteous and the saved, and with sin, what is evil, what is perverse, to be shunned and shudderingly avoided."

I then proceeded to give various quotations and argued that the original sense of the English word 'sin' was "the sense of doing what was wrong, of committing an error, of making a mistake, of being at fault; at most of overstepping the bounds, of transgressing limits imposed by others, and thus being 'guilty' of such an infraction, a sense which the suggested etymology of the word *syn* implies: from the Latin *sons, sontis*." Hence why in translating John 8.7 I eschewed the much overused and now often pejorative word sin:

So, as they continued to ask [for an answer] he straightened himself, saying to them: Let he who has never made a mistake [Ἀναμαρτητός] throw the first stone at her.

ὥς δὲ ἐπέμενον ἐρωτῶντες αὐτόν, ἀνέκυψεν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὁ ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν πρῶτος ἐπ' αὐτὴν βαλέτω λίθον.

While such a translation may well be controversial, to me it imparts something important regarding the teachings, and the life, of Jesus of Nazareth: something quite human, something rather different from a stern preacher preaching about 'sin'; something which to me seems to express what the Beatitudes express, and something which individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox and William Pen many centuries later tried to say and write about Christianity and about the teachings and the life of Jesus of Nazareth. This seeking after meaning beyond what a particular English word now often denoted - in common usage or otherwise - I applied to my translations of some fragments of Heraclitus, to my translations of three tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum, and am applying to my on-going (as of 2016) translation of and commentary on the Gospel of John. I also used this principle, albeit then in a mostly intuitive way, when undertaking my translations, decades before, of Sophocles and Aeschylus.

Thus I sought to try and understand - to apprehend, both intuitively and by scholarly means - what the author was expressing or sought to express all those centuries ago; which necessitated understanding the milieu, the ethos, the culture, of the time and the place where the author lived. My approach was therefore more than strictly grammatical; more than lexicographical. Why is why, in the Hermetic tractates the translation of such words as ἀγαθός and εὐσεβέω and θεός were considered in the necessary context. [1]

What, for example, did θεός mean and imply in the Hellenic times that the texts were written? My view is that to translate as 'god' is to miss the variety of possible meanings, since 'god' to so many people in the West imparts the sense of, if not the God of Christianity, then of 'the one deity' of neo-pythagoreanism and gnosticism. This then leads and has led to speculation as whether God and 'the one deity' are the same and whether the texts are neo-pythagorean and/or gnostic and/or possibly influenced by early Christianity. The texts under consideration, however, are unclear as to exactly what and who θεός is, especially given (i) that in the Poemandres tractate θεός is described as being both male and female (ἀρρενόθηλος) and (ii) that 'archetypes'/deities from classical Greek culture are mentioned, from Psyche to Hermes, and (iii) that Poemandres is described as 'changing their form/appearance' (shapeshifting) in the manner of Greek divinities such as Athena in The Odyssey and Demeter in mythological poems and legends, and (iv) the mention of 'daimons'. This θεός might thus refer to a deity in a classical sense, with the texts describing a mysticism that is essentially a development of existing and past Greek ideas.

To translate θεός as god is therefore, in my view, not helpful given that 'god' is not, in our milieu, a neutral word and therefore tends to impose a certain meaning on the text. In contrast, the transliteration 'theos' is neutral and also aids the curiosity of the reader who might well then ask: what and who, here, is theos?

In regard to εὐσεβέω, is what is meant what we understand by terms such as reverent and pious? Again, given the influence of Christianity over the past two millennia, what such terms now so often denote is redolent of that religion so that such words are not neutral in respect of understanding the spirituality of such ancient Greek texts. Hence why my choice was for an expression: 'awareness of the numinous', which expression encompasses - or seems to me to encompass - an essential aspect of all spirituality, from ancient Greece to Greco-Roman times to Christianity and beyond. There is therefore, yet again, no retrospective re-interpretation of the text resulting from a poor choice of English words.

In considering ἀγαθός my basic guide was ἀγαθός contrasted with κακός in ancient Greece and Greco-Roman times with the sense being not some abstract god-given 'what is good' and 'what is evil', nor of some impersonal idea of 'good' contrasted with some other impersonal idea of 'evil', but rather the difference between good (noble) and bad (rotten) individuals, and which difference (according to so many authors of those times) was revealed, became known, through the deeds done by individuals. An interesting passage illustrating ἀγαθός contrasted with κακός occurs in section eight of the fourth tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum:

τούτων δὲ οὕτως ἔχόντων, ὦ Τάτ, τὰ μὲν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῖν τε
ὑπῆρξε καὶ ὑπάρξει· τὰ δὲ ἀφ' ἡμῶν ἀκολουθησάτω καὶ μὴ
ὑστερήστω· ἐπεὶ ὁ μὲν θεὸς ἀναίτιος, ἡμεῖς δὲ αἴτιοι τῶν κακῶν,
ταῦτα προκρίνοντες τῶν ἀγαθῶν

Nearly all past translations have opted to use the English words 'good' and 'evil', as did John Everard and G.R.S. Mead whose respective translations are,

These things being so, O Tat, that things have been, and are so
plenteously ministered to us from God; let them proceed also from
us, without any scarcity or sparing. For God is innocent or guiltless,
but we are the causes of Evil, preferring them before the Good.

This being so, O Tat, what comes from God hath been and will be
ours; but that which is dependent on ourselves, let this press
onward and have no delay; for 'tis not God, 'tis we who are the
cause of evil things, preferring them to good.

A more recent translation is that of Brian Copenhaver,

Since this is so, Tat, what proceeds from god has been and will be
available to us. May what comes to us be suited to it and not
deficient. And the evils for which we are responsible, who chose
them instead of good things, are no responsibility of god's.

In contrast, I interpret as,

Because of this, then - Thoth - what is from theos can be and has been ours
So let what accompanies us be that now instead of later.
For it is we who select dishonour rather than honour
With theos blameless in this.

Which interpretation emphasises the personal origin of what is done and why what is bad, in personal terms, is - as the author of the text later writes, αὕτη διαφορὰ τοῦ ὁμοίου πρὸς τὸ ἀνόμοιον, καὶ τῷ ἀνομοίῳ ὑστέρημα πρὸς τὸ ὅμοιον - a privation of what is good:

This is the distinction between what is akin and what is different
With what is different having a privation of what is akin.

Which contrast between personal honour (a nobility of character) and dishonour (a doing of rotten deeds) is rather different from abstract "evil things", and well expresses an important aspect of the ethos of ancient Greece and of Greco-Roman culture; an aspect well-expressed by Sophocles: πόλεμος οὐδέν' ἄνδρ' ἐκὼν αἰρεῖ πονηρόν ἀλλὰ τοὺς χρηστοὺς ἀεί battle does not willingly take cowards, but - as of old - the honourable Philoctetes, v.437

This interpretation of ἀγαθός - in the personal terms of such an ethos, rather than as some abstract existent external to the individual as posited by Plato, ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα - is why the author of text also writes,

ὁρᾷς, ὦ τέκνον, πόσα ἡμᾶς δεῖ σώματα διεξελθεῖν, καὶ πόσους χοροὺς δαιμόνων καὶ συνέχειαν καὶ δρόμους ἀστέρων ἵνα πρὸς τὸν ἕνα καὶ μόνον σπεύσωμεν; ἀδιάβατον γὰρ τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ ἀπέραντον καὶ ἀτελές, αὐτῷ δὲ καὶ ἄναρχον, ἡμῖν δὲ δοκοῦν ἀρχὴν ἔχειν τὴν γνῶσιν. οὐκ αὐτοῦ οὖν ἀρχὴ γίνεται ἡ γνῶσις

Do you, my son, apprehend how many celestial bodies we have to traverse - How many groups of Daimons and sequential constellations - So that we hasten to the Monas. For the honourable is unpassable, without limit, and unending Even though to us its origin appears to be the knowledge. But even though such knowledge is not the origin of it It yields to us the origin of our knowing. [2]

For Plato's explanation requires a questioning, a philosophical search for ἀληθεία, a type of anados, resulting in a knowing of 'the good', ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα, and which knowing - which knowledge - is the source, the origin, of all other knowing. Here, the opposite is clearly stated: that such knowledge of 'the good', of what is honourable, is not 'the knowledge' - the conclusion of our anados - but instead only the source of what we know about ourselves

and about others.

This understanding of 'the good', of ἀγαθός, is indeed somewhat controversial - the opposite of what Plato et al theorized and what some seem to have assumed regarding the Corpus Hermeticum - but one which presents an alternative (a somewhat paganus) understanding of such hermeticism as is described in the three tractates under consideration. And an interesting alternative that, to my knowledge, has been long neglected, given the various and the numerous assumptions made regarding the meaning of certain Greek words in texts such as the Corpus Hermeticum.

2016

[1] In order to elucidate my methodology I for brevity only consider here three Greek terms.

[2] As I noted in my commentary on tractate IV:

Reading ἀδιάβατον, which implies that what is honourable is always there, always around, always noticeable when it is presenced by someone. In other words - given the following καὶ ἀπέραντον καὶ ἀτελές - there are always some mortals who will (qv. sections 5 and 8) select honour rather than dishonour: who will (as described in section 4) "receive the perceivation," having won that prize gifted by theos [...]

The expression ἡμῖν δὲ δοκοῦν ἀρχὴν ἔχειν τὴν γνῶσιν is interesting given that it refers to 'the knowledge', which some have construed to refer to the gnosis of certain pagan weltanschauungen. However, since what this particular knowledge is, is not specified, to translate as 'the Gnosis' would be to impose a particular and modern interpretation on the text given what the term gnosticism now denotes. All that can be adduced from the text is that this particular knowledge may refer to and be the knowledge imparted in the text itself: the knowledge that Hermes is here imparting to Thoth.

A Note On Greek Terms In The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos

As I mentioned in the *A Philosophical Compendiary* chapter of my book *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, my philosophy of pathei-mathos has connexions to the culture of ancient Greece, exemplified by the many Greek terms and phrases I use in an attempt to express certain philosophical concepts. Such use of such terms also serves to intimate that my philosophy has some connexion to the Graeco-Roman mystical, and paganus, traditions, one of which traditions is outlined in the Ἱερός Λόγος tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum where it is written that

"...every psyche - embodied in flesh - can
By the mirificence of the circumferent deities coursing the heavens
Apprehend the heavens, and honour, and physis presenced, and the works of
theos;
Can understand divine influence as wyrdful change
And thus, regarding what is good and what is bad, discover all the arts of
honour." [1]

Furthermore, I also - and perhaps (as you mention) somewhat confusingly - use certain Greek and Latin terms in a specific way, such that the meaning I assign to them is not necessarily identical to how they were understood in classical times or the same as the meaning ascribed to them in modern Greek and Latin lexicons. A few examples being συμπάθεια, δίκη, φύσις, ἁρμονία, perfectus, ἅγιος, and σωφρονεῖν.

Thus I understand ἅγιος - qv. my translation of and commentary on the Pœmandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum - not as the conventional 'holy'/sacred but rather as implying the numinous/numinosity, for I incline toward the view that the English words holy and sacred have too many modern connotations, Christian and otherwise, whereas numinous/numinosity still have the advantage of being religiously neutral and thus can intimate what an ancient paganus tradition may well have intimated. Hence also why and for example I in that tractate chose to translate ἀρχέτυπον εἶδος as 'quidditas of semblance' [2] rather than use (as some other translators have) an expression that included the word 'archetype' since that word has modern connotations that detract from (that can falsify) the meaning of the original Greek.

Another example, from the many, is φύσις which I use contextually to refer to not only its Homeric and later Aristotelian sense - of personal character, Nature, and the unfolding/change of being, respectively [3] - but also to what I have philosophically described as the unity (the being/Being) beyond the division of our φύσις, as individual mortals, into masculous and muliebral and a division we have made via abstractions (including 'forms'; the ἰδέα/εἶδος of Plato) and denotatum.

Yet another example is σωφρονεῖν which I use - in preference to σωφρονέω/σωφροσύνη - as a synonym for "a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement" (that is, thoughtful reasoning, or wisdom) whereas in classical and Hellenic terms the expression should be τὸ σωφρονεῖν/εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν which imply 'to be discreet (Ag. 1425), being moderate, having good judgement', and so on. Here, as with Δίκη (in preference to δίκη) I have used a form or variant of a specific Greek word in order to suggest a modern philosophical meaning (or principle) and differentiate it from the conventional lexicographic meaning. But it would perhaps, with the hindsight of some years, have been better to avoid confusion and instead given and then used transliterations - sophronein, Dika - as I did (following the example of Jung) with ἐναντιοδρομία/enantiodromia. That is, using the transliterations as Anglicized terms, as I do with my usage of πάθει μάθος - especially when the transliteration is employed - for such Anglicized terms do not follow the correct Greek grammatical (inflective) usage, with my writings

thus employing expressions such as "a pathei-mathos", "that pathei-mathos", "which pathei-mathos", "our accumulated pathei-mathos", "my pathei-mathos", and of course "the philosophy of pathei-mathos".

In other words, my usage of some Greek terms - and the meaning I assign to some others - is somewhat idiosyncratic, often philosophical; and although I have endeavoured to explain my usage and meaning in essays and commentaries, obviously this has not always been successful or as pedantic as it perhaps should have been.

Thus when I, some years ago now, first published my translation of fragment 1 of Heraclitus - without commentary - it led to a Greek scholar, then in Oxford, to ask about my seeming neglect of ἀεὶ. In correspondence I explained my usage, later incorporating part of that correspondence into a brief commentary which I appended to the translation, writing in the commentary that "in my view, *tend to* captures the poetic sense of ἀεὶ here. That is, the literal - the bland, strident - 'always' is discarded in favour of a more Heraclitean expression of human beings having an apparently rather irreconcilable tendency - both now and as in the past - to ignore (or forget or not understand) certain things, even after matters have been explained to them (they have heard the explanation) and even after they have discovered certain truths for themselves." [4]

Therefore, and as I mentioned in the introduction to my *Poemandres*, some may well consider the words of Diogenes Laertius about Plato - *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 3.1 (64) - apposite in relation to my idiosyncratic use of some Greek terms:

χρῆται δὲ ὁ Πλάτων ἐνίοτε αὐτῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ κακοῦ: ἔστι δ' ὅτε καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ μικροῦ. πολλάκις δὲ καὶ διαφέρουσιν ὀνόμασιν ἐπὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ
σημαινομένου χρῆται.

2015

Extract from a letter to an academic correspondent, with footnotes added post scriptum.

[1] My translation, from *Ἐρὸς Λόγος: An Esoteric Mythos. A Translation Of And A Commentary On The Third Tractate Of The Corpus Hermeticum*. 2015.

[2] Quidditas being 11th/12th century post-classical Latin, from whence derived the scholastic term 'quiddity'.

[3] *Towards Understanding Physis*. The essay is included in *Sarigthersa: Some Recent Essays*. 2015.

[4] "Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed

details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done."

The translation - together with the Greek text and a brief commentary - is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/heraclitus-fragment-1/>

Appreciating Classical Literature

Having read and once been in possession of a few of the printed published volumes of *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* [1] I seem to at last understand how that continuing scholarly endeavour, begun decades before the First World War, is emblematic of the importance of academic scholarship, and emblematic of the temporal nature of wars and especially of such national and regional conflicts as we have endured, and continue to be involved in, during the past one hundred and fifty years.

Wars, and conflicts, with their human suffering and their often civilian deaths which an appreciation of classical (Ancient Greek and Latin) literature can place into a necessary supra-personal and supra-national perspective.

For the *pathei-mathos* which such literature - and often the associated *mythoi* - can impart is of our hubris and our need for the wisdom enshrined in the phrase *καλὸς κάγαθός*. That is, in the melding of *τὸ καλόν* (the beautiful) and *τὸ ἀγαθόν* (the honourable) as in tractate XI:3 of the *Corpus Hermeticum*:

Ἡ δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ σοφία τί ἔστι;
Τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ καλὸν καὶ εὐδαιμονία καὶ ἡ πᾶσα ἀρετὴ καὶ ὁ αἰὼν.

But the Sophia of the theos is what?
The noble, the beautiful, good fortune, *arête*, and Aion. [2]

Where, however, *τὸ καλόν* refers, in terms of individuals, to not only physical beauty - the beautiful - but also to a particular demeanour indicative of a well-balanced, noble, personal character, as for example mentioned by Xenophon in *Hellenica*, Book V, 3.9,

πολλοὶ δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ τῶν περιοίκων ἐθελονταὶ καλοὶ κάγαθοι
ἠκολούθουν, καὶ ξένοι τῶν τροφίμων καλουμένων, καὶ νόθοι τῶν
Σπαρτιατῶν, μάλα εὖειδεῖς τε καὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ πόλει καλῶν οὐκ
ἄπειροι

A personal character which Marcus Tullius Cicero also explained, in his *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*,

Honestum igitur id intellegimus, quod tale est, ut detracta omni

utilitate sine ullis praemiis fructibusve per se ipsum possit iure laudari. quod quale sit, non tam definitione, qua sum usus, intellegi potest, quamquam aliquantum potest, quam communi omnium iudicio et optimi cuiusque studiis atque factis, qui permulta ob eam unam causam faciunt, quia decet, quia rectum, quia honestum est, etsi nullum consecuturum emolumentum vident. (II, 45f)

I am inclined to believe that it is unfortunate that the societies of the modern West no longer consider "a classical education" – the learning of Ancient Greek and Latin, and a study of Ancient Greek and Latin texts such as those of Cicero, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Aristotle – a necessity, as a way to wisdom, as a means to understanding our human physis.

That some individuals, such as the scholars engaged in endeavouring to complete *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, do still appreciate Ancient Greek and Latin texts provides this old man, in the twilight of his life, some comfort, some hope for our human future.

ἀθάνατοι θνητοί, θνητοὶ ἀθάνατοι, ζῶντες τὸν ἐκείνων θάνατον,
τὸν δὲ ἐκείνων βίον τεθνεῶτες

The deathless are deathful, the deathful deathless, with one living the other's dying with the other dying in that other's life. [3]

December 2019

Extract from a letter to an Oxfordian friend, with footnotes post scriptum

[1] <https://www.thesaurus.badw.de/en/tll-digital/tll-open-access.html>

[2] As I have mentioned in several essays, and in my *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates: Translation and Commentary*, the theos – ὁ θεός – is the chief classical deity (such as Zeus in Ancient Greek mythoi) and should not be understood as equivalent to the monotheistic creator God of Christianity and of the ancient Hebrews. For ὁ θεός is not omnipotent, and can be overthrown, as Zeus overthrew Kronos and as Kronos himself overthrew his own father.

[3] Heraclitus, Fragment 62, Diels-Krantz.

An Indebtedness To Ancient Greek And Greco-Roman Culture

One of my fond memories of English schooldays was as a Sixth Form boarder in the late 1960's when I had a room to myself and an allowance from my father who had returned to live and work in Africa.

As recounted elsewhere [1] the allowance allowed me to travel and buy

books, often from bookshops in London, Oxford, and Cambridge, and one such purchase was of the complete, multi-volume, Oxford English Dictionary, and almost every evening I loved

"to dip into it for an hour or so, discovering new words, their etymology, and a quotation or two to betake me, in the days following, to some library or some bookshop to find and to read the work or works in question. I enjoyed the richness, the diversity, the flexibility, of the English language; its assimilation of so many words from other languages, and that ambiguity of sound which sometimes led to or could lead to such variations in spelling as sometimes seemed to annoy those who desired to reform that language and which reform would see its versatility, quirkiness, and heritage, lost in order to fit some boring manufactured schemata." [2]

Such schoolboy habits would prove useful when I began to develop my philosophy of *pathei-mathos* and sought to express my intuitions about Being and about our mortal being through the medium of English words.

Such an expression led me to use some non-English terms mostly from Ancient Greek but occasionally from Latin in the hope that such terms would not only be able to convey my meaning better than some easily mis-understood English term but also might be assimilated into the English language as philosophical terms either in their transliterated English form or in their Greek and Latin form.

Such terms might also reveal my indebtedness to Ancient Greek and Greco-Roman culture and how and why the philosophy of *pathei-mathos* is both a "transition from *mythoi* and anthropomorphic deities (*theos* and *theoi*) to an appreciation of the numinous *sans denotatum* and *sans religion*" [3] and thus a return to individual insight and understanding over impersonal abstractions/ideations, over *denotatum*, and over religious and political dogma, with the Latin *denotatum* – used as an Anglicized term and which thus can be used to describe both singular and plural instances of denoting and naming – a useful example of my somewhat idiosyncratic methodology.

Thus and for example I used and use σοφόν instead of σοφός when the sense implied is not the usual "skilled", or "learned" or "wise" but rather what lies beyond and what was/is the genesis of what is presented in a person as skill, or learning, or wisdom.

I used and use σωφρονεῖν in preference to σωφροσύνη (*sophrosyne*) to suggest a fair and balanced personal judgement rather than the fairly modern English interpretation of *sophrosyne* as "soundness of mind, moderation".

I used and use Δίκη instead of δίκη when the sense implied is "what lies beyond and what was the genesis of δίκη personified as [a] goddess", which is the natural instinct in those of noble *physis* (φύσις) for honour, fairness, and beauty – καλὸς κάγαθός [4] – and thus the natural balance rather than

"the correct/customary/ancestral way" or an abstract, impersonal, modern-type of "justice".

In most such cases the Greek words are used, as I wrote in *A Note On Greek Terms In The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos*, in an Anglicized way – as transliterated terms such as pathei-mathos and enantiodromia are – with there being no need to employ Greek inflective forms.

In the cases where the Greek words are not transliterated – σωφρονεῖν as sophronein for example – the intent was to not only provide a direct link to Ancient Greek and Greco-Roman culture but also to signify that the word represents an important or interesting metaphysical principle in the philosophy of pathei-mathos.

Hence σοφόν – sophon – is how and why empathy and pathei-mathos can reveal and can presence our physis, the nature of our being, the nature of Being itself, and reveal that Time is not only causal but acausal. It also suggests, as do Δίκα and σωφρονεῖν, the primacy and the importance of individual insight and understanding.

In a world where propaganda and disinformation still proliferate, based as they are on denotatum and often on political dogma and impersonal abstractions/ideations, and in a world where mythoi and anthropomorphic deities (theos and theoi) and thus organized religion still seem to dominate, the philosophy of pathei-mathos provides an alternative: the individual way of pathei-mathos and of empathy, based as it is on four axioms:

- (i) that it is empathy and pathei-mathos which can wordlessly reveal the ontological reality both of our own physis and of how we, as sentient beings, relate to other living beings and to Being itself;
- (ii) that it is denotatum – and thus the abstractions deriving therefrom – which, in respect of human beings, can and often do obscure our physis and our relation to other living beings and to Being;
- (iii) that denotatum and abstractions imply a dialectic of contradictory opposites and thus for we human beings a separation-of-otherness; and
- (iv) that this dialectic of opposites is, has been, and can be a cause of suffering for both ourselves, as sentient beings, and – as a causal human presenced effect – for the other life with which we share the planet named in English as Earth. [5]

Does my idiosyncratic use of Ancient Greek and Latin terms make this philosophy confusing, difficult to understand and difficult to appreciate? Perhaps. But since philosophia – φιλοσοφία – is, at least according to my fallible understanding, becoming a friend of σοφόν, [6] and since such a personal friendship involves seeking to understand Being, beings, and Time, and since part of the ethos of the culture of the West – heir to Ancient Greek and Greco-Roman culture – is or at least was a personal and rational quest for understanding and knowledge, then perhaps some effort, as befits those of noble physis who appreciate and who may seek to presence καλὸς κάγαθός, is only to be expected.

April 2019

[1] *Early Years*, in *Myngath: Some Recollections of a Wyrdful and Extremist Life*. 2013. ISBN 978-1484110744.

[2] *The Joy Of Words*, 2013. <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/the-joy-of-words/2013>.

[3] *From Mythoi To Empathy: Toward A New Appreciation Of The Numinous*. <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2018/01/04/from-mythoi-to-empathy/2018>.

[4] I have described καλὸς κάγαθός in my two recent books *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*, and *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*.

[5] *Physis And Being: An Introduction To The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos*. 2019. <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2019/02/10/physis-and-being/>

[6] *The Way of Pathei-Mathos: A Philosophical Compendiary*, in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, fifth edition, 2018. ISBN 978-1484096642.

Concerning The Gospel Of John

A Question Of Interpretation

Vernacular translations are, by the nature of translation, interpretations, with the history of vernacular translations of the Bible - and especially of the Gospels - revealing how such interpretations could be used to support schisms; for example, in the case of Wycliffe's English, the Lollards, and in the case of Luther's German, the Protestant reformation. In addition, some translations enriched the vernacular language itself, as for example, the translations of Tyndale and the King James Bible did in respect of English.

My own interpretation of the Gospel of John is not intended to be schismatic but rather to be unfamiliar, with such unfamiliarity hopefully betaking some readers to the unfamiliar milieu of an ancient Judaea governed as it was by Rome and abode as it was of those Judaeans who believed in a Messias/Messiah, with it being written in the first chapter of the Gospel of John that in, reference to Jesus, Andrew - the brother of Simon Peter - announced: εὐρήκαμεν τὸν Μεσσίαν (we have found the Messias).

My interpretation is intended to be unfamiliar for several reasons. Firstly, because the Gospels were written in Hellenistic (Koine, κοινή) Greek, with the author of the Gospel of John by including colloquial Greek sayings and offering explanations for some particular terms [1] indicating that his intended or actual audience - those reading or hearing his Gospel in late first century and early second century CE - were most probably native speakers of

Hellenistic Greek or at least quite familiar with that language.

Intended to be unfamiliar secondly because the standard English versions of the Gospel of John - and English versions of the other Gospels - have become so familiar to so many people in the West over so many centuries that certain words and terms have acquired particular meanings, with those meanings and certain passages - via iconography, exegesis, and preaching - assuming archetypal status. Hence, and to provide just some examples, our assumptions about God (theos), about 'angels' (τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ θεοῦ), about Heaven (οὐρανός), about sin (ἁμαρτία) and about 'the Holy Spirit' (τὸ πνεῦμα).

An interpretation intended to be unfamiliar, thirdly, because the Gospels were written at a time when Christianity was, in the lands of the Roman Empire, one small religious sect among many others and had yet to develop a standardized doctrinal theology or a centralized ecclesiastical authority, with the Gospel of John not providing any theological explanation of what is meant by theos, by τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ θεοῦ, by οὐρανός, by ἁμαρτία, by τὸ πνεῦμα, and by many other terms. Thus, there is a natural tendency for us to project medieval, Renaissance, and modern meanings onto such terms with the inevitable consequence of us assuming that we understand the message of the Evangelist and thus comprehend at least something of Christianity itself.

In contrast, what are we to make of such translated passages as the following:

I beheld the Spiritus as a dove descend from Empyrean and remain there with him. (1.32)

It was He who sent me to baptize in water, saying to me: 'Upon whosoever you behold the Spiritus descend and remain there with, is the same one who baptizes in Halig Spiritus.' (1.33)

Having spoken to you of earthly things and you lack trust, how can you trust if I speak of things caelestien? (3.12)

And this is the condemnation: That the Phaos arrived in the world but mortals loved the darkness more than the Phaos, for their deeds were harmful. (3.19)

Are we betaken to an unfamiliar milieu where, having read or listened to the evangel attributed to John from familiar translations, we believe we may know something about such things as Heaven (οὐρανός, Empyrean) and the Spirit (τὸ πνεῦμα, the Spiritus) but now may have some doubts about their meaning and doubts about how they may relate to the Light (φῶς, Phaos) and thus to a man named Jesus? Are such doubts relevant or perhaps even necessary given that the emphasis in the Gospel seems to be on individuals trusting in the person of Jesus after they had accepted that the narrated signs (σημεῖα) - such as the Passion, the death and resurrection of Jesus, and

his Ascension - indicate that he may well be the only begotten Son of Theos so that, by trusting in him, we have the opportunity of life everlasting?

Such were some of the questions I pondered when a Christian monk, and my fallible interpretation of the Gospel of John, founded on some forty years of reflection and study, is my fallible attempt to find some answers.

2017

[1] Qv. my comments on 1.42 and 1.51.

On Minutiae And The Art Of Revision

Over forty years ago, many hours on many days on many months were spent in the library of a monastery reading many books that I now only vaguely recollect. But one of those which does still linger in memory was a work by John Chrysostom concerning the Gospel of John [1], homilies given toward the end of the fourth century Anno Domini, probably in Antioch, and over one and half thousand years before I sat down in a religious environment to read them. This continuity of religious tradition, of language, resonated with me then in a pleasing way as did the scholarly minutiae, sparsely scattered among the preaching, in which he explained some matters such as the use of the definite article in the phrase – from verse 1 of chapter one of the Gospel – θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος, Theos was the Logos.

Such minutiae make the process of translation – at least for me and in respect of the Gospel of John – somewhat slow, partly because they can change the meaning; or rather, provide a possible alternative interpretation as is the case in the matter of θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. Why, for example, is θεὸς here not ὁ θεὸς (pedantically, the Theos/the God) as at verse 24 of chapter four, πνεῦμα ὁ θεός? Which apparently pedantic question formed part of a somewhat acrimonious theological dispute before, during, and after the time of John Chrysostom; a dispute centred around a possible distinction between (i) The God and (ii) God, father of Jesus, and thus whether Jesus was, like The God, eternally-living. Those who affirmed such a distinction, and who thus came to believe that both Jesus and the πνεῦματος ἁγίου (the Holy Spirit) were not equal to The God, were termed ‘Arians’ (after the Alexandrian priest Arius) and were repeatedly condemned as heretics.

In respect of certain words or phrases it is, as so often, a personal choice between following what has become or is regarded as the scholarly consensus or undertaking one’s own research and possibly arriving at a particular, always disputable, interpretation. Such research takes time – days, weeks, months, sometimes longer – and may lead one to revise one’s own particular interpretation, as occurred recently in respect of my interpretation of θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος, which initially and in respect of grammar was a minority one (qv. Jean Daillé) of *The Logos was Theos* rather than the

conventional Theos [God] was the Logos [Word].

In the matter of θεός and ὁ θεός the current consensus is that there is in the Gospel of John no distinction between them. However, the arguments used to support this – from Chrysostom on – are theological and devolve around the use of such terms by John, by other Evangelists, by early Christians such as Paul of Tarsus, and even by the authors of LXX. That is, arguments are made regarding, for example, why the Evangelist wrote ὁ λόγος (the logos) rather than just λόγος: because, it is argued, to distinguish Jesus (identified as the logos) from everyone else. In addition, the Evangelist, and thus his Gospel, are often considered to be divinely-inspired – guided by the Holy Spirit, with the Evangelist thus aware of τὰ βάθη τοῦ θεοῦ [2] – so that there are in that Gospel, as in the others, meanings beyond what an ordinary person might express in Hellenistic Greek.

Over forty years ago I, subsequent to some doubts, accepted such theological arguments and therefore had little interest – beyond disputations concerning the actual meaning of words such as λόγος in classical and Hellenistic Greek – in further questioning the accuracy of conventional interpretations of the Gospel of John such as that of the Douay-Rheims version.

Now, as someone with a rather paganus weltanschauung, brought-into-being by πάθει μάθος, but respectful still of other manifestations of the numinous, I strive to understand that Gospel in the cultural milieu of the ancient Roman Empire and thus as a work, written in Hellenistic Greek, by a man who either had known Jesus and participated in his life, or who had known and was close to someone who did. That is, I approach the text as I did the tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum and the extant writings of Sophocles and Aeschylus; as an original work, possibly a self-contained one, where the author conveys something derived from their knowledge, learning, and personal experience, and where the meanings of certain words or passages may sometimes be explained or placed into context by comparison with other authors writing in the same language in the same or in a similar cultural milieu.

Thus, when I consider a phrase such as πνεῦμα ὁ θεός I wonder about the meaning of πνεῦμα, of θεός, and of ὁ θεός, not in terms of later explanations – in this instance ‘the Holy Spirit’, God, the God – and not in terms of assuming the author is learned concerning and referring to or quoting or paraphrasing texts such as LXX, but rather as terms, ideas, germane to the world, the place, in which the author lived. Understood thus, θεός is just theos; πνεῦμα is just pneuma or ‘spiritus’; with words such as those and other words such as λόγος possibly becoming explained or placed into context by the narrator as the narrative proceeds.

In the matter of my interpretation of the Gospel of John [3], revision is therefore inevitable as I proceed, slowly, hopefully studiously, from verse to verse and from chapter to chapter, for I really have no preconceptions about what such slow studious progress will or might reveal about what has already been interpreted (or misinterpreted) by me, especially as minutiae can take one on various detours, and which detours sometimes cause one to

travel far away from the Judaea that existed when Pontius Pilate was Praefectus of that Roman province.

July 2017

[1] *Homiliae in Ioannem*, volume 59 of the Migne Patrologia Graeca series.

[2] "The profundities of Theos." *First Epistle To The Corinthians*, 2.10. Wycliffe, and the King James Bible: "The deep things of God."

[3] <http://www.davidmyatt.info/gospel-john.html>

Concerning ἀγαθός and νοῦς in the Corpus Hermeticum

Three of the many Greek terms of interest in respect of understanding the varied weltanschauungen outlined in the texts that comprise the Corpus Hermeticum are ἀγαθός and νοῦς and θεός, with conventional translations of these terms as 'good' and 'Mind' and 'god' (or God) imparting the sense of reading somewhat declamatory sermons about god/God and 'the good' familiar from over a thousand years of persons preaching about Christianity interspersed with definitive philosophical statements about 'Mind', as if a "transcendent intelligence, rationality," or a "Mental or psychic faculty" or both, or something similar, is meant or implied.

Thus the beginning of tractate VI - τὸ ἀγαθόν, ὃ Ἀσκληπιέ, ἐν οὐδενί ἐστιν, εἰ μὴ ἐν μόνῳ τῷ θεῷ, μᾶλλον δὲ τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ θεὸς αἰεὶ - and dealing as it does with both ἀγαθός and θεός, has been translated, by Mead, as "Good, O Asclepius, is in none else save God alone; nay, rather, Good is God Himself eternally," [1] and by Copenhaver as "The good, Asclepius, is in nothing except in god alone, or rather god himself is always the good." [2]

In respect of νοῦς, a typical example is from Poemandres 12 - ὁ δὲ πάντων πατὴρ ὁ Νοῦς, ὢν ζωὴ καὶ φῶς, ἀπεκύησεν ἄνθρωπον αὐτῷ ἴσον, οὗ ἡράσθη ὡς ἰδίου τόκου· περικαλλὴς γάρ, τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς εἰκόνα ἔχων· ὄντως γὰρ καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἡράσθη τῆς ἰδίας μορφῆς, παρέδωκε τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πάντα δημιουργήματα. The beginning of this is translated by Mead as "But All-Father Mind, being Life and Light, did bring forth Man co-equal to Himself, with whom He fell in love, as being His own child for he was beautiful beyond compare," and by Copenhaver as "Mind, the father of all, who is life and light, gave birth to a man like himself whom he loved as his own child. The man was most fair: he had the father's image."

Similarly, in respect of Poemandres 22 - παραγίνομαι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ὁ Νοῦς τοῖς ὁσίοις καὶ ἀγαθοῖς καὶ καθαροῖς καὶ ἐλεήμοσι, τοῖς εὐσεβοῦσι, καὶ ἡ παρουσία μου γίνεται βοήθεια, καὶ εὐθὺς τὰ πάντα γνωρίζουσι καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἰλάσκονται ἀγαπητικῶς καὶ εὐχαριστοῦσιν εὐλογοῦντες καὶ ὑμνοῦντες τεταγμένως πρὸς αὐτὸν τῇ στοργῇ - which is translated by Mead

as "I, Mind, myself am present with holy men and good, the pure and merciful, men who live piously. [To such] my presence doth become an aid, and straightway they gain gnosis of all things, and win the Father's love by their pure lives, and give Him thanks, invoking on Him blessings, and chanting hymns, intent on Him with ardent love," and by Copenhaver as "I myself, the mind, am present to the blessed and good and pure and merciful - to the reverent - and my presence becomes a help; they quickly recognize everything, and they propitiate the father lovingly and give thanks, praising and singing hymns affectionately and in the order appropriate to him."

As explained in various places in my commentary on tractates I, III, IV, VIII, and XI, and in two appendices [3], I incline toward the view that - given what such English terms as 'the good', Mind, and god now impute, often as a result of two thousand years of Christianity and post-Renaissance, and modern, philosophy - such translations tend to impose particular and modern interpretations on the texts and thus do not present to the reader the ancient ethos that forms the basis of the varied weltanschauungen outlined in the texts of the Corpus Hermeticum.

To avoid such impositions, and in an endeavour to express at least something of that ancient (and in my view non-Christian) ethos, I have - for reasons explained in the relevant sections of my commentary - transliterated θεός as theos [4], νοῦς as perceiveration, or according to context, perceiverance; and ἀγαθός as, according to context, nobility, noble, or honourable [5]. Which is why my reading of the Greek of the three examples above provides the reader with a somewhat different impression of the texts:

° Asclepius, the noble exists in no-thing: only in theos alone; indeed, theos is, of himself and always, what is noble. [6]

° Perceiveration, as Life and phaos, father of all, brought forth in his own likeness a most beautiful mortal who, being his child, he loved.

° I, perceiveration, attend to those of respectful deeds, the honourable, the refined, the compassionate, those aware of the numinous; to whom my being is a help so that they soon acquire knowledge of the whole and are affectionately gracious toward the father, fondly celebrating in song his position.

But, as I noted in respect of ἀγαθός in the *On Ethos And Interpretation* appendix, whether these particular insights of mine are valid, others will have to decide. But they - and my translations of the tractates in general - certainly, at least in my fallible opinion, convey an impression about ancient Hermeticism which is rather different from that conveyed by other translations.

Extract from a letter in reply to a correspondent who, in respect of the Corpus Hermeticum, enquired about my translation of terms such as ἀγαθός and νοῦς. I have, for publication here, added a footnote which references my translations of and commentaries on five tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum.

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Notes

[1] G.R.S Mead. *Thrice-Greatest Hermes*. Theosophical Society (London). 1906.

[2] B. Copenhaver. *Hermetica*. Cambridge University Press. 1992

[3] My translation of and commentary on tractates I, III, IV, and XI - and the two appendices - is available in pdf format at
<https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/03/08/corpus-hermeticum-i-iii-iv-xi/>

My translation of and commentary on tractate VIII is available in pdf format at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/03/20/corpus-hermeticum-viii/>

[4] To be pedantic, when θεός is mentioned in the texts it often literally refers to 'the' theos so that at the beginning of tractate VI, for example, the reference is to 'the theos' rather than to 'god'.

[5] In respect of 'the good' - τὸ ἀγαθόν - as 'honourable', qv. Seneca, *Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales*, LXXI, 4, "summum bonum est quod honestum est. Et quod magis admireris: unum bonum est, quod honestum est, cetera falsa et adulterina bona sunt."

[6] The suggestion seems to be that 'the theos' is the origin, the archetype, of what is noble, and that only through and because of theos can what is noble be presented and recognized for what it is, and often recognized by those who are, or that which is, an eikon of theos. Hence why in tractate IV it is said that "the eikon will guide you,"; why in tractate XI that "Kosmos is the eikon of theos, Kosmos [the eikon] of Aion, the Sun [the eikon] of Aion, and the Sun [the eikon] of mortals," and why in the same tractate it is said that "there is nothing that cannot be an eikon of theos," and why in Poemandres 31 theos is said to "engender all physis as eikon."

As I noted in my commentary - qv. especially the mention of Maximus of Constantinople in respect of Poemandres 31 - I have transliterated εἰκὼν.

Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos

Vocabulary, Definitions, and Explanations

Abstraction

An abstraction is a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed.

Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future.

All abstractions involve a causal perception, based as they are on the presumption of a linear cause-and-effect (and/or a dialectic) and on a posited or an assumed category or classification which differs in some way from some other assumed or posited categories/classifications, past, present or future. When applied to or used to describe/classify/distinguish/motivate living beings, abstractions involve a causal separation-of-otherness; and when worth/value/identity (and exclusion/inclusion) is or are assigned to such a causal separation-of-otherness then there is or there arises hubris.

Abstractions are often assumed to provide some 'knowledge' or some 'understanding' of some-thing assigned to or described by a particular abstraction. For example, in respect of the abstraction of 'race' applied to human beings, and which categorization of human beings describes a median set of values said or assumed to exist 'now' or in some recent historical past.

According to the philosophy of pathei-mathos, this presumption of knowledge and understanding by the application of abstractions to beings - living and otherwise - is false, for abstractions are considered as a primary means by which the nature of Being and beings are and have been concealed, requiring as abstractions do the positing and the continuation of abstractive opposites in relation to Being and the separation of beings from Being by the process of ideation and opposites.

Acausal

The acausal is not a generalization - a concept - deriving from a collocation of assumed, imagined, or causally observed Phainómenon, but instead is that

wordless, conceptless, a-temporal, knowing which empathy reveals and which a personal πάθει μάθος and an appreciation of the numinous often inclines us toward. That is, the acausal is a direct and personal (individual) revealing of beings and Being which does not depend on denoting or naming.

What is so revealed is the a-causal nature of some beings, the connexion which exists between living beings, and how living beings are emanations of ψυχή.

Thus speculations and postulations regarding the acausal only serve to obscure the nature of the acausal or distance us from that revealing of the acausal that empathy and πάθει μάθος and an appreciation of the numinous provide.

ἀρετή

Arête is the prized Hellenic virtue which can roughly be translated by the English word 'excellence' but which also implies what is naturally distinguishable - what is pre-eminent - because it reveals or shows certain valued qualities such as beauty, honour, valour, harmony.

Aristotelian Essentials

The essentials which Aristotle enumerated are: (i) Reality (existence) exists independently of us and our consciousness, and thus independent of our senses; (ii) our limited understanding of this independent 'external world' depends for the most part upon our senses, our faculties – that is, on what we can see, hear or touch; on what we can observe or come to know via our senses; (iii) logical argument, or reason, is perhaps the most important means to knowledge and understanding of and about this 'external world'; (iv) the cosmos (existence) is, of itself, a reasoned order subject to rational laws.

In addition such essentials now include Isaac Newton's first *Rules of Reasoning* which is that

"We are to admit no more causes of natural things than such as are both true and sufficient to explain their appearances. To this purpose the philosophers say that Nature does nothing in vain, and more is in vain when less will serve; for Nature is pleased with simplicity, and affects not the pomp of superfluous causes."

Hence why it is often considered that there are five Aristotelian Essentials

Experimental science seeks to explain the natural world – the phenomenal world – by means of direct, personal observation of it, and by making deductions, and formulating hypothesis, based on such direct observation.

The philosophy of pathei-mathos adds the faculty of empathy - and the

knowing so provided by empathy - to these essentials. Part of the knowing that empathy reveals, or can reveal, concerns the nature of Being, of beings, and of Time.

ἁρμονία

ἁρμονία (harmony) is or can be manifest/discovered by an individual cultivating wu-wei and σωφρονεῖν (a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement).

Compassion

The English word compassion dates from around 1340 CE and the word in its original sense (and as used in this work) means benignity, which word derives from the Latin *benignitatem*, the sense imputed being of a kind, compassionate, well-mannered character, disposition, or deed. Benignity came into English usage around the same time as compassion; for example, the word occurs in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* [ii. 483] written around 1374 CE.

Hence, compassion is understood as meaning being kindly disposed toward and/or feeling a sympathy with someone (or some living being) affected by pain/suffering/grief or who is enduring vicissitudes.

The word compassion itself is derived from *com*, meaning together-with, combined with *pati*, meaning to-suffer/to-endure and derived from the classical Latin *passiō*. Thus useful synonyms for compassion, in this original sense, are *compassivity* and *benignity*.

Cosmic Perspective

The Cosmic Perspective refers to our place in the Cosmos, to the fact that we human beings are simply one fragile fallible mortal biological life-form on one planet orbiting one star in one galaxy in a Cosmos of billions of galaxies. Thus in terms of this perspective all our theories, our ideas, our beliefs, our abstractions are merely the opinionated product of our limited fallible Earth-bound so-called 'intelligence', an 'intelligence', an understanding, we foolishly, arrogantly, pridefully have a tendency to believe in and exalt as if we are somehow 'the centre of the Universe' and cosmically important.

The Cosmic Perspective inclines us – or can incline us – toward wu-wei, toward avoiding the error of hubris, toward humility, and thus toward an appreciation of the numinous.

δαίμων

A δαίμων is not one of the pantheon of major Greek gods – θεοί - but rather a lesser type of divinity who might be assigned by those gods to bring good

fortune or misfortune to human beings and/or watch over certain human beings and especially particular numinous (sacred) places.

Denotatum

The term denotatum - from the Latin, denotare - is used in accord with its general meaning which is "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted."

Thus understood, and used as an Anglicized term, denotatum is applicable to both singular and plural instances and thus obviates the need to employ the Latin plural denotata.

Descriptor

A descriptor is a word, a term, used to describe some-thing which exists and which is personally observed, or is discovered, by means of our senses (including the faculty of empathy).

A descriptor differs from an ideation, category, or abstraction, in that a descriptor describes what-is as 'it' is observed, according to its physis (its nature) whereas an abstraction, for example, denotes what is presumed/assumed/idealized, past or present or future. A descriptor relies on, is derived from, describes, individual knowing and individual judgement; an abstraction relies on something abstract, impersonal, such as some opinion/knowing/judgement of others or some assumptions, theory, or hypothesis made by others.

An example of a descriptor is the term 'violent' [using physical force sufficient to cause bodily harm or injury to a person or persons] to describe the observed behaviour of an individual. Another example would be the term 'extremist' to describe - to denote - a person who treats or who has been observed to treat others harshly/violently in pursuit of some supra-personal objective of a political or of a religious nature.

δίκη

Depending on context, δίκη could be the judgement of an individual (or Judgement personified), or the natural and the necessary balance, or the correct/customary/ancestral way, or what is expected due to custom, or what is considered correct and natural, and so on.

A personified Judgement - the Δίκη of Hesiod - is the goddess of the natural balance, evident in the ancestral customs, the ways, the way of life, the ethos, of a community, whose judgement, δίκη, is "in accord with", has the nature or the character of, what tends to restore such balance after some deed or deeds by an individual or individuals have upset or disrupted that balance. This sense of δίκη as one's ancestral customs is evident, for example, in Homer (Odyssey, III, 244).

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, the term Δίκαια - spelt thus in a modern

way with a capital Δ - is sometimes used to intimate a new, a particular and numinous, philosophical principle, and differentiate Δίκη from the more general δίκη. As a numinous principle, or axiom, Δίκη thus suggests what lies beyond and what was the genesis of δίκη personified as the goddess, Judgement – the goddess of natural balance, of the ancestral way and ancestral customs.

Empathy

Etymologically, this fairly recent English word, used to translate the German Einfühlung, derives, via the late Latin sympathia, from the Greek συμπάθεια - συμπάθης - and is thus formed from the prefix σύν (sym) together with παθ- [root of πάθος] meaning enduring/suffering, feeling: πάσχειν, to endure/suffer.

As used and defined by the philosophy of pathei-mathos, empathy - ἐμπάθεια - is a natural human faculty: that is, a noble intuition about (a revealing of) another human being or another living being. When empathy is developed and used, as envisaged by that way of life, then it is a specific and extended type of συμπάθεια. That is, it is a type of and a means to knowing and understanding another human being and/or other living beings - and thus differs in nature from compassion.

Empathic knowing is different from, but supplementary and complimentary to, that knowing which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

Empathy reveals or can reveal the nature, the ontology (the physis) - sans abstractions/ideations/words - of Being, of beings, and of Time. This revealing is of the the a-causal nature of Being, and of how beings have their genesis in the separation-of-otherness; and thus how we human beings are but causal, mortal, fallible, microcosmic emanations of ψυχή.

Enantiodromia

The unusual compound Greek word ἐναντιοδρομίας occurs in a summary of the philosophy of Heraclitus by Diogenes Laërtius.

Enantiodromia is the term used, in the philosophy of pathei-mathos, to describe the revealing, the process, of perceiving, feeling, knowing, beyond causal appearance and the separation-of-otherness, and thus when what has become separated – or has been incorrectly perceived as separated – returns to the wholeness, the unity, from whence it came forth. When, that is, beings are understood in their correct relation to Being, beyond the causal abstraction of different/conflicting ideated opposites, and when as a result, a reformation of the individual, occurs. A relation, an appreciation of the numinous, that empathy and pathei-mathos provide, and which relation and which appreciation the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals over millennia have made us aware of or tried to inform us or teach us about.

An important and a necessary part of enantiodromia involves a discovery, a knowing, an acceptance, and - as prelude - an interior balancing within individuals, of what has hitherto been perceived and designated as the apparent opposites described by terms (descriptors) such as 'muliebral' and 'masculous'.

The balance attained by - which is - enantiodromia is that of simply feeling, accepting, discovering, the empathic, the human, the personal, scale of things and thus understanding our own fallibility-of-knowing, our limitations as a human being

ἔρις

Strife; discord; disruption; a quarrel between friends or kin. As in the Odyssey:

ἢ τ' ἔριν Ἀτρεΐδῃσι μετ' ἀμφοτέροισιν ἔθηκε.

Who placed strife between those two sons of Atreus

Odyssey, 3, 136

According to the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, ἔρις was caused by, or was a consequence of, the marriage between a personified πόλεμος (as the δαίμων of kindred strife) and a personified ὕβρις (as the δαίμων of arrogant pride) with Polemos rather forlornly following Hubris around rather than vice versa. Eris is thus the child of Polemos and Hubris.

Extremism

By extreme is meant to be harsh, so that an extremist is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious nature. Here, harsh is: rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic.

Hence extremism is considered to be: (a) the result of such harshness, and (b) the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists. In addition, a fanatic is considered to be someone with a surfeit of zeal or whose enthusiasm for some objective, or for some cause, is intemperate.

In the terms of the philosophy/way of pathei-mathos, an extremist is someone who commits the error of hubris; and error which enantiodromia - following from πάθει μάθος - can sometimes correct or forestall. The genesis of extremism - be such extremism personal, or described as political or religious - is when the separation-of-otherness is used as a means of personal and collective identity and pride, with some 'others' - or 'the others' - assigned to a category considered less worthy than the category we assign ourselves and 'our kind/type' to.

Extremist ideologies manifest an unbalanced, an excessive, masculine nature.

εὐταξία

The quality, the virtue, of self-restraint, of a balanced, well-mannered conduct especially under adversity or duress, of which Cicero wrote:

Haec autem scientia continentur ea, quam Graeci εὐταξίαν nominant, non hanc, quam interpretamur modestiam, quo in verbo modus inest, sed illa est εὐταξία, in qua intellegitur ordinis conservatio

Those two qualities are evident in that way described by the Greeks as εὐταξίαν although what is meant by εὐταξία is not what we mean by the moderation of the moderate, but rather what we consider is restrained behaviour... [My translation]

De Officiis, Liber Primus, 142

Honour

The English word honour dates from around 1200 CE, deriving from the Latin honorem (meaning refined, grace, beauty) via the Old French (and thence Anglo-Norman) onor/onur. As used by The Way of Pathei-Mathos, honour means an instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous. An honourable person is thus someone of manners, fairness, natural dignity, and valour.

In respect of early usage of the term, two quotes may be of interest. The first, from c. 1393 CE, is taken from a poem, in Middle English, by John Gower:

And riht in such a maner wise
Sche bad thei scholde hire don servise,
So that Achilles underfongeth
As to a yong ladi belongeth
Honour, servise and reverence.

John Gower, Confessio Amantis. Liber Quintus vv. 2997-3001 [Macaulay, G.C., ed. The Works of John Gower. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1901]

The second is from several centuries later:

" Honour - as something distinct from mere probity, and which supposes in gentlemen a stronger abhorrence of perfidy, falsehood, or cowardice, and a more elevated and delicate sense of the dignity of virtue, than are usually found in vulgar minds."

George Lyttelton. History of the Life of Henry the Second. London, Printed for J. Dodsley. M DCC LXXV II [1777] (A new ed., cor.) vol 3, p.178

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, the personal virtue of honour is considered to be a presencing, a grounding, an expression, of ψυχή - of Life, of our φύσις - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη. That is, as a means to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἀρμονίη.

Humility

Humility is used, in a spiritual context, to refer to that gentleness, that modest demeanour, that understanding, which derives from an appreciation of the numinous and also from one's own admitted uncertainty of knowing and one's acknowledgement of past mistakes. An uncertainty of knowing, an acknowledgement of mistakes, that often derive from πάθει μάθος.

Humility is thus the natural human balance that offsets the unbalance of hubris (ὕβρις) - the balance that offsets the unbalance of pride and arrogance, and the balance that offsets the unbalance of that certainty of knowing which is one basis for extremism, for extremist beliefs, for fanaticism and intolerance. That is, humility is a manifestation of the natural balance of Life; a restoration of ἀρμονίη, of δίκη, of σωφρονεῖν - of those qualities and virtues - that hubris and extremism, that ἔρις and πόλεμος, undermine, distance us from, and replace.

Ideation

To posit or to construct an ideated form - an assumed perfect (ideal) form or category or abstraction - of some-thing, based on the belief or the assumption that what is observed by the senses, or revealed by observation, is either an 'imperfect copy' or an approximation of that thing, which the additional assumption that such an ideated form contains or in some way expresses (or can express) 'the essence' or 'the ethos' of that thing and of similar things.

Ideation also implies that the ideated form is or can be or should be contrasted with what it considered or assumed to be its 'opposite'.

Immediacy-of-the-Moment

The term the 'immediacy-of-the-moment' describes both (i) the nature and the extent of the acausal knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos provide, and (ii) the nature and extent of the morality of the philosophy of pathei-mathos.

Empathy, for example, being a natural and an individual faculty, is limited in range and application, just as our faculties of sight and hearing are limited in range and application. These limits extend to only what is direct, immediate,

and involve personal interactions with other humans or with other living beings. There is therefore, for the philosophy of pathei-mathos, an 'empathic scale of things' and an acceptance of our limitations of personal knowing and personal understanding. An acceptance of (i) the unwisdom, the hubris, of arrogantly making assumptions about who and what are beyond the range of our empathy and outside of our personal experience/beyond the scope of our pathei-mathos.

Morality, for the philosophy of pathei-mathos, is a result of individuals using the faculty of empathy; a consequence of the insight and the understanding (the acausal knowing) that empathy provides for individuals in the immediacy-of-the-moment. Thus, morality is considered to reside not in some abstract theory or some moralistic schemata presented in some written text which individuals have to accept and try and conform or aspire to, but rather in personal virtues - such as such as compassion and fairness, and εὐταξία - that arise or which can arise naturally through empathy, πάθει μάθος, and thus from an awareness and appreciation of the numinous.

Innocence

Innocence is regarded as an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us, are therefore unjudged us by and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence of others - until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise - is the fair, the reasoned, the numinous, the human, thing to do.

Empathy and πάθει μάθος incline us toward treating other human beings as we ourselves would wish to be treated; that is they incline us toward fairness, toward self-restraint, toward being well-mannered, and toward an appreciation and understanding of innocence.

Masculous

Masculous is a term, a descriptor, used to refer to certain traits, abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with men, such as competitiveness, aggression, a certain harshness, the desire to organize/control, and a desire for adventure and/or for conflict/war/violence /competition over and above personal love and culture. Extremist ideologies manifest an unbalanced, an excessive, masculous nature.

Masculous is from the Latin masculus and occurs, for example, in some seventeenth century works such as one by William Struther: "This is not only the language of Canaan, but also the masculous Schiboleth." *True Happines, or, King Davids Choice: Begunne In Sermons, And Now Digested Into A Treatise*. Edinbvrgh, 1633

Muliebral

The term muliebral derives from the classical Latin word muliebris, and in the context the philosophy of Pathei-Mathos refers to those positive traits,

abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with women, such as empathy, sensitivity, gentleness, compassion, and a desire to love and be loved over and above a desire for conflict/adventure/war.

Numinous

The numinous is what manifests or can manifest or remind us of (what can reveal) the natural balance of ψυχή; a balance which ὕβρις upsets. This natural balance - our being as human beings - is or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful. In a practical way, it is what predisposes us not to commit ὕβρις, and thus what we regard or come to appreciate as 'sacred' and dignified; what expresses our developed humanity and thus places us, as individuals, in our correct relation to ψυχή, and which relation is that we are but one mortal emanation of ψυχή.

See my *From Mythoi To Empathy: A New Appreciation Of The Numinous* for more details.

Pathei-Mathos

The Greek term πάθει μάθος derives from The Agamemnon of Aeschylus (written c. 458 BCE), and can be interpreted, or translated, as meaning learning from adversary, or wisdom arises from (personal) suffering; or personal experience is the genesis of true learning.

When understood in its Aeschylean context, it implies that for we human beings pathei-mathos possesses a numinous, a living, authority. That is, the understanding that arises from one's own personal experience - from formative experiences that involve some hardship, some grief, some personal suffering - is often or could be more valuable to us (more alive, more relevant, more meaningful) than any doctrine, than any religious faith, than any words/advice one might hear from someone else or read in some book.

Thus, pathei-mathos, like empathy, offers we human beings a certain conscious understanding, a knowing; and, when combined, pathei-mathos and empathy are or can be a guide to wisdom, to a particular conscious knowledge concerning our own nature (our physis), our relation to Nature, and our relation to other human beings, leading to an appreciation of the numinous and an appreciation of virtues such as humility and εὐταξία.

Politics

By the term politics is meant both of the following, according to context. (i) The theory and practice of governance, with governance itself founded on two fundamental assumptions; that of some minority - a government (elected or unelected), some military authority, some oligarchy, some ruling elite, some tyrannos, or some leader - having or assuming authority (and thus power and influence) over others, and with that authority being exercised over a specific geographic area or territory. (ii) The activities of those

individuals or groups whose aim or whose intent is to obtain and exercise some authority or some control over - or to influence - a society or sections of a society by means which are organized and directed toward changing/reforming that society or sections of a society in accordance with a particular ideology.

Πόλεμος

Heraclitus fragment 80

Πόλεμος is not some abstract 'war' or strife or kampf, but rather that which is or becomes the genesis of beings from Being (the separation of beings from Being), and thus not only that which manifests as δίκη but also accompanies ἔρις because it is the nature of Πόλεμος that beings, born because of and by ἔρις, can be returned to Being, become bound together - be whole - again by enantiodromia.

According to the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, ἔρις was caused by, or was a consequence of, the marriage between a personified πόλεμος (as the δαίμων of kindred strife) and a personified ὕβρις (as the δαίμων of arrogant pride) with Polemos rather forlornly following Hubris around rather than vice versa. Thus Eris is the child of Polemos and Hubris.

Furthermore, Polemos was originally the δαίμων (not the god) of kindred strife, whether familial, of friends, or of one's πόλις (one's clan and their places of dwelling). Thus, to describe Polemos, as is sometimes done, as the god of war, is doubly incorrect.

Physis (φύσις)

See Appendix I: The Concept Of Physis.

Religion

By religion is meant organized worship, devotion, and faith, where there is: (i) a belief in some deity/deities, or in some supreme Being or in some supra-personal power who/which can reward or punish the individual, and (ii) a distinction made between the realm of the sacred/the-gods/God/the-revered and the realm of the ordinary or the human.

The term organized here implies an established institution, body or group - or a plurality of these - who or which has at least to some degree codified the faith and/or the acts of worship and devotion, and which is accepted as having some authority or has established some authority among the adherents. This codification can relate to accepting as authoritative certain writings and/or a certain book or books.

Separation-of-Otherness

The separation-of-otherness is a term used to describe the implied or assumed causal separateness of living beings, a part of which is the distinction we make (instinctive or otherwise) between our self and the others. Another part is assigning our self, and the-others, to (or describing them and us by) some category/categories, and to which category/categories we ascribe (or to which category/categories has/have been ascribed) certain qualities or attributes.

Given that a part of such ascription/denoting is an assumption or assumptions of worth/value/difference and of inclusion/exclusion, the separation-of-otherness is the genesis of hubris; causes and perpetuates conflict and suffering; and is a path away from ἀρμονία, δίκη, and thus from wisdom.

The separation-of-otherness conceals the nature of Beings and beings; a nature which empathy and pathei-mathos can reveal.

Society

By the term society is meant a collection of people who live in a specific geographic area or areas and whose association or interaction is mostly determined by a shared set of guidelines or principles or beliefs, irrespective of whether these are written or unwritten, and irrespective of whether such guidelines/principles/beliefs are willingly accepted or accepted on the basis of acquiescence. These shared guidelines or principles or beliefs often tend to form an ethos and a culture and become the basis for what is considered moral (and good) and thence become the inspiration for laws and/or constitutions.

As used here, the term refers to 'modern societies' (especially those of the modern West).

σωφρονεῖν

I use σωφρονεῖν (sophronein) in preference to σωφροσύνη (sophrosyne) since sophrosyne has acquired an English interpretation - "soundness of mind, moderation" - which in my view distorts the meaning of the original Greek. As with my use of the term πάθει μάθος (pathei-mathos) I use σωφρονεῖν in an Anglicized manner with there thus being no necessity to employ inflective forms.

State

By the term The State is meant:

The concept of both (1) organizing and controlling - over a particular and

large geographical area – land (and resources); and (2) organizing and controlling individuals over that same geographical particular and large geographical area by: (a) the use of physical force or the threat of force and/or by influencing or persuading or manipulating a sufficient number of people to accept some leader/cliue/minority/representatives as the legitimate authority; (b) by means of the central administration and centralization of resources (especially fiscal and military); and (c) by the mandatory taxation of personal income.

The Good

For the philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, 'the good' is considered to be what is fair; what alleviates or does not cause suffering; what is compassionate; what is honourable; what is reasoned and balanced. This knowing of the good arises from the (currently underused and undeveloped) natural human faculty of empathy, and which empathic knowing is different from, supplementary and complimentary to, that knowing which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

Time

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, Time is considered to be an expression of the nature - the φύσις - of beings, and thus, for living beings, is a variable emanation of ψυχή, differing from being to being, and representing how that living being can change (is a fluxion) or may change or has changed, which such change (such fluxions) being a-causal.

Time - as conventionally understood and as measured/represented by a terran-calendar with durations marked days, weeks, and years - is therefore regarded as an abstraction, and an abstraction which tends to conceal the nature of living beings.

ὑβρις

ὑβρις (hubris) is the error of personal insolence, of going beyond the proper limits set by: (a) reasoned (balanced) judgement – σωφρονεῖν – and by (b) an awareness, a personal knowing, of the numinous, and which knowing of the numinous can arise from empathy and πάθει μάθος.

Hubris upsets the natural balance – is contrary to ἁρμονίη [harmony] – and often results from a person or persons striving for or clinging to some causal abstraction.

According to The Way of Pathei-Mathos, ὑβρις disrupts - and conceals - our appreciation of what is numinous and thus of what/whom we should respect, classically understood as ψυχή and θεοί and Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες and δαιμόνων and those sacred places guarded or watched over by δαιμόνων.

Way

The philosophy of pathei-mathos makes a distinction between a religion and a spiritual Way of Life. One of the differences being that a religion requires and manifests a codified ritual and doctrine and a certain expectation of conformity in terms of doctrine and ritual, as well as a certain organization beyond the local community level resulting in particular individuals assuming or being appointed to positions of authority in matters relating to that religion. In contrast, Ways are more diverse and more an expression of a spiritual ethos, of a customary, and often localized, way of doing certain spiritual things, with there generally being little or no organization beyond the community level and no individuals assuming - or being appointed by some organization - to positions of authority in matters relating to that ethos.

Religions thus tend to develop an organized regulatory and supra-local hierarchy which oversees and appoints those, such as priests or religious teachers, regarded as proficient in spiritual matters and in matters of doctrine and ritual, whereas adherents of Ways tend to locally and informally and communally, and out of respect and a personal knowing, accept certain individuals as having a detailed knowledge and an understanding of the ethos and the practices of that Way.

Many spiritual Ways have evolved into religions.

Wisdom

Wisdom is both the ability of reasoned - a balanced - judgement, σωφρονεῖν, a discernment; and a particular conscious knowledge concerning our own nature, and our relation to Nature, to other life and other human beings: rerum divinarum et humanarum. Part of this knowledge is of how we human beings are often balanced between honour and dishonour; balanced between ὕβρις and ἀρετή; between our animalistic desires, our passions, and our human ability to be noble, to morally develop ourselves; a balance manifest in our known ability to be able to control, to restrain, ourselves, and thus find and follow a middle way, of ἀμυνή.

Wu-wei

Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in The Way of Pathei-Mathos/The Numinous Way to refer to a personal 'letting-be' deriving from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, their φύσις, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive - that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous.

In practice, the knowledge, the understanding, the intuition, the insight that is wu-wei is a knowledge, an understanding, that can be acquired from

empathy, πάθει μάθος, and by a knowing of and an appreciation of the numinous. This knowledge and understanding is of wholeness, and that life, things/beings, change, flow, exist, in certain natural ways which we human beings cannot change however hard we might try; that such a hardness of human trying, a belief in such hardness, is unwise, un-natural, upsets the natural balance and can cause misfortune/suffering for us and/or for others, now or in the future. Thus success lies in discovering the inner nature (the physis) of things/beings/ourselves and gently, naturally, slowly, working with this inner nature, not striving against it.

ψυχή

Life qua being. Our being as a living existent is considered an emanation of ψυχή. Thus ψυχή is what 'animates' us and what gives us our nature, φύσις, as human beings. Our nature is that of a mortal fallible being veering between σωφρονεῖν (thoughtful reasoning, and thus fairness) and ὕβρις.

Appendix I

The Concept Of Physis

The term physis - φύσις - was used by Heraclitus, Aristotle, and others, and occurs in texts such as the Pœmandres and Ἰερός Λόγος tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum.

Physis is usually translated as either 'Nature' (as if 'the natural world', and the physical cosmos beyond, are meant) or as the character (the nature) of a person. However, while the context - of the original Greek text - may suggest (as often, for example, in Homer and Herodotus) such a meaning as such English words impute, physis philosophically (as, for example, in Heraclitus and Aristotle and the Corpus Hermeticum) has specific ontological meanings. Meanings which are lost, or glossed over, when physis is simply translated either as 'Nature' or - in terms of mortals - as (personal) character.

Ontologically, as Aristotle makes clear [1], physis denotes the being of those beings who or which have the potentiality (the being) to change, be changed, or to develop. That is, to become, or to move or be moved; as for example in the motion (of 'things') and the 'natural unfolding' or growth, sans an external cause, that living beings demonstrate.

However, and crucially, physis is not - for human beings - some abstract 'essence' (qv. Plato's ἰδέα/εἶδος) but rather a balance between the being that it is, it was, and potentially might yet be. That is, in Aristotelian terms, it is a meson - μέσον - of being and 'not being'; and 'not being' in the sense of not yet having become what it could be, and not now being what it used to be.

Hence why, for Aristotle, a manifestation of physis - in terms of the being of mortals - such as *arête* (ἀρετή) is a meson, a balance of things, and not, as it is for Plato, some fixed 'form' - some idea, ideal - which as Plato wrote "always exists, and has no genesis. It does not die, does not grow, does not decay." [2]

According to my understanding of Heraclitus, physis also suggests - as in Fragment 1 - the 'natural' being of a being which we mortals have a tendency to cover-up or conceal [3].

Furthermore, physis is one of the main themes in the *Poemandres* tractate of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, for the author seeks "to apprehend the physis of beings" [4] with physis often mystically personified:

"This is a mysterium esoteric even to this day. For Physis, having intimately joined with the human, produced a most wondrous wonder possessed of the physis of the harmonious seven I mentioned before, of Fire and pneuma. Physis did not tarry, giving birth to seven male-and-female humans with the physis of those viziers, and ætherean...

[For] those seven came into being in this way. Earth was muliebral, Water was lustful, and Fire maturing. From Æther, the pneuma, and with Physis bringing forth human-shaped bodies. Of Life and phaos, the human came to be of psyche and perceivation; from Life - psyche; from phaos - perceivation; and with everything in the observable cosmic order cyclic until its completion...

When the cycle was fulfilled, the connexions between all things were, by the deliberations of theos, unfastened. Living beings - all male-and-female then - were, including humans, rent asunder thus bringing into being portions that were masculous with the others muliebral." [5]

Physis is also personified in the *Ἱερός Λόγος* tractate:

"The divine is all of that mision: renewance of the cosmic order through Physis For Physis is presenced in the divine." [6]

The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, physis is used contextually to refer to:

- (i) the ontology of beings, an ontology - a reality, a 'true nature' - that is often obscured by denotatum [7] and by abstractions [8], both of which conceal physis;
- (ii) the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being, which is of us - we mortals - as a nexion, an affective effluvium (or emanation) of Life (ψυχή) and thus of why 'the separation-of-otherness' [9] is a concealment of that relationship;

- (iii) the character, or persona, of human beings, and which character - sans denotatum - can be discovered (revealed, known) by the faculty of empathy;
- (iv) the unity - the being - beyond the division of our physis, as individual mortals, into masculous and muliebral;
- (v) that manifestation denoted by the concept Time, with Time considered to be an expression/manifestation of the physis of beings. [10]

My concept of physis is therefore primarily ontological.

March 2015

Notes

[1] See my *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*.

[2] πρῶτον μὲν αἰὲν ὄν καὶ οὔτε γιγνόμενον οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον οὔτε αὐξανόμενον οὔτε φθίνον (Symposium 210e - 211a).

[3] See <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/heraclitus-fragment-1/>

[4] Pœmandres 3; qv. my *Mercvrii Trismegisti Pymander de potestate et sapientia dei: A Translation and Commentary*, 2013.

[5] Pœmandres 16-18.

[6] Ιερός Λόγος 3; qv. my *Ιερός Λόγος: An Esoteric Mythos. A Translation Of And A Commentary On The Third Tractate Of The Corpus Hermeticum*, 2015.

[7] In my philosophy of pathei-mathos, I use the term denotatum - from the Latin, denotare - in accord with its general meaning which is "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted."

[8] An abstraction is a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed.

Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future. Abstractions are often assumed to provide some 'knowledge' or some 'understanding' of some-thing assigned to or described by a particular abstraction.

[9] Refer, for example, to *The Error of The-Separation-of-Otherness* section of

in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*.

[10] *Time And The Separation Of Otherness - Part One*. 2012.

Appendix II

Towards Understanding Ancestral Culture

As manifest in my weltanschauung, based as that weltanschauung is on pathei-mathos and an appreciation of Greco-Roman culture, the term Ancestral Culture is synonymous with Ancestral Custom, with Ancestral Custom represented in Ancient Greek mythoi by Δίκη, the goddess Fairness as described by Hesiod:

σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης, μηδ' ὕβριν ὄφελλε:
ὕβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῶ βροτῶ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς
215 ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύνатаι, βαρύθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς
ἐγκύρσας ἄτησιν: ὁδὸς δ' ἐτέρηφι παρελθεῖν
κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει
ἐς τέλος ἐξελθοῦσα: παθῶν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω

You should listen to Fairness and not oblige Hubris
Since Hubris harms unfortunate mortals while even the more fortunate
Are not equal to carrying that heavy a burden, meeting as they do with Mischief.
The best path to take is the opposite one: that of honour
For, in the end, Fairness is above Hubris
Which is something the young come to learn from adversity.

Hesiod, Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι [Works and Days], vv 213-218

That Δίκη is generally described as the goddess of 'justice' - as 'Judgement' personified - is unfortunate given that the terms 'justice' and 'judgement' have modern, abstract, and legalistic, connotations which are inappropriate and which detract from understanding and appreciating the mythoi of Ancient Greece and Rome.

Correctly understood, Δίκη - and δίκη in general - represents the natural and the necessary balance manifest in ἁρμονίη (harmony) and thus not only in τὸ καλόν (the beautiful) but also in the Cosmic Order, κόσμος, with ourselves as human beings (at least when unaffected by hubris) a microcosmic re-presentation of such balance, κόσμον δὲ θείου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον [1]. A sentiment re-expressed centuries later by Marsilii Ficini:

Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora,
et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona.

How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is

cosmically presented therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned. [2]

This understanding and appreciation of ἁρμονία and of κόσμος and of ourselves as a microcosm is perhaps most evident in the Greek phrase καλὸς κἀγαθός, describing as it does those who are balanced within themselves, who - manifesting τὸ καλόν and τὸ ἀγαθόν - comport themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner, part of which comportment is living and if necessary dying in a honourable, a noble, manner. For personal honour presences τὸ καλόν and τὸ ἀγαθόν, and thus the numinous.

For in practice honour manifests the customary, the ancestral way, of those who are noble, those who presence fairness; those who restore balance; those who (even at some cost to themselves) are fair due to their innate physis or because they have been nurtured to be so. For this ancestral way - such ancestral custom - is what is expected in terms of personal behaviour based on past personal examples and thus often manifests the accumulated wisdom of previous generations.

Thus, an important - perhaps even ethos-defining - Ancestral Custom of Greco-Roman culture, and of Western culture born as Western culture was from medieval mythoi involving Knights and courtly romance and from the re-discovery of Greco-Roman culture that began the Renaissance, is chivalry and which personal virtue - presencing the numinous as it does and did - is not and cannot be subject to any qualifications or exceptions and cannot be confined to or manifest by anything so supra-personal as a particular religion or anything so supra-personal as a political dogma or ideology.

Hence, the modern paganus weltanschauung that I mentioned in my *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* as a means "to reconnect those in the lands of the West, and those in Western émigré lands and former colonies of the West, with their ancestral ethos," is one founded on καλὸς κἀγαθός. That is, on chivalry; on manners; on gentrified romance; and on the muliebral virtues, the gender equality, inherent in both chivalry and personal manners, consciously and rationally understood as chivalry and manners now are as a consequence of both our thousands of years old human culture of pathē-mathos and of our empathic (wordless) and personal apprehension of the numinous.

January 2018

[1] "a cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings." Tractate IV:2. Corpus Hermeticum. Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς.

[2] De Vita Coelitus Comparanda. XXVI.

Appendix III

On Ethos And Interpretation

One of the intentions of these translations of mine of various tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum is provide an alternative approach to such ancient texts and hopefully renew interest in them beyond conventional current, and past interpretations, which - based on using terms such as God, Mind, and Soul - makes them appear to be proto-Christian or imbued with an early Christian weltanschauung or express certain philosophical and moralistic abstractions.

Why an alternative approach to such ancient texts? For two reasons.

First, because the choice of English words hitherto in respect of Greek terms such as λόγος, νοῦς, θεός, ἀγαθός, φῶς, and φύσις, seems to me to be based on various assumptions such as that those and other terms express something definite and philosophical and relate to various ancient 'schools of thought'. I dissent from this view; instead, regarding such terms as descriptors used by individuals to express their own often mystical weltanschauung based on their own personal insights or, more probably, on what they had learned from others and/or from various MSS they had read. That is, many of the tractates present mythos, and/or ancient aural esoteric traditions, rather than the teachings of some established and philosophical 'school of thought'. Thus, such Greek terms require contextual interpretation and are often best transliterated or at least referred to the ethos underlying such weltanschauung and such mythos.

Second, because such texts seem to me to be, in the matter of cosmogony and metaphysics, more influenced by the classical Greek and the Hellenistic ethos than by any other, and thus in many ways are representative of that ethos as it was being developed, or as it was known, at the time texts such as those in the Corpus Hermeticum were written. An ethos, a cosmogony and a metaphysics, exemplified - to give just a few examples - by terms such as ἄρρενόθηλυς (Poemander), by the shapeshifting of Poemander (τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἡλλάγη τῇ ἰδέᾳ), by mention of a septenary system (Poemander, Tractate XI), by the 'voyages of the psyche' (Tractate XI: 20) and by terms such as ἱερός Λόγος (Tractate III) and which term dates back to the time of Hesiod [1] .

In respect, for example, of the ἱερός Λόγος tractate, my view - as noted in the Preface of my translation of and commentary on that tractate - is that it is the story of genesis according to an ancient pagan, and esoteric, weltanschauung; a text in all probability older than the other texts in the Corpus Hermeticum and certainly older, as an aural tradition, than the story given in the Biblical Genesis; and a text which the author of the Poemander tractate might well have been familiar with, as a reading of both texts indicates.

As an example of my alternative approach (and perhaps the most controversial example) is my interpretation of ἀγαθός as honour/nobility, τὸ ἀγαθὸν as the honourable/the noble/nobility, and thus as embodied in brave,

noble, trustworthy, honest, individuals - exemplified in legend by the likes of the hero Leonidas - which interpretation I am inclined to view as an expression of both the classical Greek and the Greco-Roman (Hellenic) ethos, just as the expression τί ἐστὶν ἀλήθεια, attributed to a certain Roman, is an expression of that ethos; whereas ἀγαθός as some disputable 'abstract', impersonal or philosophical 'good' does not in my view exemplify that ethos and the milieu in which it flourished. Furthermore, given how such a disputable 'abstract', moral, good has been generally understood for the last millennia (partly due to the influence of Christianity, partly due to post-Renaissance philosophy, and partly due to Western jurisprudence) then it seems desirable to avoid using the term 'good' in translations of such ancient texts - as also elsewhere, in other metaphysical tractates of the Hellenic era - since 'good' now has certain post-Hellenic connotations which can distance us from what such ancient tractates may well express and have expressed.

Thus, such an iconoclastic interpretation of such an important ancient Greek word - in terms of individuals and their physis, as opposed to in terms of some abstract, moral, impersonal schemata or dogma or as part of some conjectured philosophy - might provide a new perspective on some of the tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum.

But whether this particular insight of mine regarding ἀγαθός is valid, others will have to decide.

2017

[1] (a) ἔστι λόγος περὶ αὐτοῦ ἱρὸς λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 48, s3. (b) ἔστι ἱρὸς περὶ αὐτοῦ λόγος λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 62, s2. (c) ἔστι δὲ περὶ αὐτῶν ἱρὸς λόγος λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 81, s2.

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The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos

David Myatt

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Seventh Edition 2022

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Prefatory Note

The numinous way - the philosophy - of pathei-mathos (πάθει μάθος) represents my weltanschauung, and which philosophy I advanced after I had, upon reflexion, rejected much of and revised what then remained of the 'numinous way', and which 'numinous way' I developed between 2006 and 2011.

Included are my writings concerning this philosophy which were penned in 2012; a slightly revised version of a 2011 essay, *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*, which has some relevance to that philosophy; and some appendices which elaborate on these earlier writings and on my use of words such as Δίκαια, σωφρονεῖν, and 'abstraction'.

The Conspectus summarizes the philosophy of pathei-mathos, and, as the title might suggest, in a few places paraphrases, or utilizes, short passages from some of the other writings included here.

For this seventh edition, I have added a detailed Introduction, a new appendix, and corrected some typos.

David Myatt
2022

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θάνατος δὲ τότε ἔσσεται ὁπότε κεν δὴ Μοῖραι ἐπικλώσωσ'

"Our ending arrives whenever wherever the Moirai decide."
Attributed to Καλλίνου, as recorded by Ἰωάννης Στοβαῖος in Ἀνθολόγιον (c. 5th century CE)

Introduction

Physis And Being

The numinous way - the philosophy - of pathei-mathos is based on four principles: (i) that it is empathy and pathei-mathos which can wordlessly reveal the ontological reality both of our own physis [1] and of how we, as sentient beings, relate to other living beings and to Being itself; (ii) that it is denotatum [2] - and thus the abstractions deriving therefrom [3] - which, in respect of human beings, can and often do obscure our physis and our relation to other living beings and to Being; (iii) that denotatum and abstractions imply a dialectic of contradictory opposites and thus for we human beings a separation-of-otherness; and (iv) that this dialectic of opposites is, has been, and can be a cause of suffering for both ourselves, as sentient beings, and - as a causal human presenced effect - for the other life with which we share the planet named in English as Earth.

In respect of the term numinous, it

"derives from the classical Latin *numen* and denotes 'a reverence for the divine; a divinity; divine power' with the word *numen* assimilated into English in the 15th century, with the English use of 'numinous' dating from the middle of the 17th century and used to signify 'of or relating to a numen; revealing or indicating the presence of a divinity; divine, spiritual.'

It thus has a wider meaning than that ascribed to it by Rudolf Otto in his *Das Heilige*. For him, it was manifest in the written words - 'the revelation' - of the Old and New Testaments of Christianity (qv. *Das Heilige*, chapters X, XI) as well as in Christian exegesis manifest in the preaching of individuals such as Martin Luther (*Das Heilige*, chapter XII) and in religious terms it involved 'worship' (*Das Heilige*, chapter XIII ff) and in philosophical terms was described by Kant's *a priori* (*Das Heilige*, chapter XVII). Yet Otto also wrote that it was *sui generis*, a personal emotion or feeling.

The wider meaning of the numinous results from our faculty of empathy which provides or can provide an individual intuition - a wordless-knowing or awareness - of the numinous, and as a personal human faculty empathy has a personal horizon and thus cannot be extrapolated from such a personal knowing into some-thing supra-personal be this some-thing denotata, including an ἰδέα/εἶδος, or an axiom (ἀρχή) or a source (αἴτιος) for some 'revelation' or ideology or similar manifestations constructed by and dependent on appellation. In the case of a 'revelation' the source is often named as God or a god/the god (θεός, ὁ θεός) who or which are often described by a myth or mythoi." Appendix VIII - Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition

In respect of empathy and pathei-mathos, they

"incline us to suggest that ipseity is an illusion of perspective: that there is, fundamentally, no division between 'us' - as some individual sentient, mortal being - and what has hitherto been understood and named as the Unity, The One, God, The Eternal. That 'we' are not 'observers' but rather Being existing as Being exists and is presenced in the Cosmos. That thus all our striving, individually and collectively when based on some ideal or on some form - some abstraction and what is derived therefrom, such as ideology and dogma - always is or becomes sad/tragic, and which recurrence of sadness/tragedy, generation following generation, is perhaps even inevitable unless and until we live according to the wordless knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal." [4]

In essence, empathy and pathei-mathos lead us away from the abstractions we have constructed and manufactured and which abstractions we often tend to impose, or project, upon other human beings, upon ourselves, often in the belief that such abstractions can aid our understanding of others and of ourselves, with a feature of all abstractions being inclusion and exclusion; that is, certain individuals are considered as belonging to or as defined by a particular category while others are not.

Over millennia we have manufactured certain abstractions and their assumed opposites and classified many of them according to particular moral standards so that a particular abstraction is considered good and/or beneficial and/or as necessary and/or as healthy, while its assumed dialectical opposite is considered bad (or evil), or unnecessary, or unhealthy, and/or as unwarranted.

Thus in ancient Greece and Rome slavery was accepted by the majority, and considered by the ruling elite as natural and necessary, with human beings assigned to or included in the category 'slave' a commodity who could be traded with slaves regarded as necessary to the functioning of society. Over

centuries, with the evolution of religions such as Christianity and with the development in Western societies of humanist weltanschauungen, the moral values of this particular abstraction, this particular category to which certain human beings assigned, changed such that for perhaps a majority slavery came to be regarded as morally repugnant. Similarly in respect of the abstraction designated in modern times by such terms as "the rôle of women in society" which rôle for millennia in the West was defined according to various masculous criteria – deriving from a ruling and an accepted patriarchy – but which rôle in the past century in Western societies has gradually been redefined.

Yet irrespective of such developments, such changes associated with certain abstractions, the abstractions themselves and the dialectic of moral opposites associated with them remain because, for perhaps a majority, abstractions and ipseity, as a criteria of judgment and/or as a human instinct, remain; as evident in the continuing violence against, the killing of, and the manipulation, of women by men, and in what has become described by terms such as "modern slavery" and "human trafficking".

In addition, we human beings have continued to manufacture abstractions and continue to assign individuals to them, a useful example being the abstraction denoted by the terms The State and The Nation-State [5] and which abstraction, with its government, its supra-personal authority, its laws, its economy, and its inclusion/exclusion (citizenship or lack of it) has come to dominate and influence the life of the majority of people in the West.

Ontologically, abstractions – ancient and modern – usurp our connexion to Being and to other living beings so that instead of using wordless empathy and pathei-mathos as a guide to Reality [6] we tend to define ourselves or are defined by others according to an abstraction or according to various abstractions. In the matter of the abstraction that is The State there is a tendency to define or to try to understand our relation to Reality by for example whether we belong, are a citizen of a particular State; by whether or not we have an acceptable standard of living because of the opportunities and employment and/or the assistance afforded by the economy and the policies of the State; by whether or not we agree or disagree with the policies of the government in power, and often by whether or not we have transgressed some State-made law or laws. Similarly, in the matter of belief in a revealed religion such as Christianity or Islam we tend to define or understand our relation to Reality by means of such an abstraction: that is, according to the revelation (or a particular interpretation of it) and its eschatology, and thus by how the promise of Heaven/Jannah may be personally obtained.

Empathy and pathei-mathos, however, wordlessly – sans denotatum, sans abstractions, sans a dialectic of contradictory opposites – uncover physis: our physis, that of other mortals, that of other living beings, and that of Being/Reality itself. Which physis, howsoever presented – in ourselves, in other living beings, in Being – is fluxive, a balance between the being that it now is, that it was, and that it has the inherent (the acausal) quality to be. [7]

This uncovering, such a revealing, is of a knowing beyond ipseity and thus beyond the separation-of-otherness which denotatum, abstractions, and a dialectic of opposites manufacture and presence. A knowing of ourselves as an affective connexion [8] to other living beings and to Being itself, with Being revealed as fluxive (as a meson – μέσον [9] – with the potentiality to change, to develop) and thus which (i) is not – as in the theology of revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam – a God who is Eternal, Unchanging, Omnipotent [10], and (ii) is affected or can be affected (in terms of physis) by what we do or do not do.

This awareness, this knowing, of such an affective connexion – our past, our current, our potentiality, to adversely affect, to have adversely affected, to cause, to having caused, suffering or harm to other living beings – also inclines us or can incline us toward benignity and humility, and thus incline us to live in a non-suffering causing way, appreciate of our thousands of years old culture of pathei-mathos. [11]

In terms of understanding Being and the divine, it inclines us or can incline us, as sentient beings, to apprehend Being as not only presented in us but as capable of changing – unfolding, evolving – in a manner dependant on our physis and on how our physis is presented by us, and by others, in the future. Which seems to imply a new ontology and one distinct from past and current theologies with their anthropomorphic θεός (god) and θεοὶ (gods).

An ontology of physis: of mortals, of living beings, and of Being, as fluxive mesons. Of we mortals as a mortal microcosm of Being – the cosmic order, the κόσμος – itself [12] with the balance, the meson, that empathy and pathei-mathos incline us toward living presented in the ancient Greek phrase καλὸς κάγαθός,

"which means those who conduct themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner and who thus manifest – because of their innate physis or through pathei-mathos or through a certain type of

education or learning – nobility of character." [13]

Which personal conduct, in the modern world, might suggest a Ciceronian-inspired but new type of *civitas*, and one

"not based on some abstractive law but on a spiritual and interior (and thus not political) understanding and appreciation of our own Ancestral Culture and that of others; on our 'civic' duty to personally presence καλὸς κάγαθός and thus to act and to live in a noble way. For the virtues of personal honour and manners, with their responsibilities, presence the fairness, the avoidance of hubris, the natural harmonious balance, the gender equality, the awareness and appreciation of the divine, that is the numinous." [14]

With καλὸς κάγαθός, such personal conduct, and such a new *civitas*, summarising how such a philosophy based on empathy and *pathei-mathos* might, in one way, be presented in a practical manner in the world.

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Notes

[1] I use the term *physis* – φύσις – ontologically, in the Aristotelian sense, to refer to the 'natural' and the fluxive being (nature) of a being, which nature is often manifest, in we mortals, in our character (*persona*) and in our deeds. Qv. my essay *Towards Understanding Physis* (2015) and my translation of and commentary on the *Poemandres* tractate in *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates* (2017).

[2] As noted elsewhere, I generally use the term *denotatum* – from the Latin *denotare* – not only as meaning "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted," but also as an Anglicized term implying, depending on context, singular or plural instances. As an Anglicized term there is generally no need to use the inflected plural *denotata*.

[3] In the context of the philosophy of *pathei-mathos* the term *abstraction* signifies a particular named and defined category or form (ἰδέα, εἶδος) and which category or form is a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing.

In respect of *denotatum*, in *Kratylus* 389d Plato has Socrates talk about 'true, ideal' naming (*denotatum*) – βλέποντα πρὸς αὐτὸ ἐκεῖνο ὃ ἔστιν ὄνομα, qv. my essay *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*, 2015.

[4] *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*.

[5] Contrary to modern convention I tend to write *The State* instead of "the state" because I consider *The State/The Nation-State* a particular abstraction; as an existent, an entity, which has been manufactured, by human beings, and which entity, like many such manufactured 'things', has been, in its design and function, changed and which can still be changed, and which has associated with it a presumption of a supra-personal (and often moral) authority.

In addition, written *The State* (or the State) it suggests some-thing which endures or which may endure beyond the limited lifespan of a mortal human being.

[6] 'Reality' in the philosophical sense of what (in terms of *physis*) is distinguished or distinguishable from what is apparent or external. In terms of ancient Hellenic and Western Renaissance mysticism the distinction is between the esoteric and the exoteric; between the *physis* of a being and some outer form (or appearance) including the outer form that is a useful tool or implement which can be used to craft or to manufacture some-thing such as other categories/abstractions. With the important ontological proviso that what is esoteric is not the 'essence' of something – as for example Plato's ἰδέα/εἶδος – but instead the *physis* of the being itself as explicated for instance by Aristotle in *Metaphysics*, Book 5, 1015α,

ἐκ δὴ τῶν εἰρημένων ἡ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἡ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὕλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικὴ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐνυπάρχουσα πῶς ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ

Given the foregoing, then principally – and to be exact – *physis* denotes the quidditas of beings

having change ment inherent within them; for substantia has been denoted by physis because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are change ments predicated on it. For physis is inherent change ment either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.

That is, as I noted in my essay *Towards Understanding Physis*, it is a meson (μέσον) balanced between the being that-it-was and the being it has the potentiality to unfold to become.

In respect of “what is real” – τῶν ὄντων – cf. the Poemandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum and especially section 3,

φημὶ ἐγώ, Μαθεῖν θέλω τὰ ὄντα καὶ νοῆσαι τὴν τοῦτων φύσιν καὶ γνῶναι τὸν θεόν

I answered that I seek to learn what is real, to apprehend the physis of beings, and to have knowledge of theos [qv. *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, 2017]

[7] Qv. *Towards Understanding Physis*, 2015.

[8] I use the term *affective* here, and in other writings, to mean “having the quality of affecting; tending to affect or influence.”

[9] Qv. footnote [6]. In terms of ontology a meson is the balance, the median, existing between the being which-was and the being which-can-be.

[10] This understanding of Being as fluxive – as a change ment – was prefigured in the mythos of Ancient Greece with the supreme deity – the chief of the gods – capable of being overthrown and replaced, as Zeus overthrew Kronos and as Kronos himself overthrew his own father.

[11] As explained in my 2014 essay *Education And The Culture of Pathei-Mathos*, the term describes

"the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals, world-wide, over thousands of years, as (i) described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts; as (ii) have inspired particular works of literature or poetry or drama; as (iii) expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and as (iv) manifest in more recent times by ‘art-forms’ such as films and documentaries."

This culture remembers the suffering and the beauty and the killing and the hubris and the love and the compassion that we mortals have presenced and caused over millennia, and which culture

"thus includes not only traditional accounts of, or accounts inspired by, personal pathei-mathos, old and modern – such as the *With The Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa* by Eugene Sledge, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, and the poetry of people as diverse as Sappho and Sylvia Plath – but also works or art-forms inspired by such pathei-mathos, whether personal or otherwise, and whether factually presented or fictionalized. Hence films such as *Monsieur Lazhar* and *Etz Limon* may poignantly express something about our φύσις as human beings and thus form part of the culture of pathei-mathos."

[12] κόσμον δὲ θεῖου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον, "a cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings." Tractate IV:2, Corpus Hermeticum.

Cf. Marsilii Ficini, *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda*, XXVI, published in 1489 CE,

Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona.

How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned.

Which is a philosophical restatement of the phrase "quod est inferius est sicut quod est superius" (what is above is as what is below) from the Latin version, published in 1541 CE, of the medieval Hermetic text known as *Tabula Smaragdina*.

[13] The quotation is from my *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*, 2017.

[14] The quotation is from my *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua: Christianity, The Johannine Weltanschauung, And Presencing The Numinous*, 2017.

Part One

Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos

- I. Morality, Virtues, and Way of Life
- II. Wisdom, Pathei-Mathos, and Humility
- III. Enantiodromia and The Separation-of-Otherness

I. Morality, Virtues, and Way of Life

For the philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, 'the good' is considered to be what is fair; what alleviates or does not cause suffering; what is compassionate; what is honourable; what is reasoned and balanced. This knowing of the good arises from the (currently underused and undeveloped) natural human faculty of empathy, and which empathic knowing is different from, supplementary and complimentary to, that knowing which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

Empathy thus inclines a person toward certain virtues; toward a particular type of personal character; and disinclines them toward doing what is bad, what is unfair; what is harsh and unfeeling; what intentionally causes or contributes to suffering.

For empathy enables us to directly perceive, to sense, the φύσις (the physis, qv. Appendix IV) of human beings and other living beings, involving as empathy does a translocation of ourselves and thus a knowing-of another living-being as that living-being is, without presumptions and sans all ideations, all projections, all assumed or believed categories or categorizations. For empathy involves a numinous sympathy with another living-being; a becoming – for a causal moment or moments – of that other-being, so that we know, can feel, can understand, the suffering or the joy of that living-being. In such moments, there is no distinction made between them and us – there is only the flow of life; only the presencing and the ultimate unity of Life, of ψυχή, with our individuals self understood as just one fallible, fragile, microcosmic, mortal emanation of Life, and which emanation can affect other life in a good way or a bad way. In addition, empathy and pathei-mathos, provide us with the understanding that we human beings have the ability - the character - (or can develop the ability, the character) to understand and to restrain ourselves, to decide to do what is good and not do what is wrong. This ability of reason, this choice, and this ability to develop our character, are the genesis of culture and express our natural potential as human beings.

The numinous sympathy - συμπάθεια (sympatheia, benignity) - with another living being that empathy provides naturally inclines us to treat other living beings as we ourselves would wish to be treated: with fairness, compassion, honour, and dignity. It also inclines us not to judge those whom we do not know; those beyond the purveu - beyond the range of - our faculty of empathy. There is thus or there develops or there can develop:

(i) Wu-wei, the cultivation of an inner balance arising from an appreciation of the natural change (the flux) of living beings and how it is unbalanced, and harsh, of us to interfere in ways which conflict with the natural character of such beings and with that natural change. Part of this appreciation is of the numinous; another is of our own limits and limitations because we ourselves are only a small part of such natural change, an aspect of which is Nature; and which appreciation of the numinous and of our limits incline us toward a certain humility.

(ii) An appreciation of innocence, for innocence is regarded as an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us, are therefore unjudged by us and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence of others – until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise – is the fair, the reasoned, the numinous, the human and cultured, thing to do.

(iii) An appreciation of how and why a personal and loyal love between two individuals is the most beautiful, the most numinously human, thing of all.

Thus among the virtues of the philosophy - the way - of pathei-mathos are compassion; self-restraint [εὐταξία], fairness, honour; manners; wu-wei, and a reasoned personal judgement.

Living according to the way of pathei-mathos therefore simply means:

- being compassionate or inclining toward compassion by trying to avoid causing, or contributing, to suffering;
- being honourable - fair, reasonable, well-mannered, just, dignified, tolerant, balanced;
- appreciating the value and importance of personal love;
- inclining toward a personal humility;
- appreciating the numinous;
- cultivating empathy and wu-wei.

In essence, The Way of Pathei-Mathos is an ethical, an interior, a personal, a non-political, a non-interfering, a non-religious but spiritual, way of individual reflexion, individual change, and empathic living, where there is an awareness of the importance of virtues such as compassion, humility, tolerance, gentleness, and love.

II. Wisdom, Pathei-Mathos, and Humility

Over millennia, the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals - often evident in Art, literature, memoirs, music, myths, legends, and often manifest in the ethos of a religious-type awareness or in spiritual allegories - has produced certain insights, certain intimations of wisdom, one of which was the need for a balance, for ἀρμονία, achieved by not going beyond the numinous limits; an intimation evident in Taoism, and in Greek myths and legends where this unwise 'going beyond' is termed ὕβρις - hubris - and well-described by, for example, Sophocles in Antigone and Oedipus Tyrannus.

Another intimation of wisdom - and perhaps one of the most significant - is pathei-mathos, with Aeschylus writing, in his Agamemnon, that the Immortal, Zeus, guiding mortals to reason, provided we mortals with a new law, which law replaces previous ones, and which new law - this new guidance laid down for mortals - is pathei-mathos. That is, that for we human beings, pathei-mathos possesses a numinous, a living, authority; that the wisdom, the understanding, that arises from one's own personal experience, from formative experiences that involve some hardship, some grief, some personal suffering, is often or could be more valuable to us (more alive, more meaningful) than any doctrine, than any religious faith, than any words one might hear from someone else or read in some book.

Pathei-mathos thus, like empathy, offers a certain understanding, a knowing; and, when combined, pathei-mathos and empathy are or can be a guide to wisdom, to a particular conscious knowledge concerning our own nature, our relation to Nature, and our relation to other human beings. Or, expressed philosophically, they can reveal the nature of Being and beings.

Since the range of our faculty of empathy is limited to the immediacy-of-the-moment and to personal interactions, and since the learning wrought by pathei-mathos and pathei-mathos itself is and are direct and personal, then the knowledge, the understanding, that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal and provide is of the empathic scale of things and of our limitations of personal knowing and personal understanding. That is, what is so revealed is not some grand or grandiose theory or praxis or philosophy which is considered applicable to others, or which it is believed can or should be developed to be applicable to others or developed to offer guidance beyond the individual in political and/or social and/or religious and/or ideological terms; but rather a very personal, individual, spiritual and thus interior, way. A way of tolerance and humility, where there is an acceptance of the unwisdom, the hubris, the unbalance, of arrogantly, pejoratively, making assumptions about who and what are beyond the range of our empathy and outside of our personal experience. That is, we are honest we do not know when we do not know; we accept that we do not have enough knowledge and/or experience to form and express an opinion about matters we have not studied and have no personal experience of, and about people we do not know and have not personally interacted with over a period of time. We accept that our empathy and pathei-mathos - our personal judgement, our experience, our interior appreciation of the numinous, the knowledge personally acquired - are what inform and guide us: not faith and not the rhetoric or the words or the passion or the propaganda or the ideas or the dogma or the policies or the ideology of others.

There is therefore an appreciation, a knowing, that is the genesis of a balanced and personal judgement -

a discernment – and which knowing is evidential of our perception of Being and beings. Which is of how all living beings are emanations of Being, of ψυχή, and of how the way of non-suffering-causing moral change and reform both personal and social is the way of individual, interior, change; of aiding, helping, assisting other individuals in a direct, a personal manner, and in practical ways, because our perception is that of the human scale of things; of ourselves as fallible, and of individuals as individuals, as fellow human beings presumed innocent and good, or capable of reforming change, until direct experience and knowledge of them reveals otherwise.

III. Enantiodromia and The Separation-of-Otherness

The revealing concerning our own nature, our relation to Nature, and our relation to other human beings, that empathy and pathei-mathos provide is, as mentioned previously, of how all living beings are emanations of ψυχή, and thus of what is beyond 'the separation-of-otherness' that our division (instinctive or otherwise) into our self and the others causes. A revealing that this 'separation-of-otherness' is mere causal appearance, and which appearance not only obscures the nature of Being and of beings, but is also the genesis of hubris, and thence of suffering; a path away from wisdom.

Part of this 'separation-of-otherness' is when we (again, instinctively or otherwise) divide people into assumed categories and thus assign to them some term or some label or some name. We then presume we 'know' them as we often then prejudge them on the basis of the qualities (or lack of them) we or others have assigned to or associate with that category or term or label or name. In addition, we often or mostly come to define ourselves - provide ourselves with identity and our life with meaning - by accepting or assuming or assigning ourselves (or allowing others to so assign us) to a human manufactured category or categories. However, all these categories, terms, labels, names - and the duties and responsibilities, and/or likes/dislikes, assigned to them - have been and are the genesis of suffering, for they lead to and have led to certain categories being regarded as 'better than', or opposed to, others, and from notions of superiority/inferiority, of liked/hated opposites/enemies, conflict arises; both personal conflict, and the supra-personal conflict of some human beings, assigned to or identifying with some category, fighting/killing/hating/subjugating some other human beings assigned to or identifying with some other category.

For millennia, the periodicity of such assigning to, such identification with, such conflict between, human manufactured categories has continued. Old categories fade away, or are renamed, or become extinct; new ones are manufactured. Sometimes, categories become merged, forming a new type, assigned a new name. And the suffering, the lack of understanding about the nature of Being and beings, 'the separation-of-otherness', continues.

Enantiodromia is the term used, in the philosophy of pathei-mathos, to describe the revealing, the process, of perceiving, feeling, knowing, beyond causal appearance and the separation-of-otherness and thus when what has become separated – or has been incorrectly perceived as separated – returns to the wholeness, the unity, from whence it came forth. When, that is, beings are understood in their correct relation to Being, beyond the causal abstraction of different/conflicting ideated opposites, and when as a result, a reformation of the individual, occurs. A relation, an appreciation of the numinous, that empathy and pathei-mathos provide, and which relation and which appreciation the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals over millennia have made us aware of or tried to inform us or teach us about.

For all living religions, all living spiritual ways, manifest or have expressed or were founded to express this same wisdom. Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Taoism, all - in their own particular way and beyond their different outer manifestations and the different terms and expressions and allegories used to elucidate 'that of the numinous' - express, enhance (or can enhance), our humanity: our ability to restrain ourselves, to admit our unknowing, to admit our mistakes, to perceive beyond our self and beyond 'the separation-of-otherness'. To be compassionate, forgiving, and receptive to humility and reformation.

Enantiodromia is therefore nothing new, accept that the process, the discovery, the reformation, is - in the philosophy of pathei-mathos - a natural one that does not involve any theory, or dogma, or praxis, or require any faith or belief of any kind. Rather, there is the personal cultivation of empathy, of wu-wei, an appreciation of the numinous, and the personal knowledge discovered by pathei-mathos; and that is all.

Part Two

The Way of Pathei-Mathos

A Philosophical Compendiary

- Introduction
- I - Pathei-Mathos as Authority and Way
- II - The Nature and Knowledge of Empathy
- III - The Nature of Being and of Beings
- IV - An Appreciation of The Numinous
- Conclusion

Introduction

The philosophy of πάθει μάθος (pathei-mathos) may be said to represent both the essence and the substance of what I have retained after refining and reflecting upon 'the numinous way' I developed between the years 2006 and 2011.

This year-long process of refinement and reflexion [2011-2012] led me to not only discard most of that 'numinous way' but also to re-express, in a more philosophical manner, the basic insights and the personal pathei-mathos that initially inspired me to develop that 'numinous way', a re-expression contained in this 'way of pathei-mathos' essay and in the following three essays: (1) Some Personal Musings On Empathy; (2) Enantiodromia and The Reformation of The Individual; (3) Society, Politics, Social Reform, and Pathei-Mathos. These four essays should also serve to distinguish my new philosophy from that old 'numinous way'.

The philosophy of πάθει μάθος, however, is not a conventional, an academic, one where a person intellectually posits or constructs a coherent theory - involving ontology, epistemology, ethics, and so on - often as a result of an extensive dispassionate study, review, or a criticism of the philosophies or views, past and present, advanced by other individuals involved in the pursuit of philosophy as an academic discipline or otherwise. Instead, the philosophy of pathei-mathos is the result of my own pathei-mathos, my own learning from diverse - sometimes outré, sometimes radical and often practical - ways of life and experiences over some four decades; of my subsequent reasoned analysis, over a period of several years, of those ways and those experiences; of certain personal intuitions, spread over several decades, regarding the numinous; of an interior process of personal and moral reflexion, lasting several years and deriving from a personal tragedy; and of my life-long study and appreciation of Hellenic culture, an appreciation that led me to translate works by Sappho, Sophocles, Aeschylus and Homer, and involved me in a detailed consideration of the weltanschauung of individuals such as Heraclitus (insofar as such weltanschauungen are known from recorded sayings and surviving books).

Given this appreciation, and as the name suggests, the philosophy of πάθει μάθος has certain connexions to Hellenic culture and I tend therefore to use certain Greek words in order to try and elucidate my meaning and/or to express certain philosophical principles regarded as important in - and for an understanding of - this philosophy; a usage of words which I have endeavoured to explain as and where necessary, sometimes by quoting passages from Hellenic literature or other works and by providing translations of such passages. For it would be correct to assume that the ethos of this philosophy is somewhat indebted to and yet - and importantly - is also a development of the ethos of Hellenic culture; an indebtedness obvious in notions such as δίκη, πάθει μάθος, avoidance of ὕβρις, and references to Heraclitus, Aeschylus, and others, and a development manifest in notions such as empathy and the importance attached to the virtue of compassion.

In addition, and possibly somewhat unconventionally since in accord with the Hellenic etymology of the

word and the Homeric sense of φίλος ^[a] I view a philosopher as someone who is a friend of – whose companion is, who seeks to find, to acquire, to follow, to befriend – σοφόν. Thus in this sense, a philosopher is someone seeking to acquire a certain skill (such as the learning/reasoning that is λόγος) and discover a particular knowledge, such as a knowledge regarding Being and beings, rerum divinarum et humanarum; a knowledge acquired or found by means of both using λόγος and from life itself via practical experience, practical learning; a dual sense evident from the meaning and usage of σοφός.

Thus my personal understanding of philosophy is that it is the result of the activity and the life of a philosopher; more correctly perhaps, it is both the written or the recorded or transmitted results of the lucubrations that such way of life (that such a following, such a seeking, of knowledge and wisdom) engenders, and of what the living of such a life (that such befriending of σοφόν) brings-into-being and/or reveals. And it is in this sense that I consider my way of πάθει μάθος a philosophy.

All translations from Ancient Greek in this work are mine, and I have, at the suggestion of a friend, added a Glossary giving some brief explanations and definitions of some of the Greek and English terms used.

[a] For example, Odyssey, Book I, v.301-302

καὶ σύ, φίλος, μάλα γάρ σ' ὀρώω καλόν τε μέγαν τε,
ἄλκιμος ἔσσω, ἵνα τίς σε καὶ ὀψιγόνων ἐὺ εἴπῃ.

Thus should you, my friend - who I see are strong and fully-grown -
Be as brave, so that those born after you will speak well of you.

I Pathei-Mathos as Authority and Way

The Greek term πάθει μάθος derives from The Agamemnon of Aeschylus (written c. 458 BCE), and can be interpreted, or translated, as meaning learning from adversary, or wisdom arises from (personal) suffering; or personal experience is the genesis of true learning.

However, this expression should be understood in context [1], for what Aeschylus writes is that the Immortal, Zeus, guiding mortals to reason, has provided we mortals with a new law, which law replaces previous ones, and which new law – this new guidance laid down for mortals – is pathei-mathos.

Thus, for we human beings, pathei-mathos possesses a numinous, a living, authority [2] – that is, the wisdom, the understanding, that arises from one's own personal experience, from formative experiences that involve some hardship, some grief, some personal suffering, is often or could be more valuable to us (more alive, more meaningful) than any doctrine, than any religious faith, than any words one might hear from someone else or read in some book.

In many ways, this Aeschylean view is an enlightened – a very human – one, and is somewhat in contrast to the faith and revelation-centred view of religions such as Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. In the former, it is the personal experience of learning from, and dealing with, personal suffering and adversity, that is paramount and which possesses authority and 'meaning'. In the latter, it is faith that some written or transmitted work or works is or are a sacred revelation from the supreme deity one believes in which is paramount, which possess meaning and authority, often combined with a belief that this supreme deity has appointed or authorized some mortal being or beings, or some Institution, as their earthly representative(s), and which Institution and/or representative(s) therefore are believed to possess or are accepted as possessing authority or are regarded as authoritative.

Thus, the Aeschylean view is that learning, and hence wisdom, often or perhaps mostly arises from within us, by virtue of that which afflicts us (and which afflictions could well be understood as from the gods/Nature or from some supra-personal source) and from our own, direct, personal, practical, experience. In contrast, the conventional religious view is that wisdom can be found in some book (especially in some religious text), or be learnt from someone considered to be an authority, or who has been appointed as some authority by some Institution, religious or otherwise.

The essential difference between these two ways is therefore that pathei-mathos is the way of direct learning from personal experience, while the religious way is often or mostly the way of secondary or tertiary learning, from others; of accepting or believing what is written by or taught by someone else or laid down in some dogma, some creed, some book, or by some external authority, such as an Institution.

For The Way of Pathei-Mathos, it is the personal learning that pathei-mathos provides or can provide, combined with - balanced by - the insight, the knowing, that empathy provides, which are considered as possessing authority, and which can aid us to discover wisdom.

The Way of Pathei-Mathos

The fundamental axioms of The Way of Pathei-Mathos are:

- 1) That human beings possess a mostly latent perceptive faculty, the faculty of empathy - ἐμπάθεια - which when used, or when developed and used, can provide us with a particular type of knowing, a particular type of knowledge, and especially a certain knowledge concerning the φύσις (the physis, the nature or character) of human beings and other living beings.
- 2) This type of knowing, this perception, is different from and supplementary to that acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science [3], and thus enables us to better understand Phainómenon, ourselves, and other living beings.
- 3) That because of or following πάθει μάθος there is or there can be a change in, a development of, the nature, the character - the φύσις - of the person because of that revealing and that appreciation (or re-appreciation) of the numinous whose genesis is this πάθει μάθος, and which appreciation of the numinous includes an awareness of why ὕβρις is an error (often the error) of unbalance, of disrespect or ignorance (of the numinous), of a going beyond the due limits, and which ὕβρις itself is the genesis both of the τύραννος [4] and of the modern error of extremism. For the tyrannos and the modern extremist (and their extremisms) embody and give rise to and perpetuate ἔρις [5] and thus are a cause of, or contribute to and aid, suffering.
- 4) This change, this development of the individual, is or can be the result of enantiodromia [6] and reveals the nature of, and restores in individuals, the natural balance necessary for ψυχή [7] to flourish - which natural balance is δίκη as Δίκη [8] and which restoration of balance within the individual results in ἁρμονίη [9], manifest as ἁρμονίη (harmony) is in the cultivation, in the individual, of wu-wei [10] and σωφρονεῖν (a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement) [11].
- 5) The development and use of empathy, the cultivation of wu-wei and σωφρονεῖν, are thus a means, a way, whereby individuals can cease to cause suffering or cease to contribute to, or cease to aid, suffering.
- 6) The reason as to why an individual might so seek to avoid causing suffering is the reason, the knowledge - the appreciation of the numinous - that empathy and πάθει μάθος provide.
- 7) This appreciation of the numinous inclines or can incline an individual to living in a certain way and which way of life naturally inclines the individual toward developing, in a natural way - sans any methodology, praxis, theory, dogma, or faith - certain attributes of character, and which attributes of character include compassion, self-restraint, fairness, and a reasoned, a personal, judgement.

II The Nature and Knowledge of Empathy

Empathy is, as an intuitive understanding, what was, can be, and often is, learned or developed by πάθει μάθος. That is, from and by a direct, personal, learning from experience and suffering. An understanding manifest in our awareness of the numinous and thus in the distinction we have made, we make, or we are capable of making, between the sacred and the profane; the distinction made, for example in the past, between θεοί and δαιμόνων and mortals, and thus manifest in that understanding of ὕβρις and δίκη which can be obtained from the works of Sophocles, and Aeschylus [12], and from an understanding of Φύσις evident in some of the sayings attributed to Heraclitus [13].

Understood by reference to such classical illustrations, empathy is thus what naturally predisposed us to appreciate δίκη and be aware, respectful of, the goddess, Δίκην [14], and thus avoid retribution for committing the error of ὕβρις, for disrupting the natural balance necessary for individual and communal well-being.

That is, a certain empathy is, and has been, the natural basis for a tradition which informs us, and reminds us - through Art, literature, myths, legends, the accumulated πάθει μάθος of individuals, and often through a religious-type awareness - of the need for a balance, for ἁρμονίη, achieved by not going beyond the numinous limits.

As a used and a developed faculty, the perception that empathy provides is of undivided ψυχή and of the emanations of ψυχή, of our place in the Cosmic Perspective: of how we are a connexion to other life; of how we are but one mortal fallible emanation of Life; of how we affect or can affect the well-being - the very being, ψυχή - of other mortals and other life; and how other mortals and other living beings interact with us and can affect us, in a good or a harmful way.

Empathy thus involves a translocation of ourselves and thus a knowing-of another living-being as that living-being is, without presumptions and sans all ideations, all projections. In a simple way, empathy involves a numinous sympathy with another living-being; a becoming - for a causal moment or moments - of that other-being, so that we know, can feel, can understand, the suffering or the joy of that living-being. In such moments, there is no distinction made between them and us - there is only the flow of life; only the presencing and the ultimate unity of Life itself.

This knowing-of another living-being and this knowledge of the Cosmic Perspective - this empathic awareness of Life - inclines us toward compassion; toward the human virtue of having συμπάθεια (sympatheia, benignity) with and toward other living beings. For such an awareness involves being sensitive to, respectful of, other Life, and not arrogantly, in a hubriatic manner, imposing ourselves or trying to impose ourselves on Life and its emanations. That is, there is the cultivation of the natural balance that is wu-wei because of our awareness of how other Life, other living-beings, can suffer, and how some-things, some actions, are unwise because they do or can cause suffering or have caused suffering.

In effect, empathy uncovers or can uncover the nature of our being and the nature of Being itself.

III The Nature of Being and of Beings

Empathy uncovers the a-causal nature of Being; of how, as Heraclitus expressed it in fragment 53, beings have their genesis,

Πόλεμος πάντων μὲν πατήρ ἐστι, πάντων δὲ βασιλεύς, καὶ τοὺς μὲν θεοὺς ἔδειξε τοὺς δὲ ἄνθρωπους, τοὺς μὲν δούλους ἐποίησε τοὺς δὲ ἐλευθέρους.

Polemos our genesis, governing us all to bring forth some gods, some mortal beings with some unfettered yet others

kept bound. [15]

and how

πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα

All by genesis is appropriately apportioned [separated into portions] with beings bound together again by enantiodromia [16]

and why σωφρονεῖν is important:

σωφρονεῖν ἀρετὴ μέγιστη, καὶ σοφίῃ ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαίοντας

Most excellent is balanced reasoning, for that skill can tell inner character from outer. [17]

Empathy also reveals why the assumption that abstracted, ideated, opposites apply to or should apply to living beings - and that they thus can supply us with knowledge and understanding of living being - disrupts the natural balance, resulting in a loss of ἁρμονία and συμπάθεια and is therefore a manifestation of the error of ὕβρις.

The Acausal Nature of Being

The empathic perception of an undivided ψυχή and of living beings as emanations of ψυχή, and the knowledge of ourselves and one affective and effecting fallible mortal connexion to other life that such a perception provides, leads to an understanding of Being, of ψυχή, as a-causal: as beyond the linearity of a simple and direct cause-and-effect and beyond the supposition that we are separated beings. This perception - and this knowing of the acausal nature of Being deriving from it - is numinous; that is, of how beings are part of Being and of how they come-into-being, are affected and affecting, and so Change and are Change: of how Life flows and ebbs and continues undivided, unseparated, a-temporal, and is only temporarily manifest in particular beings only erroneously perceived by us as discrete entities, as separated beings.

As Heraclitus mentioned as recorded in fragment 52:

αἰὼν παῖς ἐστὶ παίζων πεσσεύων· παιδὸς ἢ βασιλῆϊ

For Aeon, we are a game, pieces moved on some board: since, in this world of ours, we are but children.

For the perception and the knowing of causality in respect of living beings is that of the-separation-of-otherness; a notion of causal and linear separation, of past-present-future, of independent beings that gives rise to two things. (1) Of how we human consider we are different from or similar to other individual human beings. A difference or a similarity deriving from posited, manufactured, ideated, categories to which we assign others and ourselves and from which we often or mostly derive our identity, our self-assurance, and our belief about their and our φύσις, or at least what we assume is a knowledge of such things. (2) Of how such separately existing human beings are not subject to - or can and should make themselves not subject to or can overcome or ignore - any external supra-personal non-physical (non-temporal) force or forces, and thus of how these separated human beings have or can acquire the ability, the skill, to 'determine their own destiny/fate/life' by some means if the right method, or some methodology, or some tool - such as some idea or theory - can be found or developed, or if they develop their physical prowess/intelligence/cunning or acquire sufficient wealth/power/influence/followers.

Such a purely causal perception and causal understanding of living beings - lacking as it does an awareness of, an appreciation and a feeling for the numinous, or wilfully ignoring the numinous - is the genesis of ὕβρις and can thus bring-into-being the τύραννος [4].

An example of this reliance on causal perception and causal understanding is Oedipus, as described by Sophocles in Oedipus Tyrannus. In his singular desire to find the killer of Laius, Oedipus oversteps the due limits, and upsets the natural balance both within, and external to, himself. He is blinded by mere causality (a linear thinking) and subsumed by personal feelings - by his overwhelming desire for a simple cause-and-effect solution to the plague and his prideful belief that he, a mortal, a strong man, and master

of the riddle of the Sphinx, can find or derive a solution. What results is tragedy, suffering, for himself and for others.

ὦ πάτρας Θήβης ἔνοικοι, λεύσσετ', Οἰδίπους ὄδε,
ὃς τὰ κλείν' αἰνίγματ' ἤδει καὶ κράτιστος ἦν ἀνὴρ,
οὗ τίς οὐ ζήλω πολιτῶν ἦν τύχαις ἐπιβλέπων,
εἰς ὅσον κλύδωνα δεινῆς συμφορᾶς ἐλήλυθεν.
ὥστε θνητὸν ὄντα κείνην τὴν τελευταίαν ἰδεῖν
ἡμέραν ἐπισκοποῦντα μηδέν' ὀλβίζειν, πρὶν ἂν
τέρμα τοῦ βίου περάσῃ μηδέν ἀλγεινὸν παθῶν.

You natives of Thebes: Observe – here is Oedipus,
He who understood that famous enigma and was a strong man:
What clansman did not behold that fortune without envy?
But what a tide of problems have come over him!
Therefore, look toward that ending which is for us mortals,
To observe that particular day – calling no one lucky until,
Without the pain of injury, they are conveyed beyond life's ending.

(Oedipus Tyrannus, vv. 1524-1530)

Another example is Creon, as described by Sophocles in his Antigone. Creon's pride and stubbornness, and his rigid adherence to his own, causal (temporal), mortal, edict – which overturns an ancestral custom established and maintained to 'please the gods' and implement a natural edict of the gods designed to give and maintain balance, harmony, among the community – leads to tragedy, to suffering.

The same thing occurred to Odysseus, who for all his prowess and mortal cunning could not contrive to return to his homeland as he wished nor save his friends, and

κπολλὰ δ' ὅ γ' ἐν πόντῳ πάθεν ἄλγεα ὃν κατὰ θυμόν,
ἀρνύμενος ἦν τε ψυχὴν καὶ νόστον ἐταίρων.
ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὥς ἐτάρους ἐρρύσατο, ἰέμενός περ:
αὐτῶν γὰρ σφετέρῃσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὄλοντο,
νήπιοι, οἳ κατὰ βοῦς Ὑπερίονος Ἥελίοιο
ἦσθιον: αὐτὰρ ὁ τοῖσιν ἀφείλετο νόστιμον ἦμαρ.

...whose vigour, at sea, was weakened by many afflictions
As he strove to win life for himself and return his comrades to their homes.
But not even he, for all this yearning, could save those comrades
For they were destroyed by their own immature foolishness
Having devoured the cattle of Helios, that son of Hyperion,
Who plucked from them the day of their returning.

(Homer, Odyssey, vv.3-9)

Such emphasis by mortals on causality, arising from a lack of the acausal, the numinous, perspective that empathy and πάθει μάθος provide, is in effect an ignoring of, a wilful defiance of, or a forgetfulness of, the natural balance, of our own nature, and of the gods. Expressed un-theistically, it is a lack of, or a covering-up of, or an ignorance of, the the nature of Being and of beings, of who and why we are, and why wu-wei is a wise way to live.

Our nature - which empathy and πάθει μάθος can reveal - is that of a mortal being veering between σωφρονεῖν (thoughtful reasoning, and thus fairness) and ὕβρις.

As Sophocles expressed it:

πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ κούδεν ἀνθρώπου δεινότερον πέλει...

σοφὸν τι τὸ μηχανόεν τέχνας ὑπὲρ ἐλπίδ' ἔχων
τοτὲ μὲν κακόν, ἄλλοτ' ἐπ' ἐσθλὸν ἔρπει

There exists much that is strange, yet nothing
Has more strangeness than a human being...
Beyond his own hopes, his cunning
In inventive arts - he who arrives
Now with dishonour, then with chivalry

Yet as empathy and πάθει μάθος also reveal, our nature is such that we also have hope and a choice. We can choose to be fair, rational, beings who appreciate and cultivate σωφρονεῖν; who appreciate the numinous and ἁρμονίη and who understand ὕβρις for the error, the misfortune, the unbalance, it is. Or we can, like Oedipus, Creon, Aegisthus, and the comrades of Odysseus, foolishly, recklessly, veer toward and embrace ἔρις and ὕβρις.

We can appreciate the numinous - be wary of Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες. We can kindle and rekindle the 'fire of reason', and appreciate that when 'more is obtained than is necessary it is not kept'. Or we can take short-cuts, foolishly overladden ourselves, and in our recklessness believe we are immune to injury:

τὸν δ' ἄνευ λύρας ὅμως ὑμνωδεῖ
θρῆνον Ἐρινύος αὐτοδίδακτος ἔσωθεν
θυμός, οὐ τὸ πᾶν ἔχων
ἐλπίδος φίλον θράσος.
σπλάγχνα δ' οὔτοι ματά-
ζει πρὸς ἐνδίκους φρεσὶν
τελεσφόροις δίναις κυκώμενον κέαρ.
εὐχομαι δ' ἐξ ἐμᾶς
ἐλπίδος ψύθῃ πεσεῖν
ἐς τὸ μὴ τελεσφόρον.

μάλα γέ τοι τὸ μεγάλας ὑγείας
ἀκόρεστον τέρμα: νόσος γάρ
γείτων ὁμότοιχος ἐρείδει.
καὶ πότμος εὐθυπορῶν
ἄνδρὸς ἔπαισεν ἄφαντον ἔρμα.
καὶ πρὸ μέν τι χρημάτων
κτησίων ὄκνος βαλὼν
σφενδόνας ἀπ' εὐμέτρου,
οὐκ ἔδυ πρόπας δόμος
πημονᾶς γέμων ἄγαν,
οὐδ' ἐπόντισε σκάφος.
πολλὰ τοι δόσις ἐκ Διὸς ἀμφιλα-
φῆς τε καὶ ἐξ ἀλόκων ἐπετειᾶν
νῆστιν ὤλεσεν νόσον.

τὸ δ' ἐπὶ γὰρ πεσὼν ἅπαξ θανάσιμον
πρόπαρ ἄνδρὸς μέλαν αἶμα τίς ἂν
πάλιν ἀγκαλέσαιτ' ἐπαείδων;
οὐδὲ τὸν ὀρθοδαῆ
τῶν φθιμένων ἀνάγειν
Ζεὺς ἀπέπαυσεν ἐπ' εὐλαβείᾳ;
εἰ δὲ μὴ τεταγμένα
μοῖρα μοῖραν ἐκ θεῶν
εἵργε μὴ πλέον φέρειν,
προφθάσασα καρδία
γλῶσσαν ἂν τάδ' ἐξέχει.
νῦν δ' ὑπὸ σκότῳ βρέμει
θυμαλγῆς τε καὶ οὐδὲν ἐπελπομέν-
α ποτὲ καίριον ἐκτολυπεύσειν
ζωπυρουμένας φρενός.

And so, although I have no lyre, I sing:
For there is a desire, within me - a self-taught hymn
For one of those Furies,
With nothing at all to bring me
That cherished confidence - hope.
And my stomach is by no means idle -

In fairness, it is from achieving a judgement
That the beat of my heart continues to change.
And so there is this supplication of mine:
For this defeat of my hope to be false
So that, that thing cannot be achieved.

In truth, that frequently unsatisfied goddess, Health,
Has a limit - for Sickness, her neighbour,
Leans against their shared fence;
And it is the fate of the mortal who takes the short-cut
To strike the unseen reef.
And yet if - of those possessions previously acquired
A fitting amount is, through caution, cast forth by a sling,
Then the whole construction will not go under -
Injurious over-loaded as it was -
Nor will its hull be filled, by the sea.
Often, the gifts from Zeus are abundant
And there is, then, from the yearly ploughing,
A death for famine's sickness.

But if once upon the earth there falls from
A mortal that death-making black blood -
What incantation can return it to his arms?
Not even he who was correctly-taught
How to bring back those who had died
Was allowed by Zeus to be without injury.
Were it not that Fate was ordained
By the gods to make it fated
That when more is obtained it is not kept,
My heart would have been first
To let my tongue pour forth these things.

But now, in darkness, it murmurs,
Painfully-desiring, and having no hope of when
There will be an opportunity to bring this to an end,
Rekindling the fire of reason.

Aeschylus, Agamemnon, vv.990-1033

The Error of The-Separation-of-Otherness

The essence of the faculty of empathy is συμπάθεια with other living beings and which συμπάθεια involves a translocation of ourselves for a duration or durations of causal moments. There is thus a perception of the acausal, the numinous, reality underlying the causal division of beings, existents, into separate, causal-separated, objects and the subject-object relationship which is or has been assumed by means of the process of causal ideation to exist between such causally-separate beings. That is, and for instance, the implied or assumed causal separateness of living beings - the-separation-of-otherness - is causal appearance and not an expression of the true nature of Being and beings.

The-separation-of-otherness obscures and disrupts our relation to ψυχή and thus obscures the nature of our being and the nature of Being itself, and amounts to ὕβρις. For, in place of an understanding, a knowing, and thus an appreciation and acceptance of what is numinous - and thus of the natural balance and of what/whom we should respect - the-separation-of-otherness results in the positing of abstract categories/idealised forms to which we, as living beings, are assigned and which categories and forms are regarded as what we should aspire to and/or compare ourselves to and what we are judged by or judge ourselves by.

In classical terms, the natural balance and those whom we should respect - manifest in ψυχή and θεοί and Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες and δαιμόνων and in those sacred places guarded or watched over by δαιμόνων - are arrogantly replaced by human manufactured, and fallible, ideations and which ideations do not in any way re-present the nature, the φύσις, of our being, the φύσις of other living beings, and φύσις of Being, and which φύσις is one of the living connexions, the numinosity, of ψυχή and thus of the Cosmic Perspective, a nature manifest, for we mortals, in an appreciation of the numinous and thus in living in a certain way because we understand the nature, the importance, of δίκη, of fairness, of not being excessive.

The result of such ὕβρις - of the-separation-of-otherness and of the arrogance assigning living beings to and judging them by lifeless abstractions, ideations; of neglecting θεοί and Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες and δαιμόνων - is ἔρις: strife, discord, disruption, conflict, suffering, misfortune, and a loss of

ψυχή and ἁρμονίη.

As Aeschylus mentioned, over two thousand years ago:

ἔστω δ' ἀπή-
μαντον, ὥστ' ἀπαρκεῖν
εὖ πραπίδων λαχόντα.
οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ἑπαλξις
πλούτου πρὸς κόρον ἀνδρὶ
λακτίσαντι μέγαν Δίκας
βωμὸν εἰς ἀφάνειαν.

βιάται δ' ἅ τάλαινα πειθῶ,
προβούλου παῖς ἄφερτος ἄτας.
ἄκος δὲ πᾶν μάταιον. οὐκ ἐκρύφθη,
πρέπει δέ, φῶς αἰνολαμπές, σίνος...

λιτᾶν δ' ἀκούει μὲν οὔτις θεῶν:
τὸν δ' ἐπίστροφον τῶν
φῶτ' ἄδικον καθαιρεῖ

For unharmed is the one
Who rightly reasons that what is sufficient
Is what is allotted to him.
For there is no protection
In riches for the man of excess
Who stamps down the great altar of the goddess, Judgement,
In order to hide it from view.

But vigorously endures Temptation -
That already-decided daughter of unbearable Misfortune.
And all remedies are in vain.
Not concealed, but conspicuous -
A harsh shining light -
Is the injury...

But not one of the gods hears the supplications:
Instead, they take down those persons
Who, lacking fairness, turn their attentions to such things.

Aeschylus, Agamemnon. vv.379-389, vv. 396-402

IV

An Appreciation of The Numinous

Empathy by its very nature - by its relocation, translocation, of ourselves into, and συμπάθεια with, the living other - naturally inclines us toward compassion, for to intentionally harm the living other is to feel, to know, that harm. Such harming might also upset, unbalance, hinder, or harm, the ψυχή we share with that and with other living beings and so in some way cause, or contribute to, or result in harm, suffering, or misfortune to us and/or to others now or on some future occasion or occasions.

In effect, compassion is a means to maintain ἁρμονίη and the natural balance of Life and thus to aid or contribute to our own ἁρμονίη and well-being as well as that of others.

Empathy - like πάθει μάθος - also inclines us toward treating other human beings as we ourselves would wish to be treated; that is it inclines us toward fairness, toward self-restraint, toward being well-mannered, and toward an appreciation and understanding of innocence, with innocence being regarded as an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us, are therefore unjudged by us and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence of others - until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise - is the fair, the reasoned, the numinous thing to do.

Thus morality is, for The Way of Pathei-Mathos, a result of individuals using the faculty of empathy; a consequence of the insight and the understanding (the acausal knowing) that empathy provides for individuals in the immediacy-of-the-moment. Or, expressed another way, morality resides not in some abstract theory or some moralistic schemata presented in some written text which individuals have to accept and try and conform or aspire to, but rather in personal virtues that arise or which can arise naturally through empathy, πάθει μάθος, and thus from an awareness and appreciation of the numinous. Personal virtues such as compassion and fairness, and εὐταξία, that quality of self-restraint, of a balanced, well-mannered conduct especially under adversity or duress, of which Cicero wrote:

Haec autem scientia continentur ea, quam Graeci εὐταξίαν nominant, non hanc, quam interpretamur modestiam, quo in verbo modus inest, sed illa est εὐταξία, in qua intellegitur ordinis conservatio

Those two qualities are evident in that way described by the Greeks as εὐταξίαν although what is meant by εὐταξία is not what we mean by the moderation of the moderate, but rather what we consider is restrained behaviour...

De Officiis, Liber Primus, 142

In practice, therefore, justice is not some abstract concept, some ideation, which it is believed can and should be administered by others and requiring the individual to accept, passively or willingly, some external authority. Rather, justice, like εὐταξία, like goodness, is numinous, living in the individual who - because of empathy, πάθει μάθος, awareness and appreciation of the numinous - is inclined to be fair, who is capable of restraint especially under adversity or duress; the individual of σωφρονεῖν who thus "can tell inner character from outer" and who thus has those personal qualities which can be expressed by one word: honour.

The Numinous Balance of Honour

In many ways, the personal virtue of honour, and the cultivation of wu-wei, are - together - a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἁρμονίη.

For personal honour is essentially a presencing, a grounding, of ψυχή - of Life, of our φύσις - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη.

This balancing of compassion - of the need not to cause suffering - by σωφρονεῖν and δίκη is perhaps most obvious on that particular occasion when it may be judged necessary to cause suffering to another human being. That is, in honourable self-defence. For it is natural - part of our reasoned, fair, just, human nature - to defend ourselves when attacked and (in the immediacy of the personal moment) to valorously, with chivalry, act in defence of someone close-by who is unfairly attacked or dishonourably threatened or is being bullied by others, and to thus employ, if our personal judgement of the circumstances deem it necessary, lethal force.

This use of force is, importantly, crucially, restricted - by the individual nature of our judgement, and by the individual nature of our authority - to such personal situations of immediate self-defence and of valorous defence of others, and cannot be extended beyond that, for to so extend it, or attempt to extend it beyond the immediacy of the personal moment of an existing physical threat, is an arrogant presumption - an act of ὕβρις - which negates the fair, the human, presumption of innocence [15] of those we do not personally know, we have no empathic knowledge of, and who present no direct, immediate, personal, threat to us or to others nearby us.

Such personal self-defence and such valorous defence of another in a personal situation are in effect a means to restore the natural balance which the unfair, the dishonourable, behaviour of others upsets. That is, such defence fairly, justly, and naturally in the immediacy of the moment corrects their error of ὕβρις resulting from their bad (their rotten) φύσις; a rotten character evident in their lack of the virtue, the skill, of σωφρονεῖν. For had they possessed that virtue, and if their character was not bad, they would not have undertaken such a dishonourable attack.

Wu-Wei and The Cultivation of Humility

The knowledge, the understanding, the intuition, the insight that is wu-wei is a knowledge, an understanding, that can be acquired from empathy, πάθει μάθος, and by a knowing of and an

appreciation of the numinous.

This knowledge and understanding, being of the wholeness, is that of the healthy, the interior, inward, and personal balance beyond the separation of beings – beyond πόλεμος and ὕβρις and thus beyond ἔρις; beyond the separation and thence the strife, the discord, which abstractions, ideations, encourage and indeed which they manufacture, bring-into-being. Among these ideations - and one which can often distance us from an appreciation of the numinous and thus from ἁρμονία - is that of a measured Time of fixed durations; and one which thus has a tendency to both artificially apportion out our lives, urge us to hastily strive for some ideation, and cause us to live and/or work at an artificial, un-harmonious, pace.

Empathy, wu-wei, πάθει μάθος, and a knowing of and an appreciation of the numinous, also incline us toward the cultivation of humility as a prerequisite for us not to repeat our errors of ὕβρις, or the ὕβρις of others, and which mistakes of ὕβρις - ours and/or of others - we either are personally aware of or can become aware of through the recorded πάθει μάθος of our human cultures, manifest as this transmitted knowledge and personal learning often is in literature, Art, poetry, myths, legends, and music.

For our personal πάθει μάθος makes us aware of, makes us feel, know, remember, in a very personal sense, our fallibility, our mortality, our mistakes, our errors, our wrong deeds, the suffering we have caused, the harm we have done and inflicted; how much we personally have contributed to discord, strife, sorrow. Similarly, our appreciation of the numinous, together with empathy and the cultivation of wu-wei, makes us aware of, and feel, and understand, ὕβρις and the errors of ὕβρις in others past and present.

There is then, or there develops or there can develop, a personal inclination toward σωφρονεῖν; toward being fair, toward rational deliberation, toward a lack of haste, toward a living numinously. Toward a balanced judgement, and honour, and a knowing and appreciation of the wisdom that the only effective, long-lasting, change and reform that does not cause suffering - that is not redolent of ὕβρις - is the one that changes human beings in an individual way by personal example and/or because of πάθει μάθος, and thus interiorly changes what, in them, predisposes them, or inclines them toward, doing or what urges them to do, what is dishonourable, undignified, unfair, and uncompassionate. That is what, individually, changes or rebalances bad φύσις and thus brings-into-being, or restores, good φύσις.

Conclusion - The Way of Pathei-Mathos

It is the cultivation by individuals of empathy, of wu-wei, of a reasoned judgement, combined with (i) an appreciation of the numinous and of our accumulated pathei-mathos - evident, for example, in Hellenic culture, in other cultures, and often manifest in Art, literature, music, myths, legends, poetry - and (ii) the living of a compassionate life balanced by honour, which are the whole of The Way of Pathei-Mathos.

The Way of Pathei-Mathos is thus an ethical, an interior, a personal, a non-political, a non-religious, a non-interfering, way of individual reflexion and individual change.

There is nothing else. No given, no required, praxis. No 'secret wisdom' or 'secret teachings', no enlightenment to be taught. No methodology, no theology, and no need for faith or belief. There are no theories, no goals, no dogma, no texts and no one to be revered.

Part Three

Some Personal Musings On Empathy In relation to the philosophy of πάθει μάθος

Empathy and The Individual

The first axiom of the philosophy of pathei-mathos is:

That human beings possess a mostly latent perceptive faculty, the faculty of empathy - ἐμπάθεια - which when used, or when developed and used, can provide us with a particular type of knowing, a particular type of knowledge, and especially a certain knowledge concerning the φύσις (the physis, the nature or character) of human beings and other living beings. [19]

Being a natural faculty - like sight and hearing - empathy is personal, individual, and thus depends on and relates to what-is, and/or who-is, nearby: in range of our empathy. Thus the knowing we acquire or can acquire by empathy is a personal knowing just as seeing and listening to a person speaking is a personal knowing acquired directly in the immediacy-of-the-moment. If, however, a person be out of range of our empathy, and we have no previous empathic or personal encounters with them, they are empathically and personally unknown to us and therefore, since we have no knowledge or intimation of their physis, their character, we cannot fairly assess them and should accord them 'the benefit of the doubt' since this presumption of the innocence of others - until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise - is the fair, the reasoned, the moral, the empathic, thing to do.

For empathy, according to the philosophy of pathei-mathos, is considered the primary means whereby we can fairly assess [20] - that is, fairly judge - a person and thus know them (their physis) as they are, with this knowing, by the nature of our as yet undeveloped and underused faculty of empathy, of necessity requiring a personal and a direct experience of them extending over a period of time. In effect, our initial intuitions are either confirmed or modified by such direct contact, rather as most humans may require several periods of reading or of the hearing of some lengthy text in order to commit it to memory and be able to reproduce it, aurally or in writing.

There is thus what may be described as the empathic scale: that which or those who are reachable, knowable, by means of, in range of, our empathy; and it is this scale which, in essence, may be said to be a measure, a function and expression, of our humanity; which reveals, discovers, physis and thus what is important about ourselves, about other human beings, and about the other life with which we share this planet. Beyond the reach of empathy is the physis of beings we do not (as yet) personally know and we have to admit we do not know, and so cannot and should not be sure about or make claims about or formulate some theory or opinion about.

Everything others associate with an individual, or ascribe to an individual, or use to describe or to denote an individual, or even how an individual denotes or describes themselves, are not relevant, and have no bearing on our understanding, our knowledge, of that individual and thus - morally - should be ignored, for it is our personal knowing of them which is necessary, important, valid, fair. For assessment of another - by the nature of assessment and the nature of empathy - can only be personal, direct, individual. Anything else is biased prejudgement or prejudice or unproven assumption.

This means that we approach them - we view them - without any prejudice, without any expectations, and without having made any assumptions concerning them, and as a unique, still unknown, still undiscovered, individual person: as 'innocent' until proven, until revealed by their actions and behaviour to be, otherwise. Furthermore, empathy - the acausal perception/knowing and revealing of physis - knows nothing of temporal things and human manufactured abstractions/categories such as assumed or assigned ethnicity; nothing of gender; nothing of what is now often termed 'sexual preference/orientation'. Nothing of politics, or religion. Nothing of some disability someone may suffer from; nothing of social status or wealth; nothing regarding occupation (or lack of one). Nothing regarding the views, the opinions, of others concerning someone. For empathy is just empathy, a perception different from our other senses such as sight and hearing, and a perception which provides us, or which can provide us, with a unique perspective, a unique type of knowing, a unique (acausal) connexion to the external world and especially to other human beings.

Empathy - and the knowing that derives from it - thus transcends 'race', politics, religion, gender, sexual orientation, occupation, wealth (or lack of it), 'status', and all the other things and concepts often used to describe, to denote, to prejudge, to classify, a person; so that to judge someone - for example - by and because of their political views (real or assumed) or by their religion or by their sexual orientation is an act of hubris [ὕβρις].

In practice, therefore, in the revealing of the physis of a person, the political views, the religion, the gender, the perceived ethnicity, of someone are irrelevant. It is a personal knowing of them, the perception of their physis by empathy, and an acceptance of them as - and getting to know them as - a unique individual which are important and considered moral; for they are one emanation of the Life of which we ourselves are but one other finite and fallible part.

Concerning The Error of Extremism

Extremism - as defined and understood by the philosophy of pathei-mathos - is a modern example of the error of hubris. An outward expression - codified in an ideology - of a bad individual physis (of a bad or faulty or misguided or underdeveloped/unmatured individual nature); of a lack of inner balance in individuals; of a lack of empathy and of pathei-mathos.

There is thus, in extremists, an ignorance of the true nature of Being and beings, and a lack of appreciation of or a wilful rejection of the numinous, as well as a distinct lack of or an aversion to personal humility, for it is the nature of the extremist that they are convinced and believe that 'they know' that the ideology/party/movement/group/faith that they accept or adhere to - or the leader that they follow - have/has the right answers, the correct solutions, to certain problems which they faithfully assert exist in society and often in human beings.

This conviction, this arrogance of belief, or this reliance on the assessment of someone else (some leader), combined with a lack of empathy and a lack of the insight and the self-knowing wrought by pathei-mathos, causes or greatly enhances an existing inner/interior dissatisfaction (an unbalance, a lack of harmony) within them in regard to what-is, so that some vision, some ideal, of the future - of society - becomes more important to them, more real, more meaningful, than people, than life, as people and life are now. Thus, they with their ideology, their faith, with and because of their dissatisfaction, possess or develop an urge to harshly interfere, continually finding fault with people, with society, with life itself, and so strive - mostly violently, hatefully, unethically, and with prejudice and often with anger - to undermine, to violently change, to 'revolutionize', or to destroy, what-is.

In simple terms, extremists fail to understand, to appreciate, to know, to apprehend, what is important about human beings and human living; what the simple reality, the simple nature, the real physis, of the majority of human beings and of society is and are, and thus what innocence means and implies. That is, there is a failure to know, to appreciate, what is good, and natural and numinous and innocent, in respect of human beings and of society. A failure to know, a failure to appreciate, a failure to feel what it is that empathy and pathei-mathos provide: the wisdom of our personal nature and personal needs; of our physis as rational - as balanced - human beings possessed of certain qualities, certain virtues, or capable of developing balance, capable of developing certain qualities, certain virtues, and thus having or of developing the ability to live in a certain manner: with fairness, with love, and without hatred and prejudice.

What is good, and natural - what should thus be appreciated, and respected, and not profaned by the arrogance (the hubris) of the extremist, and what empathy and pathei-mathos reveal - are the desire for personal love and the need to be loyally loved; the need for a family and the bonds of love within a family that lead to the desire to protect, care for, work for, and if necessary defend one's loved ones. The desire for a certain security and stability and peace, manifest in a home, in sufficiency of food, in playfulness, in friends, in tolerance, in a lack of danger. The need for the dignity, the self-respect, that work, that giving love and being loved, provide.

Our societies have evolved, painfully slowly, to try and provide such simple, such human, such natural, such ineluctably personal, things; to allow opportunities for such things; and have so evolved often because of individuals naturally gifted with empathy or who were inspired by their own pathei-mathos or that of others, and often and thus also so evolved because of the culture that such societies encouraged

and sometimes developed, being as such culture was - via, for example, literature, music, memoirs, poetry, Art - the recorded/aural pathos and empathic understanding of others often combined with the recorded/aural pathos and the empathic understanding of others in other societies. A pathos and an understanding that may form or in some manner express the ethos of a society, and thence become an inspiration for certain laws intended to express, in a society, what is considered to be moral and thus provide and maintain or at least aid valued human and personal qualities such as the desire for stability, peace, a loving home, sufficiency of food, and the need for the dignity of work.

But as I mentioned in some other musings regarding my own lamentable extremist past:

" Instead of love we, our selfish, our obsessed, our extremist kind, engendered hate. Instead of peace, we engendered struggle, conflict, killing. Instead of tolerance we engendered intolerance. Instead fairness and equality we engendered dishonour and discrimination. Instead of security we produced, we encouraged, revolution, violence, change.

The problem, the problems, lay inside us, in our kind, not in 'the world', not in others. We, our kind - we the pursuers of, the inventors of, abstractions, of ideals, of ideologies; we the selfish, the arrogant, the hubristic, the fanatics, the obsessed - were and are the main causes of hate, of conflict, of suffering, of inhumanity, of violence. Century after century, millennia after millennia."
Letter To My Undiscovered Self

For perhaps one of the worst consequences of the extremism of extremists - of modern hubris in general - is, or seems to me to be, the loss of what is personal, and thus what is human; the loss of the empathic, the human, scale of things; with what is personal, human, empathic, being or becoming displaced, scorned, forgotten, obscured, or a target for destruction and (often violent) replacement by something supra-personal such as some abstract political/religious notion or concept, or some ideal, or by some prejudice and some often violent intolerance regarding human beings we do not personally know because beyond the range of our empathy.

That is, the human, the personal, the empathic, the natural, the immediate, scale of things - a tolerant and a fair acceptance of what-is - is lost and replaced by an artificial scale posited by some ideology or manufactured by some τύραννος (tyrannos); a scale in which the suffering of individuals, and strife, are regarded as inevitable, even necessary, in order for 'victory to be achieved' or for some ideal or plan or agenda or manifesto to be implemented. Thus the good, the stability, that exists within society is ignored, with the problems of society - real, imagined, or manufactured by propaganda - trumpeted. There is then incitement to disaffection, with harshness and violent change of and within society regarded as desirable or necessary in order to achieve preset, predetermined, and always 'urgent' goals and aims, since slow personal reform and change in society - that which appreciates and accepts the good in an existing society and in people over and above the problems and the bad - is anathema to extremists, anathema to their harsh intolerant empathy-lacking nature and to their hubristic striving:

" [The truth] in respect of the societies of the West, and especially of societies such as those currently existing in America and Britain - is that for all their problems and all their flaws they seem to be much better than those elsewhere, and certainly better than what existed in the past. That is, that there is, within them, a certain tolerance; a certain respect for the individual; a certain duty of care; and certainly still a freedom of life, of expression, as well as a standard of living which, for perhaps the majority, is better than elsewhere in the world and most certainly better than existed there and elsewhere in the past.

In addition, there are within their structures - such as their police forces, their governments, their social and governmental institutions - people of good will, of humanity, of fairness, who strive to do what is good, right. Indeed, far more good people in such places than bad people, so that a certain balance, the balance of goodness, is maintained even though occasionally (but not for long) that balance may seem to waver somewhat.

Furthermore, many or most of the flaws, the problems, within such societies are recognized and openly discussed, with a multitude of people of good will, of humanity, of fairness, dedicating themselves to helping those affected by such flaws, such problems. In addition, there are many others trying to improve those societies, and to trying find or implement solutions to such problems, in tolerant ways which do not cause conflict or involve the harshness, the violence, the hatred, of extremism." Notes on The Politics and Ideology of Hate (Part Two)

Yet it is just such societies - societies painfully and slowly crafted by the sacrifice and the goodness of multitudes of people of good will, of humanity, of fairness - that extremists with their harsh intolerant empathy-lacking nature, their hubriatic striving, their arrogant certainty of belief, their anger and their need to harshly interfere, seek to undermine, overthrow, and destroy.

No Hubriatic Striving, No Impersonal Interference

Since the range of empathy is limited to the immediacy-of-the-moment and to personal interactions, and, together with pathei-mathos, is a primary means to reveal the nature of Being and beings - and since the learning wrought by pathei-mathos and pathei-mathos itself is and are direct and personal - then part of the knowledge, the understanding, that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal and provide is the wisdom of physis and of humility. That is, of the empathic scale of things and of acceptance of our limitations of personal knowing and personal understanding. Of (i) the unwisdom, the hubris, of arrogantly making assumptions about who and what are beyond the range of our empathy and outside of our personal experience, and (ii) of the unwisdom, the hubris, of adhering to some ideology or some belief or to some tyrannos and allowing that ideology or that belief or that tyrannos to usurp the personal judgement, the personal assessment, that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal and provide.

This acceptance of the empathic - of the human, the personal - scale of things and of our limitations as human beings is part of wu-wei. Of not-striving, and of not-interfering, beyond the purveu of our empathy and our pathei-mathos. Of personally and for ourselves discovering the nature, the physis, of beings; of personally working with and not against that physis, and of personally accepting that certain matters or many matters, because of our lack of personal knowledge and lack of personal experience of them, are unknown to us and therefore it is unwise, unbalanced, for us to have and express views or opinions concerning them, and hubris for us to adhere to and strive to implement some ideology which harshly deals with and manifests harsh views and harsh opinions concerning such personally unknown matters.

Thus what and who are beyond the purveu of empathy and beyond pathei-mathos is or should be of no urgent concern, of no passionate relevance, to the individual seeking balance, harmony, and wisdom, and in truth can be detrimental to finding wisdom and living in accord with the knowledge and understanding so discovered.

For wisdom, it seems to me, is simply a personal appreciation of the numinous, of innocence, of balance, of εὐταξία [21], of enantiodromia, and the personal knowing, the understanding, that empathy and pathei-mathos provide. An appreciation, a knowing, that is the genesis of a balanced personal judgement - of discernment - and evident in our perception of Being and beings: of how all living beings are emanations of ψυχή and of how the way of non-suffering causing moral change and reform both personal and social is the way of wu-wei. The way of personal, interior, change; of aiding, helping, assisting other individuals in a direct, a personal manner, and in practical ways, because our seeing is that of the human, the empathic, the muliebral, scale of things and not the scale of hubris, which is the scale either (i) of the isolated, egoist, striveful, unharmonious human being in thrall to their selfish masculous desires or (ii) of the human being unbalanced because in thrall to some tyrannos or to some harsh, extremist, ideology, and which harsh ideologies always manifest an unbalanced masculous, unempathic, nature redolent of that hubriatic certainty-of-knowing and that intolerant desire to interfere which mark and which have marked, and are and were the genesis of, the tyrannos.

Part Four

Enantiodromia and The Reformation of The Individual

The Muliebral and the Masculous

The third axiom of The Way of Pathei-Mathos is:

That because of or following πάθει μάθος there is or there can be a change in, a development of, the nature, the character - the φύσις - of the person because of that revealing and that appreciation (or re-appreciation) of the numinous whose genesis is this πάθει μάθος, and which appreciation of the numinous includes an awareness of why ὕβρις is an error (often the error) of unbalance, of disrespect or ignorance (of the numinous), of a going beyond the due limits, and which ὕβρις itself is the genesis both of the τύραννος and of the modern error of extremism. For the tyrannos and the modern extremist (and their extremisms) embody and give rise to and perpetuate ἔρις and thus are a cause of, or contribute to and aid, suffering.

This change, this development of the individual, is or can be the result of a process termed enantiodromia, which is the process of perceiving, feeling, knowing, beyond causal appearance and the separation-of-otherness and thus when what has become separated - or has been incorrectly perceived as separated - returns to the wholeness, the unity, from whence it came forth. When beings are understood in their correct relation to Being, beyond the causal abstraction of different/conflicting ideated opposites, a relation manifest in the cosmic perspective and thus a knowing of ourselves as but one fallible, microcosmic, fragile, mortal, biological nexion connected to and not separate from all other Life.

An important and a necessary part of enantiodromia involves a discovery, a knowing, an acceptance, and - as prelude - an interior balancing within themselves, of what has hitherto been perceived and designated as the apparent opposites described by terms such as 'muliebral' and 'masculous'. A perception of opposites manifested in ideations such as those concerning assumed traits of character, and assumed or 'ideal' rôles, behaviour, and occupations, assigned to each person, and especially historically in the prejudice of how the rôle - the duty - of men is or should be to lead, to control, to govern, to possess authority, to dominate, to be master.

The discovery of enantiodromia is of how such a designated and perceived dichotomy is but illusive, unnecessary, unhealthy, appearance, and does not therefore express either the natural, the real, nature (φύσις) of our personal character, our being, or the real nature, the Φύσις, of Being itself. In essence, this is the discovery, mentioned by Heraclitus [22], concerning Πόλεμος and γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα; that all beings are naturally born - become perceived as separate beings - because of ἔρις, and their genesis (their 'father') is Πόλεμος.

Thus the strife, the discord, often engendered by an external and by the internal (within the individual) clash between such apparent opposites as the 'muliebral' and 'masculous' is one that has naturally arisen due to misperception, due to the separation-of-otherness, as a result of a purely causal, egoist, apprehension of ourselves and of others; an error of perception that, as previously mentioned, empathy and πάθει μάθος can correct, and which correction reveals the truth of ψυχή and a knowing of the cosmic perspective.

One practical consequence of this misapprehension, this error of ὕβρις, concerning 'muliebral' and 'masculous' has been the distaste - even the hatred - of certain ideologies and religions and individuals for those whose personal love is for someone of the same gender. Another practical consequence is and has been the error of extremism, where what is masculous is emphasized to the detriment (internal, and external) of what is muliebral, and where, for example, as in many harsh ideologies, men and women are expected, encouraged - often forced, as for example in fascism - to assume some rôle based on or deriving from some manufactured abstraction, some ideation, concerning what is assumed to be or has been posited as 'the ideal man' or the 'ideal woman' in some idealized society or in some idealized 'nation'.

Furthermore, given that these attributes of personal character that have been termed 'muliebral' and

'masculous' are founded on an illusive apprehension of beings and Being - and on ideations (such as rôles, occupations, and so on) posited as a result of this misapprehension - they not symbolic, or mythological, or unconscious, or even archetypal in the sense of anima and animus.

A Natural Reformation

The balance attained by - which is - enantiodromia is that of simply feeling, accepting, discovering, the empathic, the human, the personal, scale of things and thus understanding our own fallibility-of-knowing, our limitations as a human being; that, in essence, αἰὼν παῖς ἔστι παίζων πεσσεύων· παιδὸς ἢ βασιληΐη [23], that τὰ δὲ πάντα οἰακίζει Κεραυνός [24] and that Φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ [25].

Which in practical terms simply amounts to understanding, knowing, Being and the genesis, the φύσις, of beings. Or, expressed in terms of the philosophy of pathei-mathos, it amounts to wu-wei, and to the understanding that 'what and who' are out of range of our empathy and what and who we have no personal knowledge of, is and are of no concern, of no passionate relevance, for us, because 'beyond the control, the influence' of our own fallible, error-prone, nature, and should thus be regarded 'without prejudice', as 'innocent', and the subject of no opinion, no ideations, by us. That is, we accept empathy and pathei-mathos as our guide, and (i) we do not speculate about, do not manufacture our own ideations about, those whom and that which are beyond the purveu of our empathy; and (ii) we do not accept the ideations/abstractions of others concerning those whom and that which are beyond the purveu of our empathy, and who and which we have no direct personal experience of.

Thus the process, the discovery, the reformation, is a natural one that does not involve any theory, or dogma, or praxis, or require any faith or belief of any kind. There is the personal cultivation of empathy and wu-wei, and that is all. How then - for those not having endured a personal πάθει μάθος - might empathy and wu-wei be cultivated, and thus how might the natural balance be found/restored, thus allowing ψυχὴ to flourish, bringing ἁρμονίη and σωφρονεῖν?

We might let go of ideations, of causal abstractions, many or most of which only serve to try and distinguish us from them, from other living-beings, human or otherwise, and thus increase our illusion of separation. We might consider, ponder on, the cosmic perspective and learn to value tolerance and humility. We might muse on innocence and the nature of the good, for the good is simply what is fair; what is compassionate, what inclines us to appreciate the numinous and understand why ὕβρις is an error of unbalance. We might consider why, for example, the bad is just bad φύσις. Or a natural consequence of undeveloped, unformed, not-mature, unreformed φύσις. Of a lack of empathy, of a lack of εὐταξία, of little or no appreciation of, of no personal experience of, the numinous, leading thus to individuals doing what is unfair; what is harsh and unfeeling; what intentionally causes or contributes to suffering.

We could, for example, and perhaps importantly, learn from the culture of our society and that of others, for correctly appreciated such culture - as manifest, for example, in literature, music, memoirs, poetry, history, Art, and sometimes in myths and legends and religious allegories - is but the recorded/aural pathei-mathos and empathic understanding of others over decades, centuries, millennia.

Part Five

Society, Politics, Social Reform, and Pathei-Mathos

Modern Society and The Individual

Society, in the context of this essay, refers to 'modern societies' (especially those of the modern 'democratic' West) and means a collection of individuals who dwell, who live, in a particular area and who are subject to the same laws and the same institutions of authority. Modern society is thus a manifestation of The State, and which State is predicated on individuals actively or passively accepting some supra-personal authority [26].

In modern societies, change and reform are often therefore introduced or attempted by The State most usually: (1) on the basis of the manufacture of some law or laws which the individuals, and the established institutions, of the area governed by The State are expected to obey on pain of some type of individual punishment, financial and/or physically punitive (as in prison); or (2) by means of State-sponsored or State-introduced schemes such as, for example, the British National Health Service and which schemes are invariably enshrined in law.

The essence of such change and reform of a society - large-scale, effective, rapid change and reform in society - is therefore, for the majority of people, external, and most often derives from some posited or assumed or promised agenda of the government of the day; that is, derived from some political or social or economic theory, axiom, idea, or principle, posited by others, be these others, for example, politicians, or social/political/economic theorists/reformers (and so on).

There is thus a hierarchy of judgement involved, whatever political 'flavour' the government is assigned to, is assumed to represent, or claims it represents; with this hierarchy of necessity requiring the individual in society to either (i) relinquish their own judgement, being accepting of or acquiescing in (from whatever reason or motive such as desire to avoid punishment) the judgement of these others, or (ii) to oppose this 'judgement of others' either actively through some group, association, or movement (political, social, religious) or individually, with their being the possibility that some so opposing this 'judgement of others' may resort to using violent means against the established order.

Objectively, this process of change and reform by means of a hierarchy of judgement manifest in laws, and of State authority and power sufficient to enforce such laws, has resulted in fairly stable societies which are, for perhaps the majority of people, relatively peaceful, not overtly repressive, and - judged by the criteria of past societies and many non-Western societies - relatively prosperous.

Thus, while many problems - social and economic - remain and exist in such societies, with some such problems getting worse, such societies work reasonably well, contain an abundance of well-intentioned, moral, individuals, and appear to be better than the alternatives both tried in the past and theorized about. Hence it is not surprising that perhaps the majority of people within such societies favour solving such problems as do exist by existing social, political, and economic means; that is, by internal social, political, and economic, reform rather than by violent means and the advocacy of extremist ideologies.

Furthermore, many or most of the flaws, and the problems, within society are recognized and openly discussed, with a multitude of people of good will, of humanity, of fairness, committed to or interested in helping those affected by such flaws and problems, and thus not only trying to improve society but also to finding and implementing solutions in tolerant ways which do not cause conflict or involve the harshness, the violence, the hatred, the intolerance, of extremism.

For, while most large-scale, effective, rapid change and reform in society tends to be by enforceable State laws and State-sponsored schemes, change and reform also and significantly occurs and has occurred within society, albeit often more slowly, through the efforts of individuals and groups and organizations devoted to charitable, religious, or social causes and which individuals and groups and organizations by their very nature are invariably non-violent and often non-political. Furthermore, such non-violent, non-political, individuals and groups and organizations often become the inspiration for reform and change introduced by The State.

Some Problems of Modern Society

Before outlining a possible numinous approach to reform and change, based on the philosophy of *pathei-mathos*, it would perhaps be useful to outline some of the social problems that still beset modern societies. What therefore constitutes a social problem within a society? How is such a problem defined?

In essence, it is an undesirable circumstance or way of living that affects a number of people and which undesirable circumstance or way of living others in society are or become aware of; with what is undesirable being - according to the ethics of the philosophy of *pathei-mathos* [27] - that which is, or those who are, unfair; that which deprives or those whom deprive a human being of dignity and honour; and that which is and those who are uncompassionate.

Thus, among the many problems of modern societies are misogyny; ethnic and religious discrimination, hatred, and prejudice; and social/economic inequality.

For example, misogyny - from the Greek μισογύνης - is unfairness toward, and/or prejudice and discrimination against, women. Often, as in the past, this is a consequence of an existing prejudice in a man: for example, that men are somehow better than women, or that women are 'useful' only for or suited to certain things; or that the subservience of women, and thus their domination/control by men, is 'a natural and necessary' state of human existence.

Misogyny in individual practice often results in men being violent/domineering toward, or selfishly manipulative and controlling of, women; and thus in them treating women in a dishonourable, undignified, unfair, and uncompassionate way.

Similarly, a hatred or dislike of or discrimination against an individual or a group of individuals on the basis of their perceived or assumed ethnicity is treating that individual or group in a dishonourable, undignified, unfair, and uncompassionate way.

Thus such social problems are often the result, the consequence of, a lack of empathy in a person, with this lack of συμπάθεια with other human beings having often in the past been evident in the treatment of people and individuals by governments, States, and institutions, and often revealed in and through discriminatory, unfair, uncompassionate laws.

A Numinous and Non-Political Approach

Given that the concern of the philosophy of pathei-mathos is the individual and their interior, their spiritual, life, and given that (due to the nature of empathy and pathei-mathos) there is respect for individual judgement, the philosophy of pathei-mathos is apolitical, and thus not concerned with such matters as the theory and practice of governance, nor with changing or reforming society by political means.

For, as mentioned in *Part Two: Some Personal Musings On Empathy*,

" [the] acceptance of the empathic - of the human, the personal - scale of things and of our limitations as human beings is part of wu-wei. Of not-striving, and of not-interfering, beyond the purveu of our empathy and our pathei-mathos. Of personally and for ourselves discovering the nature, the physis, of beings; of personally working with and not against that physis, and of personally accepting that certain matters or many matters, because of our lack of personal knowledge and lack of personal experience of them, are unknown to us and therefore it is unwise, unbalanced, for us to have and express views or opinions concerning them, and hubris for us to adhere to and strive to implement some ideology which harshly deals with and manifests harsh views and harsh opinions concerning such personally unknown matters.

Thus what and who are beyond the purveu of empathy and beyond pathei-mathos is or should be of no urgent concern, of no passionate relevance, to the individual seeking balance, harmony, and wisdom, and in truth can be detrimental to finding wisdom and living in accord with the knowledge and understanding so discovered. "

This means that there is no desire and no need to use any confrontational means to directly challenge and confront the authority of existing States since numinous reform and change is personal, individual, non-political, and not organized beyond a limited local level of people personally known. That is, it is of and involves individuals who are personally known to each other working together based on the understanding that it is inner, personal, change - in individuals, of their nature, their character - that is is the ethical, the numinous, way to solve such personal and social problems as exist and arise. That such inner change of necessity comes before any striving for outer change by whatever means, whether such means be termed or classified as political, social, economic, religious. That the only effective, long-lasting, change and reform is understood as the one that evolves human beings and thus changes what, in them, predisposes them, or inclines them toward, doing or what urges them to do, what is dishonourable, undignified, unfair, and uncompassionate.

In practice, this evolution means, in the individual, the cultivation and use of the faculty of empathy, and acquiring the personal virtues of compassion, honour, and love. Which means the inner reformation of individuals, as individuals.

Hence the basis for numinous social change and reform is aiding, helping, assisting individuals in a direct and personal manner, and in practical ways, with such help, assistance, and aid arising because we personally know or are personally concerned about or involved with those individuals or the situations those individuals find themselves in. In brief, being compassionate, empathic, understanding, sensitive, kind, and showing by personal example.

An Experience of The Numinous

The change that the philosophy - the way - of pathei-mathos seeks to foster, to encourage, is the natural, slow, interior and personal change within individuals; that is, the change of personal character by the individual developing and using their faculty of empathy and inclining toward being compassionate and honourable by nature. In essence, this is a numinous - a spiritual - change in people, a change of perspective, quite different from the supra-personal social change based on laws desired by modern States and by those who champion or who employ political, economic, and social theories regarding society, government, and the individual.

This interior personal change, by its numinous and ethical nature, is one that does not seek to reform society through politics or by any type of agitation, or through the use of force, or by means of any type of organization, social, political, economic, religious. Instead, such numinous change is the reform of individuals on a personal, individual, and cultural basis; by personal example and by individuals cultivating, in accordance with wu-wei, conditions and circumstances whereby they themselves and others can move toward συμπάθεια with other human beings through a personal knowing and experience of the numinous. Such a knowing and experience of the numinous can be cultivated by a variety of means, for example by harmonious surroundings; through an appreciation of, and a living in balance with, Nature; by love and respect and manners and a desire for peace; by periods of interior and exterior silence; through culture and thus through music, Art, literature, an understanding of history, and through respect for and tolerance of the many religions and spiritual Ways which have arisen over millennia and which may manifest the numinous or something of the numinous.

Part Six

The Change of Enantiodromia

The Meaning of Enantiodromia

The unusual compound Greek word ἐναντιοδρομίας occurs in a summary of the philosophy of Heraclitus by Diogenes Laërtius:

πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα (ix. 7)

This unusual word is usually translated as something like 'conflict of opposites' or 'opposing forces' which I consider are incorrect for several reasons.

Firstly, in my view, a transliteration should be used instead of some translation, for the Greek expression suggests something unique, something which exists in its own right as a principle or 'thing' and which uniqueness of meaning has a context, with both context and uniqueness lost if a bland translation is attempted. Lost, as the uniqueness, and context, of for example, δαιμόνων becomes lost if simply translated as 'spirits' (or worse, as 'gods'), or as the meaning of κακός in Hellenic culture is lost if mistranslated as 'evil'.

Second, the context seems to me to hint at something far more important than 'conflict of opposites', the context being the interesting description of the philosophy of Heraclitus before and after the word occurs, as given by Diogenes Laërtius:

1) ἐκ πυρὸς τὰ πάντα συνεστάναι

2) εἰς τοῦτο ἀναλύεσθαι

3) πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα

4) καὶ πάντα ψυχῶν εἶναι καὶ δαιμόνων πλήρη

The foundation/base/essence of all beings ['things'] is pyros to which they return, with all [of them] by genesis appropriately apportioned [separated into portions] to be bound together again by enantiodromia, and all filled/suffused/vivified with/by ψυχή and Dæmons.

This raises several interesting questions, not least concerning ψυχή and δαιμόνων, but also regarding the sense of πυρὸς. Is pyros here a philosophical principle - such as ψυχή - or used as in fragment 43, the source of which is also Diogenes Laërtius:

ὑβριν χρὴ σβεννύναι μᾶλλον ἢ πυρκαϊῇν (ix 2)

Better to deal with your hubris before you confront that fire

Personally, I incline toward the former, of some principle being meant, given the context, and the generalization - ἐκ πυρὸς τὰ πάντα. In respect of ψυχῶν καὶ δαιμόνων I would suggest that what is implied is the numinous, our apprehension of The Numen, and which numen is the source of ψυχή and the origin of Dæmons. For a δαίμων is not one of the pantheon of major Greek gods - θεοί - but another type of divinity (that is, another emanation of the numen; another manifestation of the numinous) who might be assigned by those numinous gods to bring good fortune or misfortune to human beings and/or who watch over certain human beings and especially over particular numinous (sacred) places.

Thus the above summary of the philosophy of Heraclitus might be paraphrased as:

The foundation of all beings is Pyros to which they return, with all by genesis appropriately apportioned to be bound together again by enantiodromia, with all beings suffused with [are emanations of] the numen.

Furthermore, hubris disrupts - and conceals - our appreciation of the numen, our appreciation of ψυχή and of Dæmons: of what is numinous and what/whom we should respect. A disruption that makes us unbalanced, makes us disrespect the numinous and that of the numinous (such as δαιμόνων and θεοί and sacred places), and which unbalance enantiodromia can correct, with enantiodromia suggesting a confrontation - that expected dealing with our hubris necessary in order to return to Pyros, the source of beings. Here, Pyros is understood not as we understand 'fire' - and not even as some sort of basic physical element among other elements such as water - but rather as akin to both the constant 'warmth and the light of the Sun' (that brings life) and the sudden lightning that, as from Zeus, can serve as warning (omen) and retribution, and which can destroy and be a cause of devastating fire and thus also of the regeneration/rebuilding that often follows from such fires and from the learning, the respect, that arises from appreciating warnings (omens) from the gods. All of which perhaps explains fragment 64:

τὰ δὲ πάντα οἰακίζει Κεραυνός

All beings are guided by Lightning

Enantiodromia in the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, enantiodromia is understood as the process - the natural change - that occurs or which can occur in a human being because of or following πάθει μάθος. For part of πάθει μάθος is a 'confrontational contest' - an interior battle - and an acceptance of the need to take part in this battle and 'face the consequences', one of which is learning the (often uncomfortable) truth about one's own unbalanced, strife-causing, nature.

If successful in this confrontation, there is or there can be a positive, moral, development of the nature,

the character - the φύσις (physis) - of the person because of that revealing and that appreciation (or re-appreciation) of the numinous whose genesis is this pathei-mathos, and which appreciation includes an awareness of why ὕβρις is an error (often the error) of unbalance, of disrespect, of a going beyond the due limits, and which ὕβρις is the genesis of the τύραννος and of the modern error of extremism. For the tyrannos and the extremist (and their extremisms) embody and give rise to and perpetuate ἔρις [28].

Thus enantiodromia reveals the nature of, and restores in individuals, the natural balance necessary for ψυχή to flourish - which natural balance is δίκη as Δίκη [29] and which restoration of balance within the individual results in ἁρμονία [30], manifest as ἁρμονία is in the cultivation, in the individual, of wu-wei and σωφρονεῖν (a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement).

Part Seven

The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic

- I - Opposites and Dialectic as Abstractions
- II - The Error of Polemos as Kampf
- III - Being and Empathy

I - Opposites and Dialectic as Abstractions

For well over a hundred years there has been a belief that some kind of process, or dialectic, between or involving certain, particular, opposites might lead us to answer questions such as Quid est Veritas?, could lead to a certain understanding of ourselves, and may well express something of the true nature of reality, of Being itself. In varying degrees this belief is evident, for instance, in Hegel, Nietzsche (with his Wille zur macht), Marx, and those espousing the doctrine that has been termed Social Darwinism.

In addition, and for a much greater span of causal Time, this belief has been an essential part of certain religions where the process is often expressed eschatologically and in a conjectured conflict between the abstract opposites of 'good' and 'evil', God and Devil, and such things as demons and angels.

This notion of opposites, of two distinct, separate, things is much in evidence in Plato, and indeed, philosophically, the separation of beings from Being by the process of ideation and opposites may be said to have begun with Plato. For instance, he contrasts πόλεμος with στάσις (Conflict/strife contrasted with stasis/stability) thus:

ἐπὶ μὲν οὖν τῇ τοῦ οἰκείου ἔχθρᾳ στάσις κέκληται, ἐπὶ δὲ τῇ τοῦ ἀλλοτρίου πόλεμος. Rep. V 470b

In respect of these two forms, Plato tries to explain that while there are two terms, two distinct namings - πόλεμος and στάσις - what are so denoted are not just two different names but express what he regards as the reality - the being, οὐσία - of two differing contrasted beings; that is, he posits what we would call two different ideations, or abstractions, creating an abstract (idealized) form for one and an abstract (idealized) form for the other.

Some centuries later, Diogenes Laërtius - apparently paraphrasing Heraclitus - wrote in his Lives of Eminent Philosophers:

πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα (ix. 7)

All by genesis is appropriately apportioned [separated into portions] with beings bound together again by enantiodromia [31].

Which might seem to suggest that a certain mis-understanding of Heraclitus [32]. the ideation of Plato and of later philosophers and theologians, was the genesis of abstractions and of this belief that a so-called conflict of opposites can lead to 'truth', and explain the nature of Being and beings.

However, this ideation, this development of abstractions, and this process of a dialectic, led to the philosophical error of the separation of beings from Being so that instead of the revealing that would answer Quid est Veritas? there is ὕβρις with the numinous authority of an individual πάθει μάθος replaced by adherence to some dogmatic dialectical process involving some assumed struggle/conflict. That is, by considering ἀρχή as the cause of the abstractions which are opposites and the origin of a dialectic, and which opposites, and which dialectic involving them, are said to manifest the nature of both our being and of Being itself.

This is an error because Πόλεμος is neither kampf nor conflict, but rather - as the quote from Diogenes Laërtius suggests - what lies behind or beyond Phainómenon; that is, non-temporal, non-causal, Being which, though we have a natural tendency to separate into portions (that is, to perceive beings as only beings), beings themselves become revealed as bound together again by us facing up to the expected contest: that is, to our human nature and to knowing, to developing, to using, our faculty of reasoned judgement - σωφρονεῖν - to uncover, to reveal, via λόγος, the true nature of Δίκη and thus restore ἁρμονίη [33].

That is, instead of this abstraction of a dialectic there is, as I have suggested elsewhere:

A natural process of Change, of ἀρχή which we apprehend as Φύσις - as Heraclitus expressed in fragment 112:

σωφρονεῖν ἀρετὴ μέγιστη, καὶ σοφίη ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαίοντας.

This suggests that what is most excellent [ἀρετὴ] is thoughtful reasoning [σωφρονεῖν] - and that such thoughtful reasoning is a process which not only expresses and uncovers meaning, but which is also in accord with, in harmony or in sympathy with, φύσις - that is, with our own nature as mortals and with the nature of Being itself. [34]

II - The Error of Polemos as Kampf

In a fragment attributed to Heraclitus [35] Πόλεμος is generally regarded as a synonym for either kampf, or more generally, for war; with the fragment then considered to mean something such as: strife (or war) is the father of every-thing. This interpretation is said to compliment another fragment attributed to Heraclitus:

εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἐόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα [χρεών]. Fragmentum 80.

This is generally considered to mean something abstract such as: war is everywhere and strife is justice and all that is arises and passes away because of strife.

However, I contend that this older understanding of - the accepted rendition of - Πόλεμος is a misinterpretation of Πόλεμος [36], and that rather than kampf (struggle), or a general type of strife, or what we now associate with the term war, Πόλεμος implies the acausality (a simultaneity) beyond our causal ideation, and which ideation has separated object from subject, and often abstracted them into seemingly conflicting opposites. Hence my interpretation of Fragmentum 53:

Πόλεμος πάντων μὲν πατήρ ἐστι, πάντων δὲ βασιλεύς, καὶ τοὺς μὲν θεοὺς ἔδειξε τοὺς δὲ ἄνθρωπους, τοὺς μὲν δούλους ἐποίησε τοὺς δὲ ἐλευθέρους.

Polemos our genesis, governing us all to bring forth some gods, some mortal beings with some unfettered yet others kept bound.

Hence also my interpretation of εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἐόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα [χρεών] as:

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord δίκη, and that beings are naturally born by discord. [37]

Thus the suggestion is that Πόλεμος is not some abstract 'war' or strife or kampf, but not only that which is or becomes the genesis of beings from Being, but also that which manifests as δίκη and accompanies ἔρις because it is the nature of Πόλεμος that beings, born because of and by ἔρις, can be returned to Being (become bound together - be whole - again).

For it is perhaps interesting that in the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, and in circulation at the time of Heraclitus, a personified πόλεμος (as the δαίμων of kindred strife) married a personified ὕβρις (as the δαίμων of arrogant pride) [38] and that it was a common folk belief that πόλεμος accompanied ὕβρις - that is, that Polemos followed Hubris around rather than vice versa, causing or bringing ἔρις.

As a result of ἔρις, there often arises πάθει μάθος - that practical and personal knowing, that reasoned understanding which, according to Aeschylus [39] is the new law, the new understanding, given by Zeus to replace the older more religious and dogmatic way of fear and dread, often viewed as Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες [40]. A new understanding which Aeschylus sought to explain in the Oresteia.

III - Being and Empathy

This understanding is basically that of a particular balance, born from πάθει μάθος (from the personal knowing of the error, the unbalance, that is ὕβρις) and from using reasoned judgement (σωφρονεῖν), and both of which make us aware of the true nature of our φύσις and of Φύσις itself.

In addition, by cultivating and by using our natural faculty of empathy, we can understand both φύσις and Πόλεμος, and thus apprehend Being as Being, and the nature of beings - and in particular the nature of our being, as mortals. For empathy reveals to us the acausality of Being [41] and thus how the process of abstraction, involving as it does an imposition of causality and separation upon beings (and the ideation implicit on opposites and dialectic), is a covering-up of Being and of Πόλεμος and thus involves a misunderstanding of both Δίκη and of φύσις.

In place of the numinosity of ψυχή - of Life qua being - there is, for the apprehension that is a dialectic of opposites, the hubris of abstractions, and thus a loss of our natural balance, a loss of ἁρμονίη [42] and συμπάθεια.

Footnotes

[1]

Ζῆνα δέ τις προφρόνως ἐπινίκια κλάζων
τεύξεται φρενῶν τὸ πᾶν:
ὃν φρονεῖν βροτοὺς ὁδώ-
σαντα, τὸν πάθει μάθος
θέντα κυρίως ἔχειν.

If anyone, from reasoning, exclaims loudly that victory of Zeus,
Then they have acquired an understanding of all these things;
Of he who guided mortals to reason,
Who laid down that this possesses authority:
Learning from adversity.

Aeschylus: Agamemnon, 174-183

[2] An awareness of the numinous is what predisposes us not to commit the error, the folly, of ὕβρις. As Sophocles wrote in Oedipus Tyrannus:

ὕβρις φυτεύει τύραννον:
ὕβρις, εἰ πολλῶν ὑπερπλησθῇ μάταν,

ἄ μὴ 'πίκαιρα μηδὲ συμφέροντα,
ἀκρότατον εἰσαναβᾶσ'
αἵπος ἀπότομον ὥρυσεν εἰς ἀνάγκαν,
ἔνθ' οὐ ποδὶ χρησίμῳ
χρῆται

Insolence plants the tyrant. There is insolence if by a great foolishness there is a useless over-filling which goes beyond the proper limits. It is an ascending to the steepest and utmost heights and then that hurtling toward that Destiny where the useful foot has no use... (vv.872ff)

In respect of the numinous, basically it is what manifests or can manifest or remind us of (what can reveal) the natural balance of ψυχή; a balance which ὕβρις upsets. This natural balance - our being as human beings - is or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful. In a practical way, it is what we regard or come to appreciate as 'sacred' and dignified; what expresses our humanity and thus places us, as individuals, in our correct relation to ψυχή, and which relation is that we are but one mortal emanation of ψυχή.

We are reminded of this natural balance, of what is numinous - we can come to know, to experience, the numinous and thus can understand the nature of our being - by πάθει μάθος and empathy. That is, by the process of learning from personal adversity/personal suffering/personal grief and by using and developing our faculty of empathy.

An aspect of this learning is an appreciation, an awareness, of the Cosmic Perspective: of ourselves as one fallible, mortal, fragile biological, microcosmic, nexion on one planet in one Galaxy in a Cosmos of billions of galaxies; one connexion to, one emanation of, all other Life. In essence, πάθει μάθος and empathy teach us or can teach us humility, compassion, and the importance of personal love.

[3] The essentials which Aristotle enumerated are: (i) Reality (existence) exists independently of us and our consciousness, and thus independent of our senses; (ii) our limited understanding of this independent 'external world' depends for the most part upon our senses - that is, on what we can see, hear or touch; that is, on what we can observe or come to know via our senses; (iii) logical argument, or reason, is perhaps the most important means to knowledge and understanding of and about this 'external world'; (iv) the cosmos (existence) is, of itself, a reasoned order subject to rational laws.

Experimental science seeks to explain the natural world - the phenomenal world - by means of direct, personal observation of it, and by making deductions, and formulating hypothesis, based on such direct observation, with the important and necessary proviso, expressed by Isaac Newton in his Principia, that

"We are to admit no more causes of natural things than such as are both true and sufficient to explain their appearance..... for Nature is pleased with simplicity, and affects not the pomp of superfluous causes."

[4] The sense of τύραννος is not exactly what our fairly modern term tyrant is commonly regarded as imputing. Rather, it refers to the intemperate person of excess who is so subsumed with some passion or some aim or a lust for power that they go far beyond the due, the accepted, bounds of behaviour and thus exceed the limits of or misuse whatever authority they have been entrusted with. Thus do they, by their excess, by their disrespect for the customs of their ancestors, by their lack of reasoned, well-balanced, judgement [σωφρονεῖν] offend the gods, and thus, to restore the balance, do the Ἐρινύες take revenge. For it is in the nature of the τύραννος that they forget, or they scorn, the truth, the ancient wisdom, that their lives are subject to, guided by, Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες -

τίς οὖν ἀνάγκης ἐστὶν οἰακοστροφός.
Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες

Who then compels to steer us?
Trimorphed Moirai with their ever-heedful Furies!

Aeschylus (attributed), Prometheus Bound, 515-6

[5] Heraclitus, fragment 80:

εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἔόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ
χρεώμενα [χρεών]

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord δίκη, and that beings are naturally born by discord.

See my *Heraclitus - Some Translations and Notes*. (Fifth Edition, 2012)

In respect of the modern error of ὕβρις that is extremism, an error manifest in extremists, my understanding of an extremist is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious. See Appendix VII.

[6] See *The Change of Enantiodromia*.

[7] The meaning here of ψυχή is derived from the usage of Homer, Aeschylus, Aristotle, etcetera, and implies Life qua being. Or, expressed another way, living beings are emanations of, and thus manifest, ψυχή. This sense of ψυχή is beautifully expressed in a, in my view, rather mis-understood fragment attributed to Heraclitus:

ψυχῇσι θάνατος ὕδωρ γενέσθαι, ὕδατι δὲ θάνατος γῆν γενέσθαι, ἐκ γῆς δὲ ὕδωρ γίνεται, ἐξ ὕδατος δὲ ψυχή. Fragment 36

Where the water begins our living ends and where earth begins water ends, and yet earth nurtures water and from that water, Life.

[8] In respect of the numinous principle of Δίκη, refer to Appendix I - The Principle of Δίκη.

[9] Although φύσις has a natural tendency to become covered up (Φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ - concealment accompanies Physis) it can be uncovered through λόγος and πάθει μάθος.

[10] Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in The Way of Pathei-Mathos to refer to a personal 'letting-be' deriving from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, their φύσις, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive - that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous.

In practice, the knowledge, the understanding, the intuition, the insight that is wu-wei is a knowledge, an understanding, that can be acquired from empathy, πάθει μάθος, and by a knowing of and an appreciation of the numinous. This knowledge and understanding is of wholeness and that life, things/beings, change, flow, exist, in certain natural ways which we human beings cannot change however hard we might try; that such a hardness of human trying, a belief in such hardness, is unwise, un-natural, upsets the natural balance and can cause misfortune/suffering for us and/or for others, now or in the future. Thus success lies in discovering the inner nature (the physis) of things/beings/ourselves and gently, naturally, slowly, working with this inner nature, not striving against it.

[11] Heraclitus, fragment 112:

σωφρονεῖν ἀρετὴ μέγιστη, καὶ σοφίῃ ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαίοντας

Most excellent is balanced reasoning, for that skill can tell inner character from outer.

[12] In particular, The Agamemnon of Aeschylus; and the Oedipus Tyrannus, and Antigone, of Sophocles. In respect of Oedipus Tyrannus, refer, for example, to vv.863ff and vv.1329-1338

In much mis-understood verses in The Agamemnon (1654-1656) Clytaemnestra makes it known that she still is aware of the power, and importance, of δίκη. Of not killing to excess:

μηδαμῶς, ὧ φίλτατ' ἀνδρῶν, ἄλλα δράσωμεν κακά.
ἀλλὰ καὶ τάδ' ἐξαμῆσαι πολλά, δύστηνον θέρος.
πημονῆς δ' ἄλις γ' ὑπάρχει: μηδὲν αἵματώμεθα.

The aforementioned verses are often mis-translated to give some nonsense such as: 'No more violence. Here is a monstrous harvest and a bitter reaping time. There is pain enough already. Let us not be bloody now'.

However, what Aeschylus actually has Clytaemnestra say is:

"Let us not do any more harm for to reap these many would make it an unlucky harvest: injure them just enough, but do not stain us with their blood."

She is being practical (and quite Hellenic) and does not want to bring misfortune (from the gods) upon herself, or Aegisthus, by killing to excess. The killings she has done are, however, quite acceptable to her - she has vigorously defended them claiming it was her natural duty to avenge her daughter and the insult done to her by Agamemnon bringing his mistress, Cassandra, into her home. Clytaemnestra shows no pity for the Elders whom Aegisthus wishes to kill: "if you must", she says, "you can injure them. But do not kill them - that would be unlucky for us." That would be going just too far, and overstep what she still perceives as the natural, the proper, limits of mortal behaviour.

[13] Two fragments attributed to Heraclitus are of interest in this respect - 112, and 123. Refer to my *Heraclitus - Some Translations and Notes*. (Fifth Edition, 2012)

[14] Hesiod, Theogony v. 901 - Εὐνουμίην τε Δίκην τε καὶ Εἰρήνην τεθαλυῖαν

In effect, a personified Judgement is the goddess of the natural balance - evident in the ancestral customs, the ways, the way of life, the ethos, of a community - whose judgement, δίκη, is "in accord with", has the nature or the character of, what tends to restore such balance after some deed or deeds by an individual or individuals have upset or disrupted that balance. This sense of δίκη as one's ancestral customs is evident, for example, in Homer's Odyssey:

νῦν δ' ἐθέλω ἔπος ἄλλο μεταλλῆσαι καὶ ἐρέσθαι
Νέστορ', ἐπεὶ περὶ οἶδε δίκας ἡδὲ φρόνιν ἄλλων
τρὶς γὰρ δὴ μὲν φασὶν ἀνάξασθαι γένε' ἀνδρῶν
ὥς τέ μοι ἀθάνατος ἰνδάλλεταί εἰσοράσθαι

Book III, 243-246

I now wish to ask Nestor some questions to find out about some other things,
For he understands others and knows more about our customs than them,
Having been - so it is said - a Chieftain for three generations of mortals,
And, to look at, he seems to me to be one of those immortals

[15] Πόλεμος is not some abstract 'war' or strife or kampf, but rather that which is or becomes the genesis of beings from Being (the separation of beings from Being), and thus not only that which manifests as δίκη but also accompanies ἔρις because it is the nature of Πόλεμος that beings, born because of and by ἔρις, can be returned to Being, become bound together - be whole - again by enantiodromia.

Thus πόλεμος - like ψυχή and πάθει μάθος and ἐναντιοδομίας and ὕβρις and δίκη as δίκη/Δίκην/Δίκη - is a philosophical principle and should therefore in my view not be blandly translated by a single word or term, but rather should be left untranslated or be transliterated, thus requiring for its understanding a certain thoughtful reasoning and thence interpretation according to context.

In respect of such interpretation, it is for example interesting that in the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, and in circulation at the time of Heraclitus, a personified πόλεμος (as the δαίμων of kindred strife) married a personified ὕβρις (as the δαίμων of arrogant pride) and that it was a common folk belief that πόλεμος accompanied ὕβρις - that is, that Polemos followed Hubris around rather than vice versa, causing or bringing ἔρις.

[16] See Appendix VII. The saying - attributed to Heraclitus - is from Diogenes Laërtius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* (ix. 7)

[17] Fragment 112.

[18] For an explanation is what is meant here by innocence, see the entry in Appendix VII.

[19] Part I: The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary

[20] To assess is to reasonably consider and thus arrive at a balanced, a reasonable, a fair, judgement/assessment.

[21] qv. 'An Appreciation of The Numinous' in The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary

[22] Fragments 53 and 80

[23] Fragment 52

[24] Fragment 64

[25] Fragment 123

[26] The State is defined in Appendix VI - A Glossary of Terms.

As mentioned elsewhere, I am somewhat idiosyncratic regarding capitalization (and spelling), and capitalize certain words, such as State, and often use terms such as The State to emphasize the philosophical truth of State as entity.

[27] The ethics of the way of pathei-mathos are the ethics of empathy - of συμπάθεια. In practical personal terms, this means dignity, fairness, balance (δίκη), reason, a lack of prejudgement, and the requirement of a personal knowing and of personal experience, of πάθει μάθος.

An ethical person thus reveals, possesses, εὐταξία - the quality, the personal virtue, of self-restraint; of personal orderly (balanced, honourable, well-mannered) conduct, a virtue especially evident under adversity or duress.

Thus, and as mentioned in Part Three - Enantiodromia and The Reformation of The Individual, the good is considered to be what is fair; what alleviates or does not cause suffering; what is compassionate; what empathy by its revealing inclines us to do, what inclines us to appreciate the numinous and why ὕβρις is an error of unbalance.

Hence the bad - what is wrong, immoral - is what is unfair; what is harsh and unfeeling; what intentionally causes or contributes to suffering, with what is bad often considered to be due to a lack of empathy and of πάθει μάθος in a person, and a consequence of a bad φύσις, of a bad, a rotten, or an undeveloped, unformed, not-mature, individual character/nature. In effect, such a bad person lacks εὐταξία, has little or no appreciation of the numinous, and is often in thrall to their hubriatic and/or their masculous desires.

[28] Heraclitus, fragment 80: εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἐόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα [χρεών]

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord δίκη, and that beings are naturally born by discord.

See my *Heraclitus - Some Translations and Notes*. (Fifth Edition, 2012)

[29] In respect of the numinous principle of Δίκη, refer to Appendix I.

[30] Although φύσις has a natural tendency to become covered up (Φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ - concealment accompanies Physis) it can be uncovered through λόγος and πάθει μάθος.

[31] I have used a transliteration of the compound Greek word - ἐναντιοδρομίας - rather than given a particular translation, since the term enantiodromia in my view suggests the uniqueness of expression of the original, and which original in my view is not adequately, and most certainly not accurately, described by a usual translation such as 'conflict of opposites'. Rather, what is suggested is 'confrontational contest' - that is, by facing up to the expected/planned/inevitable contest.

Interestingly, Carl Jung - who was familiar with the sayings of Heraclitus - used the term enantiodromia to describe the emergence of a trait (of character) to offset another trait and so restore a certain psychological balance within the individual.

[32] Refer to my *Heraclitus - Some Translations and Notes*. (Fifth Edition, 2012)

[33] While Φύσις (Physis) has a natural tendency to become covered up (Heraclitus, Fragment 123) it can be uncovered through λόγος and πάθει μάθος.

[34] In *Empathy and The Immoral Abstraction of Race*.

[35] Πόλεμος πάντων μὲν πατήρ ἐστι, πάντων δὲ βασιλεύς, καὶ τοὺς μὲν θεοὺς ἔδειξε τοὺς δὲ ἄνθρωπους, τοὺς μὲν δούλους ἐποίησε τοὺς δὲ ἐλευθέρους. Fragmentum 53.

[36] See my *Heraclitus - Some Translations and Notes* (Fifth Edition, 2012) where I suggest a new interpretation of Fragmentum 53: Polemos our genesis, governing us all to bring forth some gods, some mortal beings with some unfettered yet others kept bound.

[37] I have deliberately transliterated (instead of translated) polemos, and left δίκη as δίκη. In respect of δίκη, see Appendix VII - Glossary of Terms.

Alternative renderings of the fragment are:

a) One should be aware that polemos is pervasive; and discord δίκη, and that beings [our being] quite naturally come-into-being through discord

b) One should be aware that polemos pervades; with discord δίκη, and that all beings are begotten because of discord.

[38] Correctly understood, a δαίμων is not one of the pantheon of major Greek gods - θεοί - but rather a lesser type of divinity who might be assigned by those gods to bring good fortune or misfortune to human beings and/or watch over certain human beings and especially particular numinous (sacred) places.

In addition, Polemos was originally the δαίμων of kindred strife, whether familial, or of one's πόλις (one's clan and their places of dwelling). Thus, to describe Polemos, as is sometimes done, as the god of conflict (or war), is doubly incorrect.

It is interesting to observe how the term δαίμων - with and after Plato, and especially by its use by the early Christian Church - came to be a moral abstraction, used in a bad sense (as 'demon'), and contrasted with another moral abstraction, that of 'angels'. Indeed, this process - this change - with this particular term is a reasonable metaphor for what we may call the manufacture and development of abstractions, and in which development the ontology and theology of an organized monotheistic religion played a not insignificant part.

[39] Agamemnon, 174-183. qv. *Pathei-Mathos as Authority and Way* in *The Way of Pathei-Mathos*.

[40] Aeschylus (attributed), *Prometheus Bound*, 515-6

[41] qv. *The Nature of Being and of Beings* in *The Way of Pathei-Mathos*.

[42] The numinous is what predisposes us not to commit ὕβρις - that is, what continues or maintains or manifests ἁρμονίη and thus καλλός; the natural balance - sans abstractions - that enables us to know and appreciate, and which uncovers, Φύσις

Appendix I

The Principle of Δίκη

Δίκη is that noble, respectful, balance understood, for example, by Sophocles (among many others) - for instance, Antigone respects the natural balance, the customs and traditions of her own culture, given by the gods, whereas Creon verges towards and finally commits, like Oedipus in *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the error of ὕβρις and is thus "taught a lesson" (just like Oedipus) by the gods because, as Aeschylus wrote -

Δίκη δὲ τοῖς μὲν παθοῦσιν
μαθεῖν ἐπιρρέπει

The goddess, Judgement, favours someone learning from adversity.

Agamemnon, 250-251

In respect of Δίκη, I write - spell - it thus in this modern way with a capital Δ to intimate a new, a particular and numinous, philosophical principle, and differentiate it from the more general δίκη. As a numinous principle, or axiom, Δίκη thus suggests what lies beyond and what may have been the genesis of δίκη personified as the goddess, Judgement - the goddess of natural balance, of the ancestral way and ancestral customs.

Thus, Δίκη does not mean nor imply something theological, but rather implies the natural balance, the reasoned judgement, the thoughtful reasoning - σωφρονεῖν - that πάθει μάθος brings and restores, and which accumulated πάθει μάθος of a particular folk or πόλις forms the basis for their ancestral customs. δίκη is therefore, as the numinous principle Δίκη, what may be said to be a particular and a necessary balance between ἀρετή and ὕβρις - between the ὕβρις that often results when the personal, the natural, quest for ἀρετή becomes unbalanced and excessive.

That is, when ἔρις (discord) is or becomes δίκη - as suggested by Heraclitus in Fragment 80 -

εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἔοντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα [χρεών]

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord δίκη, and that beings are naturally born by discord.

Appendix II

From Mythoi To Empathy A New Appreciation Of The Numinous

Since the concept of the numinous is central to my weltanschauung - otherwise known as the 'philosophy of pathei-mathos' - it seems apposite to provide, as I did in respect of my use of the term physis, φύσις [1], a more detailed explanation of the concept, and my usage of it, than I have hitherto given, deriving as the term does from the classical Latin numen which denoted "a reverence for the divine; a divinity; divine power" with the word numen assimilated into English in the 15th century, with the English use of 'numinous' dating from the middle of the 17th century and used to signify "of or relating to a numen; revealing or indicating the presence of a divinity; divine, spiritual."

The term numinous was also used in a somewhat restrictive religious way [2] by Rudolf Otto over a century ago in his book *Das Heilige*.

In contrast to Otto et al, my understanding of the numinous is that it is primarily a perceiviation, not a personal emotion or feeling, not a mysterium, and not an idea in the sense of Plato's εἶδος and thus is not similar to Kant's concept of *a priori*. As a perceiviation, while it includes an apprehension of what is often referred to as 'the divine', 'the holy' - and sometimes thus is an apprehension of theos or theoi - it is not limited to such apprehensions, since as in the past it is often an intimation of, an intuition concerning,

"the natural balance of ψυχή; a balance which ὕβρις upsets. This natural balance - our being as human beings - is or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful." [3]

Where ψυχή is an intimation of, an intuition concerning Life *qua* being; of ourselves as a living existent considered as an emanation of ψυχή, howsoever ψυχή is described, as for example in mythoi - and thus in terms of theos, theoi, or 'Nature' - with ψυχή thus what 'animates' us and what gives us our φύσις as human beings. A physis classically perceived to be that of a mortal fallible being veering between σωφρονεῖν (thoughtful reasoning, and thus fairness) and ὕβρις. [4]

The particular apprehension of external reality that is the numinous is that provided by our natural faculty of empathy, ἐμπάθεια. When this particular faculty is developed and used then it is a specific and extended type of

συμπάθεια. That is, it is a type of and a means to knowing and understanding another human being and/or other living beings. The type of 'knowing' - and thence the understanding - that empathy provides or can provide is different from, but supplementary and complimentary to, that knowing which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

Furthermore, since empathy is a natural and an individual human faculty, it

"is limited in range and application, just as our faculties of sight and hearing are limited in range and application. These limits extend to only what is direct, immediate, and involve personal interactions with other humans or with other living beings. There is therefore, for the philosophy of pathei-mathos, an 'empathic scale of things' and an acceptance of our limitations of personal knowing and personal understanding." [5]

That is, as I explained in my 2015 essay *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*, there is a 'local horizon of empathy'.

This local horizon and the fact that empathy is a human faculty mean that the apprehension is wordless and personal and cannot be extrapolated beyond, or abstracted out from, the individual without losing some or all of its numinosity since the process of denotatum - of abstraction - devolves around the meanings assigned to words, terms, and names, and which meanings can and do vary over causal time and may be (mis)interpreted by others often on the basis of some idea, or theory, or on some comparative exegesis.

It therefore follows that the numinous cannot be codified and that numinosity cannot be adequately, fully, presenced by anything doctrinal or which is organized beyond a small, a localized, and thus personal level; and that all such a supra-local organization can ever hope to do at best is provide a fallible intimation of the numinous, or perhaps some practical means to help others toward individually apprehending the numinous for themselves.

Which intimation, given the nature of empathy - with its συμπάθεια, with its wordless knowing of actually being for a moment or for moments 'the living other' - is of muliebral virtues such as compassion, manners, and a certain personal humility, and of how a shared, mutual, personal love can and does presence the numinous. Which intimation, which wisdom, which knowing, is exactly that of our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos, and which culture - with its personal recounting, and artistic renderings, of tragedy, love, loss, suffering, and war - is a far better guide to the numinous than conventional religions. [6]

All of which is why I wrote in my *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* that in my view "the numinous is primarily a manifestation of the muliebral," and that revealed religions such as Christianity, Islam, and Judaism primarily manifest a presencing of the masculous. Such religions - indeed all religions - therefore have not presenced, and do not and cannot presence, the numinous as the numinous can be presenced. Neither did Greco-Roman culture, for all its assimilation of some muliebral mythoi, adequately presence the numinous, and just as no modern organized paganus revival dependant on mythoi and anthropomorphic deities can adequately presence the numinous.

For the cultivation of the faculty of empathy is the transition from mythoi and anthropomorphic deities (theos and theoi) to an appreciation of the numinous sans denotatum and sans religion.

A New Appreciation Of The Numinous

How then can the faculty of empathy be cultivated? My own practical experience of various religions, as well as my own pathei-mathos, inclines me to favour the personal cultivation of muliebral virtues and a return to a more local, a less organized, way or ways of living based initially on a personal and mutual and loyal love between two individuals. A living of necessity balanced by personal honour given how the world is still replete with dishonourable hubriatic individuals who, devoid of empathy, are often motivated by the worst of intentions. For such a personal honour - in the immediacy of the personal moment - is a necessary restoration of the numinous balance that the dishonourable deeds of a hubriatic individual or individuals upsets [7].

For such a personal love, such a preparedness to restore the natural balance through honour, are - in my admittedly fallible view - far more adequate presencings of the numinous than any religious ritual, than any religious worship, or any type of contemplative (wordless) prayer.

[1] *Toward Understanding Physis*. Included in the 2015 compilation *Sarigthersa*.

[2] I have endeavoured in recent years to make a distinction between a religion and a spiritual 'way of life'. As noted in Appendix VII - Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, *Religion*,

"One of the differences being that a religion requires and manifests a codified ritual and doctrine and a certain expectation of conformity in terms of doctrine and ritual, as well as a certain organization beyond the local community level resulting in particular individuals assuming or being appointed to positions of authority in matters relating to that religion. In contrast, Ways are more diverse and more an expression of a spiritual ethos, of a customary, and often localized, way of doing certain spiritual things, with there generally being little or no organization beyond the community level and no individuals assuming - or being appointed by some organization - to positions of authority in matters relating to that ethos.

Religions thus tend to develop an organized regulatory and supra-local hierarchy which oversees and appoints those, such as priests or religious teachers, regarded as proficient in spiritual matters and in matters of doctrine and ritual, whereas adherents of Ways tend to locally and informally and communally, and out of respect and a personal knowing, accept certain individuals as having a detailed knowledge and an understanding of the ethos and the practices of that Way. Many spiritual Ways have evolved into religions."

Another difference is that religions tend to presence and be biased toward the masculine, while spiritual ways tend to be either more muliebral or incorporate muliebral virtues.

[3] Myatt, David. *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, 2103. Appendix VII - Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, *The Numinous*.

[4] In my note *Concerning σωφρονεῖν* - included in my "revised 2455621.531" version of *The Balance of Physis - Notes on λόγος and ἀληθεία in Heraclitus. Part One, Fragment 112* - I mentioned that I use σωφρονεῖν (sophronein) in preference to σωφροσύνη (sophrosyne) since sophrosyne has acquired an English interpretation - "soundness of mind, moderation" - which in my view distorts the meaning of the original Greek. As with my use of the term πάθει μάθος (pathei-mathos) I use σωφρονεῖν in an Anglicized manner with there thus being no necessity to employ inflective forms.

[5] Qv. Appendix VII - *Immediacy-of-the-Moment*.

[6] One aspect of the apprehension of the numinous that empathy provides - which I have briefly touched upon in various recent personal writings - is that personal love is personal love; personal, mutual, equal, and germane to the moment and to a person. It thus does not adhere to manufactured or assumed abstractive boundaries such as gender, social status, or nationality, with enforced adherence to such presumptive boundaries - such as opposition to same gender love whether from religious or political beliefs - contrary to empathy and a cause of suffering.

[7] As mentioned in my *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*,

"The personal virtue of honour, and the cultivation of wu-wei, are - together - a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἁρμονίη.

For personal honour is essentially a presencing, a grounding, of ψυχή - of Life, of our φύσις - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη.

This balancing of compassion - of the need not to cause suffering - by σωφρονεῖν and δίκη is perhaps most obvious on that particular occasion when it may be judged necessary to cause suffering to another human being. That is, in honourable self-defence. For it is natural - part of our reasoned, fair, just, human nature - to defend ourselves when attacked and (in the immediacy of the personal moment) to valorously, with chivalry, act in defence of someone close-by who is unfairly attacked or dishonourably threatened or is being bullied by others, and to thus employ, if our personal judgement of the circumstances deem it necessary, lethal force.

This use of force is, importantly, crucially, restricted – by the individual nature of our judgement, and by the individual nature of our authority – to such personal situations of immediate self-defence and of valorous defence of others, and cannot be extended beyond that, for to so extend it, or attempt to extend it beyond the immediacy of the personal moment of an existing physical threat, is an arrogant presumption – an act of ὕβρις – which negates the fair, the human, presumption of innocence of those we do not personally know, we have no empathic knowledge of, and who present no direct, immediate, personal, threat to us or to others nearby us.

Such personal self-defence and such valorous defence of another in a personal situation are in effect a means to restore the natural balance which the unfair, the dishonourable, behaviour of others upsets. That is, such defence fairly, justly, and naturally in the immediacy of the moment corrects their error of ὕβρις resulting from their bad (their rotten) φύσις; a rotten character evident in their lack of the virtue, the skill, of σωφρονεῖν. For had they possessed that virtue, and if their character was not bad, they would not have undertaken such a dishonourable attack."

Appendix III

Towards Understanding Ancestral Culture

As manifest in my weltanschauung, based as that weltanschauung is on pathei-mathos and an appreciation of Greco-Roman culture, the term Ancestral Culture is synonymous with Ancestral Custom, with Ancestral Custom represented in Ancient Greek mythoi by Δίκη, the goddess Fairness as described by Hesiod:

σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης, μηδ' ὕβριν ὄφελλε:
ὕβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῷ βροτῷ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς
215 ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύναται, βαρύθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς
ἐγκύρσας ἄτησιν: ὁδὸς δ' ἐτέρηφι παρελθεῖν
κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει
ἐς τέλος ἐξελοῦσα: παθῶν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω

You should listen to Fairness and not oblige Hubris
Since Hubris harms unfortunate mortals while even the more fortunate
Are not equal to carrying that heavy a burden, meeting as they do with Mischief.
The best path to take is the opposite one: that of honour
For, in the end, Fairness is above Hubris
Which is something the young come to learn from adversity.

Hesiod, Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι [Works and Days], vv 213-218

That Δίκη is generally described as the goddess of 'justice' - as 'Judgement' personified - is unfortunate given that the terms 'justice' and 'judgement' have modern, abstract, and legalistic, connotations which are inappropriate and which detract from understanding and appreciating the mythoi of Ancient Greece and Rome.

Correctly understood, Δίκη - and δίκη in general - represents the natural and the necessary balance manifest in ἁρμονίη (harmony) and thus not only in τὸ καλόν (the beautiful) but also in the Cosmic Order, κόσμος, with ourselves as human beings (at least when unaffected by hubris) a microcosmic representation of such balance, κόσμον δὲ θείου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον [1]. A sentiment re-expressed centuries later by Marsilii Ficini:

Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona.

How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned. [2]

This understanding and appreciation of ἁρμονίη and of κόσμος and of ourselves as a microcosm is perhaps most evident in the Greek phrase καλὸς κάγαθός, describing as it does those who are balanced within themselves, who - manifesting τὸ καλόν and τὸ ἀγαθόν - comport themselves in a gentlemanly or

lady-like manner, part of which comportment is living and if necessary dying in a honourable, a noble, manner. For personal honour presences τὸ καλόν and τὸ ἀγαθόν, and thus the numinous.

For in practice honour manifests the customary, the ancestral way, of those who are noble, those who presence fairness; those who restore balance; those who (even at some cost to themselves) are fair due to their innate physis or because they have been nurtured to be so. For this ancestral way - such ancestral custom - is what is expected in terms of personal behaviour based on past personal examples and thus often manifests the accumulated wisdom of previous generations.

Thus, an important - perhaps even ethos-defining - Ancestral Custom of Greco-Roman culture, and of Western culture born as Western culture was from medieval mythoi involving Knights and courtly romance and from the re-discovery of Greco-Roman culture that began the Renaissance, is chivalry and which personal virtue - presencing the numinous as it does and did - is not and cannot be subject to any qualifications or exceptions and cannot be confined to or manifest by anything so supra-personal as a particular religion or anything so supra-personal as a political dogma or ideology.

Hence, the modern paganus weltanschauung that I mentioned in my *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* as a means "to reconnect those in the lands of the West, and those in Western émigré lands and former colonies of the West, with their ancestral ethos," is one founded on καλὸς κἀγαθός. That is, on chivalry; on manners; on gentrified romance; and on the muliebral virtues, the gender equality, inherent in both chivalry and personal manners, consciously and rationally understood as chivalry and manners now are as a consequence of both our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos and of our empathic (wordless) and personal apprehension of the numinous.

[1] "a cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings." Tractate IV:2. Corpus Hermeticum. Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς.

[2] De Vita Coelitus Comparanda. XXVI.

Appendix IV

The Concept Of Physis

The term physis - φύσις - was used by Heraclitus, Aristotle, and others, and occurs in texts such as the Pœmandres and ἱερός Λόγος tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum.

Physis is usually translated as either 'Nature' (as if 'the natural world', and the physical cosmos beyond, are meant) or as the character (the nature) of a person. However, while the context - of the original Greek text - may suggest (as often, for example, in Homer and Herodotus) such a meaning as such English words impute, physis philosophically (as, for example, in Heraclitus and Aristotle and the Corpus Hermeticum) has specific ontological meanings. Meanings which are lost, or glossed over, when physis is simply translated either as 'Nature' or - in terms of mortals - as (personal) character.

Ontologically, as Aristotle makes clear [2], physis denotes the being of those beings who or which have the potentiality (the being) to change, be changed, or to develop. That is, to become, or to move or be moved; as for example in the motion (of 'things') and the 'natural unfolding' or growth, sans an external cause, that living beings demonstrate.

However, and crucially, physis is not - for human beings - some abstract 'essence' (qv. Plato's ἰδέα/εἶδος) but rather a balance between the being that it is, it was, and potentially might yet be. That is, in Aristotelian terms, it is a meson - μέσον - of being and 'not being'; and 'not being' in the sense of not yet having become what it could be, and not now being what it used to be. Hence why, for Aristotle, a manifestation of physis - in terms of the being of mortals - such as arête (ἀρετή) is a meson, a balance of things, and not, as it is for Plato, some fixed 'form' - some idea, ideal - which as Plato wrote "always exists, and has no genesis. It does not die, does not grow, does not decay." [3]

According to my understanding of Heraclitus, physis also suggests - as in Fragment 1 - the 'natural' being of a being which we mortals have a tendency to cover-up or conceal [4].

Furthermore, physis is one of the main themes in the Poemandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, for the author seeks "to apprehend the physis of beings" [5] with physis often mystically personified:

"This is a mysterium esoteric even to this day. For Physis, having intimately joined with the human, produced a most wondrous wonder possessed of the physis of the harmonious seven I mentioned before, of Fire and pneuma. Physis did not tarry, giving birth to seven male-and-female humans with the physis of those viziers, and ætherean...

[For] those seven came into being in this way. Earth was muliebral, Water was lustful, and Fire maturing. From Æther, the pneuma, and with Physis bringing forth human-shaped bodies. Of Life and phaos, the human came to be of psyche and perceivation; from Life - psyche; from phaos - perceivation; and with everything in the observable cosmic order cyclic until its completion...

When the cycle was fulfilled, the connexions between all things were, by the deliberations of theos, unfastened. Living beings - all male-and-female then - were, including humans, rent asunder thus bringing into being portions that were masculous with the others muliebral." [6]

Physis is also personified in the Ιερός Λόγος tractate:

"The divine is all of that mexion: renewance of the cosmic order through Physis
For Physis is presented in the divine." [7]

The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, physis is used contextually to refer to:

- (i) the ontology of beings, an ontology - a reality, a 'true nature' - that is often obscured by denotatum [9] and by abstractions, both of which conceal physis;
- (ii) the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being, which is of us - we mortals - as a nexion, an affective effluvium (or emanation) of Life (ψυχή) and thus of why 'the separation-of-otherness' is a concealment of that relationship;
- (iii) the character, or persona, of human beings, and which character - sans denotatum - can be discovered (revealed, known) by the faculty of empathy;
- (iv) the unity - the being - beyond the division of our physis, as individual mortals, into masculous and muliebral;
- (v) that manifestation denoted by the concept Time, with Time considered to be an expression/manifestation of the physis of beings.

My concept of physis is therefore primarily ontological.

Notes

[1] I have included here, as Appendix IV, my translation of, and notes on, the relevant part of 1015α.

[2] See Appendix IV, below, and also my *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*.

[3] πρῶτον μὲν αἰεὶ ὄν καὶ οὔτε γιγνόμενον οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον οὔτε αὐξανόμενον οὔτε φθίνον (Symposium 210e - 211a).

[4] See Appendix V.

[5] Poemandres 3; qv. my *Mercvrii Trismegisti Pymander de potestate et sapientia dei: A Translation and Commentary*, 2013.

[6] Poemandres 16-18.

[7] Ιερός Λόγος 3; qv. my *Ιερός Λόγος: An Esoteric Mythos. A Translation Of And A Commentary On The Third Tractate Of The Corpus Hermeticum*, 2015.

[9] In my philosophy of pathei-mathos, I use the term denotatum - from the Latin, denotare - in accord with its general meaning which is "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-

thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted."

[10] An abstraction is a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed.

Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future. Abstractions are often assumed to provide some 'knowledge' or some 'understanding' of some-thing assigned to or described by a particular abstraction.

[11] Refer, for example, to my *The Error of The-Separation-of-Otherness in The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, 2012.

[12] *Time And The Separation Of Otherness - Part One*. 2012.

Appendix V

Notes on Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015a

Text

ἐκ δὴ τῶν εἰρημένων ἡ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἡ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὕλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικῇ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐνυπάρχουσα πῶς ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ.

Translation

Given the foregoing, then principally - and to be exact - physis denotes the quidditas of beings having changement inherent within them; for substantia has been denoted by physis because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changements predicated on it. For physis is inherent changement either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.

Commentary And Notes

physis. φύσις. A transliteration, since (i) this is a fundamental philosophical principle/term that requires contextual interpretation, and (ii) the English words 'nature' and Nature not only do not adequately describe this principle but also lead to and have led to certain misunderstandings of Aristotle in particular and of classical Greek culture in general.

quidditas. οὐσία. Quidditas - post-classical Latin, from whence the English word 'quiddity' - is more appropriate here than 'essence', given the metaphysical (ontological) context and given that 'essence' now has so many non-philosophical connotations. An interesting alternative would be the scholastic term haecceity. As with physis, quidditas is a philosophical term which requires contextual interpretation.

changement inherent. The expression ἀρχὴν κινήσεως is crucial to understanding what Aristotle means in respect of physis. In regard to κίνησις, since Aristotle here does not mean 'motion' or 'movement' in the sense of Newtonian physics (with its causal concepts of force, mass, velocity, kinetic energy), and since such physical movement is what the English words 'motion' and 'movement' now most usually denote, then alternatives must be found. Hence the translation 'changement'.

For what Aristotle is describing here is 'change', as for example in the natural development, the unfolding, the growth, of some-thing living that occurs because it is living; because it is possessed of Life and which Life is the ἀρχή of the changement, the 'original being' (the φύσις) from whence being-becomes to be often perceived and classified by us in orderly ways.

What is described is an a-causal change, of being-becoming - of being unfolding - and thus fulfilling the potentiality of being within it. Hence why here Aristotle writes ἀρχὴν κινήσεως, which describes the

potential change inherent in certain beings. ¹ That is, the a-causal origin of beings-becoming, or having become, and which beings (having changed, developed, unfolded) we then perceive and classify in orderly ways ², such as by shape or usefulness to us, or by a notion such as causality: in terms of physical- 'movement'. Which is why, in Aristotle, there is a relation between φύσις, μορφή, and εἶδος - εἶδος in the sense of 'perceivability' and not, as in Plato, denoting an abstract 'form' or an 'ideal' - διὸ καὶ ὅσα φύσει ἔστιν ἢ γίγνεται, ἤδη ὑπάρχοντος ἐξ οὗ πέφυκε γίγνεσθαι ἢ εἶναι, οὕτω φαμέν τὴν φύσιν ἔχειν ἔαν μὴ ἔχη τὸ εἶδος καὶ τὴν μορφήν.

Thus φύσις is what is a-causal in beings and which acausality is the origin of the 'natural' order that unfolds because of the potentiality of being to become, to presence in the causal, whence to be perceived by us in various orderly arrangements and/or arranged in terms of usefulness, and which arrangements/usefulness include τὸ καλόν - and thus schemata, τάξις ³ - and ἀρετή.

substantia. ὕλη. I have chosen to use the etymon of the English word 'substance' - qv. substantia in Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia libri Metaphysicae* - to again (i) emphasize the need for contextual interpretation in respect of a specific philosophical term, and (ii) to avoid whatever misunderstandings may arise from the modern (non-ontological) connotations of words such as 'matter' and 'substance'.

as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changes predicated on it. καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. The sense of γένεσις here implies a 'coming-into-being' rather than just 'generation', just as φύω implies a being 'burgeoning' - unfolding, revealing itself (its physis) - rather than just 'growing'.

the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is. The Greek word ἐντελεχεία is compounded from ἐν ελεῖ ἔχει and the sense here - in relation to ἐνυπάρχουσα - seems to be twofold: of a being as an unchanged being, and of what a being has become (or is becoming) as a result of a change, for both types of being actually exist, are real. One exists as a being as it is and has remained, and one exists as the being it has become (or is in the process of becoming) through the potential for change inherent within it. Thus, for Aristotle, physis denotes the being of both types of being.

ooo

[1] In respect of ἀρχὴ as implying what is primarily inherent, qv. 1012b-1013a.

[2] As Thomas Aquinas wrote: "Sciendum est autem, quod principium et causa licet sint idem subiecto, differunt tamen ratione. Nam hoc nomen principium ordinem quemdam importat; hoc vero nomen causa, importat influxum quemdam ad esse causati." *Sententia libri Metaphysicae*, liber 5, lectio 1, n 3.

[3] Regarding 1078a, τοῦ δὲ καλοῦ μέγιστα εἶδη τάξις καὶ συμμετρία καὶ τὸ ὠρισμένον (the most noticeable expressions of kalos are schemata and harmony and consonancy), my view - given the context - is that τάξις here is best translated as "schemata", rather than "order" or "arrangement" both of which are vague, open to mis-interpretation, and unrelated to the context, which context is mathematical beauty. Similarly, ὁρίζω (to me) suggests consonancy, echoing as that (now somewhat obscure) English word does both by its use by, among others, Shakespeare (Hamlet, Act 2, Scene 2, 286) and also by its relation to the almost 'mathematical beauty' of some music (as evident for example in the counterpoint of JS Bach).

Furthermore, just because the Greek has συμμετρία it does not necessarily follow that the English word 'symmetry' is an appropriate translation, considering how the word symmetry is now used and has been used, in the West for many centuries, and especially in relation to art (in terms, for example, of objects and the human body).

Given that Aristotle in 1078a is referring to geometry in particular and mathematics in general, then an appropriate translation is 'harmony' - as in "a collation of representative signs or marks, so arranged that they exhibit their agreement and account for their discrepancies or errors." A harmony, in other words, that is most evident (as I mentioned in my essay) in Euclid's Elements, as schemata and consonancy are therein evident, most of the contents (theorems) of which book - deriving from people such as Pythagoras - were known to Aristotle.

Thus, a translation such as "the chief forms of beauty are order and symmetry and definiteness" can in my opinion lead to projecting onto Aristotle what he may not necessarily have meant; and projecting onto in respect of how we now, over two thousand years after Aristotle, understand and use such common English terms. Hence, also, why I sometimes use obscure English words (which may suggest a relevant meaning) or transliterations (as in physis).

Appendix VI

Some Notes on Heraclitus Fragment 1

Text

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος αἰεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν εἰκόσσι, πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῖμαι κατὰ φύσιν διαιρέων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅπως ἔχει· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὖδοντες ἐπιλανθάνονται

Translation

My translation of the fragment is:

Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done.

Comments

1. λόγος

In respect of fragments 80 and 112 I have suggested that it is incorrect to interpret πόλεμος simplistically as 'war', strife, or kampf ^[1] and that, instead of using such words, it should be transliterated so as to name a distinct philosophical principle that requires interpretation and explanation with particular reference to Hellenic culture and philosophy. For, more often than not, such common English words as 'war' are now understood in a non-Hellenic, non-philosophical, context and explained in relation to some ideated opposite; and in the particular case of the term 'war', for example, in contrast to some-thing named, explained, or defined, as 'peace' or a state of non-belligerence.

In respect of fragment 1 ^[2], does λόγος suggest a philosophical principle and therefore should it, like πόλεμος, be transliterated and thus be considered as a basic principle of the philosophy of Heraclitus, or at least of what, of that philosophy or weltanschauung, we can adduce from the textual fragments we possess? Or does λόγος, as I suggested in respect of fragment 112 and 123 ^[3] imply:

both a *naming* (denoting), and a *telling* – not a telling as in some abstract explanation or theory, but as in a simple describing, or recounting, of what has been so denoted or so named. Which is why, in fragment 39, Heraclitus writes:

ἐν Πριήνῃ Βίας ἐγένετο ὁ Τευτάμεω, οὗ πλείων λόγος ἢ τῶν ἄλλων ^[4]

and why, in respect of λέγειν, Hesiod wrote:

ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα,
ἴδμεν δ' , εὖτ' ἐθέλωμεν, ἀληθέα γηρύσασθαι ^[5]

I contend that fragment 1 also suggests a denoting, in the sense of expressing some-thing by denoting it or describing it by a 'name'. That is, that λόγος here does not refer here to what has often be termed Logos, and that the 'ambiguous' αἰεὶ ^[6] is not really ambiguous at all.

For one has to, in my view, take account of the fact that there is poetry in Heraclitus; a rather underrated style that sometimes led others to incorrectly describe him as ὁ σκοτεινός, the ambiguous (or the obtuse)

one, and led Aristotle to write:

τὰ γὰρ Ἡρακλείτου διαστίξαι ἔργον διὰ τὸ ἄδηλον
εἶναι ποτέρῳ πρόσκειται, τῷ ὕστερον ἢ τῷ πρότερον, οἷον ἐν τῇ ἀρχῇ αὐτῇ τοῦ συγγράμματος:
φησὶ γὰρ "τοῦ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος ἀεὶ ἀξύνετοι ἄνθρωποι γίνονται":
ἄδηλον γὰρ τὸ ἀεὶ, πρὸς ποτέρῳ δεῖ διαστίξαι. [6]

It is the poetic style of Heraclitus that I have tried, however badly, to express in my often non-literal and rather idiosyncratic translations/interpretations of some of the fragments attributed to him. Hence my interpretation of the first part:

Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists – human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it.

The 'which I explain' being implicit in the sense of λόγος here as a naming and expression by a particular individual, contrasted (as often with Heraclitus) rather poetically with a generality; in this instance, contrasted with human beings - 'men' - in general.

2. ἀεὶ

In my view, "tend to" captures the poetic sense of ἀεὶ here. That is, the literal - the bland, strident - 'always' is discarded in favour of a more Heraclitean expression of human beings having an apparently rather irreconcilable tendency - both now and as in the past - to ignore (or forget or not understand) certain things, even after matters have been explained to them (they have heard the explanation) and even after they have discovered certain truths for themselves.

3. διαιρέων and Φύσις

I take the sense of διαιρέων here somewhat poetically to suggest not the ordinary 'divide' but the more expressive 'cleave', with it being undivided Physis that is cleaved into parts by "such naming and expression" as Heraclitus has revealed. That is, Heraclitus is not saying that he has described or expressed each thing 'in accordance with its true nature' (or divided things correctly, or something of the kind) but rather that the process of naming and categorization is or has divided Physis, obscuring the true nature of Being and beings, and it is this process, this obscuring, or concealment. of Physis - of cleaving it into separate parts or each thing, 'each' contrasted with a generality ^[7] - that he has revealed and is mentioning here, as he mentioned it in fragment 123:

Φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ

Concealment accompanies Physis ^[8]

Which is why I have transliterated Φύσις as referring to a general philosophical principle of the philosophy of Heraclitus, or at least of what, of that philosophy or weltanschauung, we can adduce from the textual fragments we possess.

4. πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων

In respect of ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, the Homeric usage ^[9] is, for me, interesting as it implies a proverbial kind of saying rather than just 'words' and 'deeds':

Τηλέμαχ', οὐδ' ὄπιθεν κακὸς ἔσσει οὐδ' ἀνοήμων,
εἰ δὴ τοι σοῦ πατρὸς ἐνέστακται μένος ἡύ,
οἷος κεῖνος ἔην τελέσαι ἔργον τε ἔπος τε:

Telemachus – you will not be unlucky nor lacking in resolution
If you hereafter instill into yourself the determination of your father
Whose nature was to accomplish those deeds he said he would.

Furthermore, I take the sense here of πειρώμενοι poetically to suggest a "fumbling about" - as the inexperienced often fumble about and experiment until, often by trial and error, they have gained

sufficient experience to understand and know what they are doing and what is involved, which rather reminds one of a saying of Pindar ^[10]:

γλυκὺ δὲ πόλεμος ἀπείροισιν, ἐμπείρων δέ τις
ταρβεῖ προσιόντα νιν καρδίᾳ περισσῶ

5. ἐγερθέντες and εὐδοντες

Given that, as mentioned above, there is poetry in Heraclitus, I am inclined to avoid the literal, and usual, understanding of ἐγερθέντες and εὐδοντες, particularly given the foregoing πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων which renders such a literal understanding not only out of context and disjointed but decidedly odd. Human beings forgetting things when they sleep? If, however, and for example, ἐγείρω here poetically suggests alertness, an interest or excitement - as ἤγειρεν in the Agamemnon suggests an alertness and excitement, an interest in what has occurred, and thence the kindling of a pyre ^[11] - then there is, as often in Heraclitus, a flowing eloquence and that lack of discordance one might expect of an aphorism remembered and recorded long after the demise of its author.

Notes

[1] qv. *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*, and *Some Notes on Πόλεμος and Δίκη in Heraclitus B80*

As mentioned in *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*:

"In addition, Polemos was originally the δαίμων [not the god] of kindred strife, whether familial, or of one's πόλις (one's clan and their places of dwelling). Thus, to describe Polemos, as is sometimes done, as the god of conflict (or war), is doubly incorrect."

[2] qv. Sextus Empiricus: *Advenus Mathematicos* VII. 132

[3] Regarding 123 - Φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ - qv. *Physis, Nature, Concealment, and Natural Change*, e-text 2010

[4] "In Priene was born someone named and recalled as most worthy - Bias, that son of Teutamias."

[5]

We have many ways to conceal - to name - certain things
And the skill when we wish to expose their meaning

[6] Aristotle: *Ars Rhetorica* Book 3, chapter 5 [1407b]

[7] As in Homer et al, for example Iliad, Book VII, 215 -

Τρῶας δὲ τρόμος αἰνὸς ὑπήλυθε γυῖα ἕκαστον

But over the Trojans, a strange fear, to shake the limbs of each one there

[8] qv. my *Physis, Nature, Concealment, and Natural Change* [Notes on Heraclitus fragment 123], e-text 2010

[9] Odyssey, Book II, 272

[10] Fragment 110

[11] Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 296-299

σθένουσα λαμπὰς δ' οὐδέπω μαυρουμένη,

ὑπερθοροῦσα πεδίον Ἀσωποῦ, δίκην
φαιδρᾶς σελήνης, πρὸς Κιθαιρῶνος λέπας
ἤγειρεν ἄλλην ἐκδοχὴν πομποῦ πυρός.

The torch, vigorous and far from extinguished,
Bounded over the Asopian plain
To the rocks of Cithaeron as bright as the moon
So that the one waiting there to begin that fire, jumped up

Note that here the watchman is not awakened from sleep.

Appendix VII

Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos Vocabulary, Definitions, and Explanations

Abstraction

An abstraction is a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed.

Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future.

All abstractions involve a causal perception, based as they are on the presumption of a linear cause-and-effect (and/or a dialectic) and on a posited or an assumed category or classification which differs in some way from some other assumed or posited categories/classifications, past, present or future. When applied to or used to describe/classify/distinguish/motivate living beings, abstractions involve a causal separation-of-otherness; and when worth/value/identity (and exclusion/inclusion) is or are assigned to such a causal separation-of-otherness then there is or there arises hubris.

Abstractions are often assumed to provide some 'knowledge' or some 'understanding' of some-thing assigned to or described by a particular abstraction. For example, in respect of the abstraction of 'race' applied to human beings, and which categorization of human beings describes a median set of values said or assumed to exist 'now' or in some recent historical past.

According to the philosophy of pathei-mathos, this presumption of knowledge and understanding by the application of abstractions to beings - living and otherwise - is false, for abstractions are considered as a primary means by which the nature of Being and beings are and have been concealed, requiring as abstractions do the positing and the continuation of abstractive opposites in relation to Being and the separation of beings from Being by the process of ideation and opposites.

Acausal

The acausal is not a generalization – a concept – deriving from a collocation of assumed, imagined, or causally observed Phainómenon, but instead is that wordless, conceptless, a-temporal, knowing which empathy reveals and which a personal πάθει μάθος and an appreciation of the numinous often inclines us toward. That is, the acausal is a direct and personal (individual) revealing of beings and Being which does not depend on denoting or naming.

What is so revealed is the a-causal nature of some beings, the connexion which exists between living beings, and how living beings are emanations of ψυχή.

Thus speculations and postulations regarding the acausal only serve to obscure the nature of the acausal

or distance us from that revealing of the acausal that empathy and πάθει μάθος and an appreciation of the numinous provide.

ἀρετή

Arête is the prized Hellenic virtue which can roughly be translated by the English word 'excellence' but which also implies what is naturally distinguishable - what is pre-eminent - because it reveals or shows certain valued qualities such as beauty, honour, valour, harmony.

Aristotelian Essentials

The essentials which Aristotle enumerated are: (i) Reality (existence) exists independently of us and our consciousness, and thus independent of our senses; (ii) our limited understanding of this independent 'external world' depends for the most part upon our senses, our faculties - that is, on what we can see, hear or touch; on what we can observe or come to know via our senses; (iii) logical argument, or reason, is perhaps the most important means to knowledge and understanding of and about this 'external world'; (iv) the cosmos (existence) is, of itself, a reasoned order subject to rational laws.

In addition such essentials now include Isaac Newton's first *Rules of Reasoning* which is that

"We are to admit no more causes of natural things than such as are both true and sufficient to explain their appearances. To this purpose the philosophers say that Nature does nothing in vain, and more is in vain when less will serve; for Nature is pleased with simplicity, and affects not the pomp of superfluous causes."

Hence why it is often considered that there are five Aristotelian Essentials

Experimental science seeks to explain the natural world - the phenomenal world - by means of direct, personal observation of it, and by making deductions, and formulating hypothesis, based on such direct observation.

The philosophy of pathei-mathos adds the faculty of empathy - and the knowing so provided by empathy - to these essentials. Part of the knowing that empathy reveals, or can reveal, concerns the nature of Being, of beings, and of Time.

ἁρμονία

ἁρμονία (harmony) is or can be manifest/discovered by an individual cultivating wu-wei and σωφρονεῖν (a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement).

Compassion

The English word compassion dates from around 1340 CE and the word in its original sense (and as used in this work) means benignity, which word derives from the Latin benignitatem, the sense imputed being of a kind, compassionate, well-mannered character, disposition, or deed. Benignity came into English usage around the same time as compassion; for example, the word occurs in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* [ii. 483] written around 1374 CE.

Hence, compassion is understood as meaning being kindly disposed toward and/or feeling a sympathy with someone (or some living being) affected by pain/suffering/grief or who is enduring vicissitudes.

The word compassion itself is derived from com, meaning together-with, combined with pati, meaning to-suffer/to-endure and derived from the classical Latin passiō. Thus useful synonyms for compassion, in this original sense, are compassivity and benignity.

Cosmic Perspective

The Cosmic Perspective refers to our place in the Cosmos, to the fact that we human beings are simply one fragile fallible mortal biological life-form on one planet orbiting one star in one galaxy in a Cosmos of billions of galaxies. Thus in terms of this perspective all our theories, our ideas, our beliefs, our

abstractions are merely the opinionated product of our limited fallible Earth-bound so-called 'intelligence', an 'intelligence', an understanding, we foolishly, arrogantly, pridefully have a tendency to believe in and exalt as if we are somehow 'the centre of the Universe' and cosmically important.

The Cosmic Perspective inclines us – or can incline us – toward wu-wei, toward avoiding the error of hubris, toward humility, and thus toward an appreciation of the numinous.

δαίμων

A δαίμων is not one of the pantheon of major Greek gods – θεοί - but rather a lesser type of divinity who might be assigned by those gods to bring good fortune or misfortune to human beings and/or watch over certain human beings and especially particular numinous (sacred) places.

Denotatum

The term denotatum - from the Latin, denotare - is used in accord with its general meaning which is "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted."

Thus understood, and used as an Anglicized term, denotatum is applicable to both singular and plural instances and thus obviates the need to employ the Latin plural denotata.

Descriptor

A descriptor is a word, a term, used to describe some-thing which exists and which is personally observed, or is discovered, by means of our senses (including the faculty of empathy).

A descriptor differs from an ideation, category, or abstraction, in that a descriptor describes what-is as 'it' is observed, according to its physis (its nature) whereas an abstraction, for example, denotes what is presumed/assumed/idealized, past or present or future. A descriptor relies on, is derived from, describes, individual knowing and individual judgement; an abstraction relies on something abstract, impersonal, such as some opinion/knowing/judgement of others or some assumptions, theory, or hypothesis made by others.

An example of a descriptor is the term 'violent' [using physical force sufficient to cause bodily harm or injury to a person or persons] to describe the observed behaviour of an individual. Another example would be the term 'extremist' to describe - to denote - a person who treats or who has been observed to treat others harshly/violently in pursuit of some supra-personal objective of a political or of a religious nature.

δίκη

Depending on context, δίκη could be the judgement of an individual (or Judgement personified), or the natural and the necessary balance, or the correct/customary/ancestral way, or what is expected due to custom, or what is considered correct and natural, and so on.

A personified Judgement - the Δίκην of Hesiod - is the goddess of the natural balance, evident in the ancestral customs, the ways, the way of life, the ethos, of a community, whose judgement, δίκη, is "in accord with", has the nature or the character of, what tends to restore such balance after some deed or deeds by an individual or individuals have upset or disrupted that balance. This sense of δίκη as one's ancestral customs is evident, for example, in Homer (Odyssey, III, 244).

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, the term Δίκᾱ - spelt thus in a modern way with a capital Δ - is sometimes used to intimate a new, a particular and numinous, philosophical principle, and differentiate Δίκᾱ from the more general δίκη. As a numinous principle, or axiom, Δίκᾱ thus suggests what lies beyond and what was the genesis of δίκη personified as the goddess, Judgement – the goddess of natural balance, of the ancestral way and ancestral customs.

Empathy

Etymologically, this fairly recent English word, used to translate the German Einfühlung, derives, via the late Latin sympathia, from the Greek συμπάθεια - συμπαθής - and is thus formed from the prefix σύν (sym) together with παθ- [root of πάθος] meaning enduring/suffering, feeling: πάσχειν, to endure/suffer.

As used and defined by the philosophy of pathei-mathos, empathy - ἐμπάθεια - is a natural human faculty: that is, a noble intuition about (a revealing of) another human being or another living being. When empathy is developed and used, as envisaged by that way of life, then it is a specific and extended type of συμπάθεια. That is, it is a type of and a means to knowing and understanding another human being and/or other living beings - and thus differs in nature from compassion.

Empathic knowing is different from, but supplementary and complimentary to, that knowing which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

Empathy reveals or can reveal the nature, the ontology (the physis) - sans abstractions/ideations/words - of Being, of beings, and of Time. This revealing is of the the a-causal nature of Being, and of how beings have their genesis in the separation-of-otherness; and thus how we human beings are but causal, mortal, fallible, microcosmic emanations of ψυχή.

Enantiodromia

The unusual compound Greek word ἐναντιοδρομίας occurs in a summary of the philosophy of Heraclitus by Diogenes Laërtius.

Enantiodromia is the term used, in the philosophy of pathei-mathos, to describe the revealing, the process, of perceiving, feeling, knowing, beyond causal appearance and the separation-of-otherness, and thus when what has become separated - or has been incorrectly perceived as separated - returns to the wholeness, the unity, from whence it came forth. When, that is, beings are understood in their correct relation to Being, beyond the causal abstraction of different/conflicting ideated opposites, and when as a result, a reformation of the individual, occurs. A relation, an appreciation of the numinous, that empathy and pathei-mathos provide, and which relation and which appreciation the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals over millennia have made us aware of or tried to inform us or teach us about.

An important and a necessary part of enantiodromia involves a discovery, a knowing, an acceptance, and - as prelude - an interior balancing within individuals, of what has hitherto been perceived and designated as the apparent opposites described by terms (descriptors) such as 'muliebral' and 'masculous'.

The balance attained by - which is - enantiodromia is that of simply feeling, accepting, discovering, the empathic, the human, the personal, scale of things and thus understanding our own fallibility-of-knowing, our limitations as a human being

ἔρις

Strife; discord; disruption; a quarrel between friends or kin. As in the Odyssey:

ἢ τ' ἔριν Ἀτρεΐδῃσι μετ' ἀμφοτέροισιν ἔθηκε.

Who placed strife between those two sons of Atreus

Odyssey, 3, 136

According to the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, ἔρις was caused by, or was a consequence of, the marriage between a personified πόλεμος (as the δαίμων of kindred strife) and a personified ὕβρις (as the δαίμων of arrogant pride) with Polemos rather forlornly following Hubris around rather than vice versa. Eris is thus the child of Polemos and Hubris.

Extremism

By extreme is meant to be harsh, so that an extremist is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious nature. Here, harsh is: rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic.

Hence extremism is considered to be: (a) the result of such harshness, and (b) the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists. In addition, a fanatic is considered to be someone with a surfeit of zeal or whose enthusiasm for some objective, or for some cause, is intemperate.

In the terms of the philosophy/way of pathei-mathos, an extremist is someone who commits the error of

hubris; and error which enantiodromia - following from πάθει μάθος - can sometimes correct or forestall. The genesis of extremism - be such extremism personal, or described as political or religious - is when the separation-of-otherness is used as a means of personal and collective identity and pride, with some 'others' - or 'the others' - assigned to a category considered less worthy than the category we assign ourselves and 'our kind/type' to.

Extremist ideologies manifest an unbalanced, an excessive, masculous nature.

εὐταξία

The quality, the virtue, of self-restraint, of a balanced, well-mannered conduct especially under adversity or duress, of which Cicero wrote:

Haec autem scientia continentur ea, quam Graeci εὐταξίαν nominant, non hanc, quam interpretamur modestiam, quo in verbo modus inest, sed illa est εὐταξία, in qua intellegitur ordinis conservatio

Those two qualities are evident in that way described by the Greeks as εὐταξίαν although what is meant by εὐταξία is not what we mean by the moderation of the moderate, but rather what we consider is restrained behaviour...
[My translation]

De Officiis, Liber Primus, 142

Honour

The English word honour dates from around 1200 CE, deriving from the Latin honorem (meaning refined, grace, beauty) via the Old French (and thence Anglo-Norman) onor/onur. As used by The Way of Pathei-Mathos, honour means an instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous. An honourable person is thus someone of manners, fairness, natural dignity, and valour.

In respect of early usage of the term, two quotes may be of interest. The first, from c. 1393 CE, is taken from a poem, in Middle English, by John Gower:

And riht in such a maner wise
Sche bad thei scholde hire don servise,
So that Achilles underfongeth
As to a yong ladi belongeth
Honour, servise and reverence.

John Gower, Confessio Amantis. Liber Quintus vv. 2997-3001 [Macaulay, G.C., ed. The Works of John Gower. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1901]

The second is from several centuries later:

" Honour - as something distinct from mere probity, and which supposes in gentlemen a stronger abhorrence of perfidy, falsehood, or cowardice, and a more elevated and delicate sense of the dignity of virtue, than are usually found in vulgar minds."

George Lyttelton. History of the Life of Henry the Second. London, Printed for J. Dodsley. M DCC LXXV II [1777] (A new ed., cor.) vol 3, p.178

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, the personal virtue of honour is considered to be a presencing, a grounding, an expression, of ψυχή - of Life, of our φύσις - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη. That is, as a means to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἁρμονίη.

Humility

Humility is used, in a spiritual context, to refer to that gentleness, that modest demeanour, that understanding, which derives from an appreciation of the numinous and also from one's own admitted uncertainty of knowing and one's acknowledgement of past mistakes. An uncertainty of knowing, an acknowledgement of mistakes, that often derive from πάθει μάθος.

Humility is thus the natural human balance that offsets the unbalance of hubris (ὕβρις) - the balance that offsets the unbalance of pride and arrogance, and the balance that offsets the unbalance of that certainty of knowing which is one basis for extremism, for extremist beliefs, for fanaticism and intolerance. That is, humility is a manifestation of the natural balance of Life; a restoration of ἁρμονίη, of δίκη, of σωφρονεῖν - of those qualities and virtues - that hubris and extremism, that ἔρις and πόλεμος, undermine, distance us from, and replace.

Ideation

To posit or to construct an ideated form - an assumed perfect (ideal) form or category or abstraction - of some-thing, based on the belief or the assumption that what is observed by the senses, or revealed by observation, is either an 'imperfect copy' or an approximation of that thing, which the additional assumption that such an ideated form contains or in some way expresses (or can express) 'the essence' or 'the ethos' of that thing and of similar things.

Ideation also implies that the ideated form is or can be or should be contrasted with what it considered or assumed to be its 'opposite'.

Immediacy-of-the-Moment

The term the 'immediacy-of-the-moment' describes both (i) the nature and the extent of the acausal knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos provide, and (ii) the nature and extent of the morality of the philosophy of pathei-mathos.

Empathy, for example, being a natural and an individual faculty, is limited in range and application, just as our faculties of sight and hearing are limited in range and application. These limits extend to only what is direct, immediate, and involve personal interactions with other humans or with other living beings. There is therefore, for the philosophy of pathei-mathos, an 'empathic scale of things' and an acceptance of our limitations of personal knowing and personal understanding. An acceptance of (i) the unwisdom, the hubris, of arrogantly making assumptions about who and what are beyond the range of our empathy and outside of our personal experience/beyond the scope of our pathei-mathos.

Morality, for the philosophy of pathei-mathos, is a result of individuals using the faculty of empathy; a consequence of the insight and the understanding (the acausal knowing) that empathy provides for individuals in the immediacy-of-the-moment. Thus, morality is considered to reside not in some abstract theory or some moralistic schemata presented in some written text which individuals have to accept and try and conform or aspire to, but rather in personal virtues - such as such as compassion and fairness, and εὐταξία - that arise or which can arise naturally through empathy, πάθει μάθος, and thus from an awareness and appreciation of the numinous.

Innocence

Innocence is regarded as an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us, are therefore unjudged us by and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence of others - until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise - is the fair, the reasoned, the numinous, the human, thing to do.

Empathy and πάθει μάθος incline us toward treating other human beings as we ourselves would wish to be treated; that is they incline us toward fairness, toward self-restraint, toward being well-mannered, and toward an appreciation and understanding of innocence.

Masculous

Masculous is a term, a descriptor, used to refer to certain traits, abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with men, such as competitiveness, aggression, a certain harshness, the desire to organize/control, and a desire for adventure and/or for conflict/war/violence /competition over and above personal love and culture. Extremist ideologies manifest an unbalanced, an excessive, masculous nature.

Masculous is from the Latin masculus and occurs, for example, in some seventeenth century works such as one by William Struther: "This is not only the language of Canaan, but also the masculous Schiboleth."

True Happines, or, King Davids Choice: Begunne In Sermons, And Now Digested Into A Treatise.
Edinbvrgh, 1633

Muliebral

The term muliebral derives from the classical Latin word muliebris, and in the context the philosophy of Pathei-Mathos refers to those positive traits, abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with women, such as empathy, sensitivity, gentleness, compassion, and a desire to love and be loved over and above a desire for conflict/adventure/war.

Numinous

The numinous is what manifests or can manifest or remind us of (what can reveal) the natural balance of ψυχή; a balance which ὕβρις upsets. This natural balance - our being as human beings - is or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful. In a practical way, it is what predisposes us not to commit ὕβρις, and thus what we regard or come to appreciate as 'sacred' and dignified; what expresses our developed humanity and thus places us, as individuals, in our correct relation to ψυχή, and which relation is that we are but one mortal emanation of ψυχή.

See Appendix II - From Mythoi To Empathy: A New Appreciation Of The Numinous - for more details.

Pathei-Mathos

The Greek term πάθει μάθος derives from The Agamemnon of Aeschylus (written c. 458 BCE), and can be interpreted, or translated, as meaning learning from adversary, or wisdom arises from (personal) suffering; or personal experience is the genesis of true learning.

When understood in its Aeschylean context, it implies that for we human beings pathei-mathos possesses a numinous, a living, authority. That is, the understanding that arises from one's own personal experience - from formative experiences that involve some hardship, some grief, some personal suffering - is often or could be more valuable to us (more alive, more relevant, more meaningful) than any doctrine, than any religious faith, than any words/advice one might hear from someone else or read in some book.

Thus, pathei-mathos, like empathy, offers we human beings a certain conscious understanding, a knowing; and, when combined, pathei-mathos and empathy are or can be a guide to wisdom, to a particular conscious knowledge concerning our own nature (our physis), our relation to Nature, and our relation to other human beings, leading to an appreciation of the numinous and an appreciation of virtues such as humility and εὐταξία.

Politics

By the term politics is meant both of the following, according to context. (i) The theory and practice of governance, with governance itself founded on two fundamental assumptions; that of some minority - a government (elected or unelected), some military authority, some oligarchy, some ruling elite, some tyrannos, or some leader - having or assuming authority (and thus power and influence) over others, and with that authority being exercised over a specific geographic area or territory. (ii) The activities of those individuals or groups whose aim or whose intent is to obtain and exercise some authority or some control over - or to influence - a society or sections of a society by means which are organized and directed toward changing/reforming that society or sections of a society in accordance with a particular ideology.

Πόλεμος

Heraclitus fragment 80

Πόλεμος is not some abstract 'war' or strife or kampf, but rather that which is or becomes the genesis of beings from Being (the separation of beings from Being), and thus not only that which manifests as δίκη but also accompanies ἔρις because it is the nature of Πόλεμος that beings, born because of and by ἔρις, can be returned to Being, become bound together - be whole - again by enantiodromia.

According to the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, ἔρις was caused by, or was a consequence of, the marriage between a personified πόλεμος (as the δαίμων of kindred strife) and a personified ὕβρις (as the δαίμων of arrogant pride) with Polemos rather forlornly following Hubris around

rather than vice versa. Thus Eris is the child of Polemos and Hubris.

Furthermore, Polemos was originally the δαίμων (not the god) of kindred strife, whether familial, of friends, or of one's πόλις (one's clan and their places of dwelling). Thus, to describe Polemos, as is sometimes done, as the god of war, is doubly incorrect.

Physis (φύσις)

See Appendix IV: The Concept Of Physis.

Religion

By religion is meant organized worship, devotion, and faith, where there is: (i) a belief in some deity/deities, or in some supreme Being or in some supra-personal power who/which can reward or punish the individual, and (ii) a distinction made between the realm of the sacred/the-gods/God/the-revered and the realm of the ordinary or the human.

The term organized here implies an established institution, body or group - or a plurality of these - who or which has at least to some degree codified the faith and/or the acts of worship and devotion, and which is accepted as having some authority or has established some authority among the adherents. This codification can relate to accepting as authoritative certain writings and/or a certain book or books.

Separation-of-Otherness

The separation-of-otherness is a term used to describe the implied or assumed causal separateness of living beings, a part of which is the distinction we make (instinctive or otherwise) between our self and the others. Another part is assigning our self, and the-others, to (or describing them and us by) some category/categories, and to which category/categories we ascribe (or to which category/categories has/have been ascribed) certain qualities or attributes.

Given that a part of such ascription/denoting is an assumption or assumptions of worth/value/difference and of inclusion/exclusion, the separation-of-otherness is the genesis of hubris; causes and perpetuates conflict and suffering; and is a path away from ἁρμονία, δίκη, and thus from wisdom.

The separation-of-otherness conceals the nature of Beings and beings; a nature which empathy and pathei-mathos can reveal.

Society

By the term society is meant a collection of people who live in a specific geographic area or areas and whose association or interaction is mostly determined by a shared set of guidelines or principles or beliefs, irrespective of whether these are written or unwritten, and irrespective of whether such guidelines/principles/beliefs are willingly accepted or accepted on the basis of acquiescence. These shared guidelines or principles or beliefs often tend to form an ethos and a culture and become the basis for what is considered moral (and good) and thence become the inspiration for laws and/or constitutions.

As used here, the term refers to 'modern societies' (especially those of the modern West).

σωφρονεῖν

I use σωφρονεῖν (sophronein) in preference to σωφροσύνη (sophrosyne) since sophrosyne has acquired an English interpretation - "soundness of mind, moderation" - which in my view distorts the meaning of the original Greek. As with my use of the term πάθει μάθος (pathei-mathos) I use σωφρονεῖν in an Anglicized manner with there thus being no necessity to employ inflective forms.

State

By the term The State is meant:

The concept of both (1) organizing and controlling - over a particular and large geographical area - land

(and resources); and (2) organizing and controlling individuals over that same geographical particular and large geographical area by: (a) the use of physical force or the threat of force and/or by influencing or persuading or manipulating a sufficient number of people to accept some leader/cliue/minority /representatives as the legitimate authority; (b) by means of the central administration and centralization of resources (especially fiscal and military); and (c) by the mandatory taxation of personal income.

The Good

For the philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, 'the good' is considered to be what is fair; what alleviates or does not cause suffering; what is compassionate; what is honourable; what is reasoned and balanced. This knowing of the good arises from the (currently underused and undeveloped) natural human faculty of empathy, and which empathic knowing is different from, supplementary and complimentary to, that knowing which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

Time

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, Time is considered to be an expression of the nature - the φύσις - of beings, and thus, for living beings, is a variable emanation of ψυχή, differing from being to being, and representing how that living being can change (is a fluxion) or may change or has changed, which such change (such fluxions) being a-causal.

Time - as conventionally understood and as measured/represented by a terran-calendar with durations marked days, weeks, and years - is therefore regarded as an abstraction, and an abstraction which tends to conceal the nature of living beings.

ὑβρις

ὑβρις (hubris) is the error of personal insolence, of going beyond the proper limits set by: (a) reasoned (balanced) judgement - σωφρονεῖν - and by (b) an awareness, a personal knowing, of the numinous, and which knowing of the numinous can arise from empathy and πάθει μάθος.

Hubris upsets the natural balance - is contrary to ἁρμονίη [harmony] - and often results from a person or persons striving for or clinging to some causal abstraction.

According to The Way of Pathei-Mathos, ὑβρις disrupts - and conceals - our appreciation of what is numinous and thus of what/whom we should respect, classically understood as ψυχή and θεοί and Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες and δαίμόνων and those sacred places guarded or watched over by δαίμόνων.

Way

The philosophy of pathei-mathos makes a distinction between a religion and a spiritual Way of Life. One of the differences being that a religion requires and manifests a codified ritual and doctrine and a certain expectation of conformity in terms of doctrine and ritual, as well as a certain organization beyond the local community level resulting in particular individuals assuming or being appointed to positions of authority in matters relating to that religion. In contrast, Ways are more diverse and more an expression of a spiritual ethos, of a customary, and often localized, way of doing certain spiritual things, with there generally being little or no organization beyond the community level and no individuals assuming - or being appointed by some organization - to positions of authority in matters relating to that ethos.

Religions thus tend to develop an organized regulatory and supra-local hierarchy which oversees and appoints those, such as priests or religious teachers, regarded as proficient in spiritual matters and in matters of doctrine and ritual, whereas adherents of Ways tend to locally and informally and communally, and out of respect and a personal knowing, accept certain individuals as having a detailed knowledge and an understanding of the ethos and the practices of that Way.

Many spiritual Ways have evolved into religions.

Wisdom

Wisdom is both the ability of reasoned - a balanced - judgement, σωφρονεῖν, a discernment; and a particular conscious knowledge concerning our own nature, and our relation to Nature, to other life and other human beings: rerum divinarum et humanarum. Part of this knowledge is of how we human beings are often balanced between honour and dishonour; balanced between ὕβρις and ἀρετή; between our animalistic desires, our passions, and our human ability to be noble, to morally develop ourselves; a balance manifest in our known ability to be able to control, to restrain, ourselves, and thus find and follow a middle way, of ἀρμονίη.

Wu-wei

Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in The Way of Pathei-Mathos/The Numinous Way to refer to a personal 'letting-be' deriving from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, their φύσις, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive - that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous.

In practice, the knowledge, the understanding, the intuition, the insight that is wu-wei is a knowledge, an understanding, that can be acquired from empathy, πάθει μάθος, and by a knowing of and an appreciation of the numinous. This knowledge and understanding is of wholeness, and that life, things/beings, change, flow, exist, in certain natural ways which we human beings cannot change however hard we might try; that such a hardness of human trying, a belief in such hardness, is unwise, un-natural, upsets the natural balance and can cause misfortune/suffering for us and/or for others, now or in the future. Thus success lies in discovering the inner nature (the physis) of things/beings/ourselves and gently, naturally, slowly, working with this inner nature, not striving against it.

ψυχή

Life qua being. Our being as a living existent is considered an emanation of ψυχή. Thus ψυχή is what 'animates' us and what gives us our nature, φύσις, as human beings. Our nature is that of a mortal fallible being veering between σωφρονεῖν (thoughtful reasoning, and thus fairness) and ὕβρις.

Appendix VIII

Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition

The Numinous And Denotata

The intuition, the personal experiencing, of the numinous is in my fallible opinion of fundamental importance in understanding our physis (φύσις) as human beings and our relation to Being, the source of beings, sentient or otherwise.

As I noted in my 2018 essay *From Mythoi To Empathy* [1], the term numinous derives from the classical Latin numen and denotes "a reverence for the divine; a divinity; divine power" with the word numen assimilated into English in the 15th century, with the English use of 'numinous' dating from the middle of the 17th century and used to signify "of or relating to a numen; revealing or indicating the presence of a divinity; divine, spiritual."

It thus has a wider meaning than that ascribed to it by Rudolf Otto in his *Das Heilige*. For him, it was manifest in the written words - 'the revelation' - of the Old and New Testaments of Christianity (qv. *Das Heilige*, chapters X, XI) as well as in Christian exegesis manifest in the preaching of individuals such as Martin Luther (*Das Heilige*, chapter XII) and in religious terms it involved 'worship' (*Das Heilige*, chapter XIII ff) and in philosophical terms was described by Kant's a priori (*Das Heilige*, chapter XVII). Yet Otto also wrote that it was sui generis, a personal emotion or feeling.

The wider meaning of the numinous results from our faculty of empathy which provides or can provide an

individual intuition - a wordless-knowing or awareness - of the numinous, and as a personal human faculty empathy has a personal horizon and thus cannot be extrapolated from such a personal knowing into some-thing supra-personal be this some-thing denotata, including an ἰδέα/εἶδος, [2] or an axiom (ἀρχή) or a source (αἴτιος) for some 'revelation' or ideology or similar manifestations constructed by and dependent on appellation. In the case of a 'revelation' the source is often named as God or a god/the god (θεός, ὁ θεός) who or which are often described by a myth or mythoi.

For such extrapolation by the very nature of - the causality inherent in - denotata results in eris, a discord of opposites: for every denotatum has or develops an opposite and thus can cleave physis, as Heraclitus poetically and somewhat enigmatically expressed:

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος αἰὲ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν εἰκόσιν, πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῖμαι κατὰ φύσιν διαιρέων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅπως ἔχει· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους λαμβάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὖδοντες ἐπιλαμβάνονται. [3]

Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done. [4]

εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἐόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα <χρεών> [5]

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord δίκη, and that beings are naturally born by discord. [6]

80 [62] Orig. c. Cels. VI 42 p. 111, 11 *εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἐόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα [χρεών?].*

Thus δίκη is the natural balance of conflicting opposites and thus an ancestral way of reconciliation or of resolving conflict, often misunderstood as a 'unity of opposites' with a dialectic of opposites with its inherent causality thus mistakenly considered a means to understanding, development and a believed in concept of necessary change.

The notion of discord so being born by denotata sundering physis is also and perhaps better expressed by Anaximander who like Heraclitus has been much misunderstood:

ἐξ ὧν δὲ ἡ γένεσις ἐστὶ τοῖς οὖσι, καὶ τὴν φθορὰν εἰς ταῦτα γίνεσθαι κατὰ τὸ χρεών· διδόναι γὰρ αὐτὰ δίκην καὶ τίσιν ἀλλήλοις τῆς ἀδικίας κατὰ τὴν τοῦ χρόνου τάξιν [7]

Where beings have their origin there also they cease to exist: offering payment to balance, one to another, their unbalance for such is the arrangement of what is passing. [8]

Which expresses the causality inherent in the beings - existents, ἰδέα/εἶδος - that denotata brings-into-being. They are unbalanced, and since they are causal entities will sooner or later pass away even though in their living through the thoughts and actions of mortals they usually manifest and bring-into-being discord: hence why Heraclitus wrote εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἐόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν.

This is in contrast to the individual wordless-knowing that empathy brings-into-being, and explains the fundamental flaw of Plato's ἔλεγχος which led for example to him having Protagoras saying that the poet Simonides does not speak 'correctly', οὐκ ὀρθῶς λέγει [9] even though poetry could possibly be - as an intimation of the numinous - an attempt to wordfully presence what causal abstractions conceal, with the attempt by Socrates to dispute such an assertion by Protagoras seeming to fail. [10]

Which is perhaps why Aristotle (Metaphysics, 982β) quoted a saying attributed to Simonides: θεός ἄν μόνος τοῦτ' ἔχοι γέρας which follows ἄνδρ' ἀγαθὸν μὲν ἀλαθέως γενέσθαι,

It is hard to be a purely noble person [...] a god alone has that privilege [11]

With the context of Aristotle's quotation his statement, ὅτι μὲν οὖν ἡ σοφία περὶ τινος ἀρχὰς καὶ αἰτίας ἐστὶν ἐπιστήμη, δῆλον. Metaphysics, 982α

It is evident that sapientia is a knowing of axioms and of sources [12]

and because

ἀλλ' οὔτε τὸ θεῖον φθονερὸν ἐνδέχεται εἶναι, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὴν παροιμίαν πολλὰ ψεύδονται ἄοιδοί, οὔτε τῆς τοιαύτης ἄλλην χρὴ νομίζειν τιμιωτέραν. ἡ γὰρ θειοτάτη καὶ τιμιωτάτη: τοιαύτη δὲ διχῶς ἂν εἴη μόνη: ἦν τε γὰρ μάλιστ' ἂν ὁ θεὸς ἔχοι, θεία τῶν ἐπιστημῶν ἐστί, καὶ εἴ τις τῶν θείων εἴη. Metaphysics, 983α

it is not possible for the divine to be envious; indeed, as the maxim goes: songsters make many a false claim; nor should any other [epistēmê] be considered the more honourable, for it is divine because honourable in just two ways: if epistēmê is of the divinity or of the divine. [13]

Which returns us to whether some poetry such as the lyric attributed to Simonides as preserved by Plato can, for we mortals, be an intimation of the numinous, as some music - such as the counterpoint of JS Bach - is believed by many musicians and others to be.

If we presume to substitute 'the numinous' for 'the divine' and for 'the divinity' (the theos) then an epistēmê is τίμιος - honourable, precious, worthy, prized - if it is of, if it presences, the numinous; and it is interesting to note that, well over a thousand years after Aristotle, τίμιος in the Greek Orthodox tradition implies 'holy' as in Τίμιος Σταυρός, the Holy Cross.

In addition, as Aristotle - citing an ancient maxim - writes: παροιμίαν πολλὰ ψεύδονται ἄοιδοί, 'songsters make many a false claim', and that because of both the nature of denotata and our physis as human beings.

Empathy, The Hermetic Tradition, And Our Human Physis

The reality of empathy in relation to the numinous is two-fold - jumelle, as is our physis as human beings according to the Corpus Hermeticism - because although a means to appreciate, to discover, to feel, to know, the numinous without the need for mythoi, denotata and the associated exegesis, dialectic and discord, it is unappreciated, underdeveloped.

° Empathy is unappreciated, because of our physis: as is explained using Greek mythoi and in terms of the mystic hermetic tradition, in the Poemander tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum:

"distinct among all other beings on Earth, mortals are jumelle; deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal. Yet, although deathless and possessing full authority, the human is still subject to wyrd. Hence, although over the harmonious structure, when within become the slave. Male-and-female since of a male-and-female father, and wakeful since of a wakeful one [...] This is a mysterium esoteric even to this day." [14]

This is further explained, again using Greek mythoi and in terms of the hermetic tradition, in tractate XI, which returns us to Aristotelian honour and takes us to where σοφία - qv. the quotation from Metaphysics, 982α above - is personified and explained as manifesting the noble, the beautiful, good fortune (εὐδαιμονία), arête, and Aion:

"The foundation of all being is theos; of their quidditas, Aion; of their substance, Kosmos. The craft of theos: Aion; the work of Aion: Kosmos, which is not just a coming-into-being but always is, from Aion. Thus it cannot be destroyed since Aion is not destroyable nor will Kosmos cease to be since Aion surrounds it.

But the Sophia of theos is what?

The noble, the beautiful, good fortune, arête, and Aion. From Aion to Kosmos: exemption from death, and continuance of substance.

For that geniture depends on Aion just as Aion does on theos. Geniture and Kronos - in the heavens and on Earth - are jumelle; in the heavens, unchanging and undecaying; yet on Earth, changeable and decayable.

Theos is the psyche of Aion; Aion that of Kosmos; the heavens that of the Earth. Theos is presenced in perceivration, with perceivration presenced in psyche, and psyche in substance, with all of this through Aion, with the whole body, in which are all the bodies, replete with psyche with psyche replete with perceivration and with theos. Above in the heavens the identity is unchanged while on Earth there is changement coming-into-being

Aion maintains this, through necessitas or through foreseeing or through physis, or through whatever other assumption we assume, for all this is the activity of theos. For the activity of theos is an unsurpassable crafting that no one can liken to anything mortal or divine [...]

Observe also the septenary cosmos ordered in arrangement by Aion with its separate aeonic orbits.

Everything replete with phaos but with no Fire anywhere. For fellowship, and the melding of opposites and the dissimilar, produced phaos shining forth in the activity of theos, progenitor of all that is honourable, archon and hegemon of the septenary cosmos." [15]

The essence of which, beyond mythoi, is (i) that our physis is both "male-and-female since of a male-and-female father" and (ii) that the numinous can be apprehended, presenced, by and through "the noble, the beautiful, good fortune, arête and Aion," with Aion understood as the eikon (εἰκὼν) of the Kosmos [16] and - qv. Tractate XI, 2-4 - the cause of changement coming-into-being on Earth and thus of what is changeable and decayable and thus dies.

Which changement coming-into-being, and its change and eventual decay applies, in the perspective of Aeons - of millennia - to denotata and what existents, such as ideologies and organized hierarchical religions, denotata has brought-into-being.

° Empathy is underdeveloped because it seems that for millennia we mortals - or more specifically, perhaps a majority of the males of our species - have neglected the reality of our physis being jumelle: both male-and-female, both masculous and muliebral, with such muliebral physis the geneture of empathy. [18] As described in terms of Greek mythoi and the hermetic tradition in the Pœmandres Tractate in relation to the seven spheres:

"Those seven came into being in this way. Earth was muliebral, Water was lustful, and Fire maturing. From Æther, the pneuma, and with Physis bringing forth human-shaped bodies. Of Life and phaos, the human came to be of psyche and perceivration; from Life - psyche; from phaos - perceivration; and with everything in the observable cosmic order cyclic until its completion.

Now listen to the rest of the explanation you asked to hear. When the cycle was fulfilled, the connexions between all things were, by the deliberations of theos, unfastened. Living beings - all male-and-female then - were, including humans, rent asunder thus bringing into being portions that were masculous with the others muliebral. Directly, then, theos spoke a numinous logos: propagate by propagation and spawn by spawning, all you creations and artiselements, and let the perceiver have the knowledge of being deathless and of Eros as responsible for death.

Having so spoken, foreknowing - through wyrd and that harmonious structure - produced the coagulations and founded the generations with all beings spawning according to their kind. And they of self-knowledge attained a particular benefit while they who, misled by Eros, love the body, roamed around in the dark, to thus, perceptively, be afflicted by death." [19]

The masculous is evident in patriarchy, in patriarchal religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam; in denotata, in dialectical confrontation including Plato's ἑλεγχος, as well as evident in the desire, the masculous need, for competition and for armed and personal conflict. The muliebral is evident in personal virtues such as honour, benignitas, empathy, and wordless personal methodologies such as the epistêmê that is mystical contemplation.

The neglect of empathy is understandable since the masculous - as manifest for example in patriarchy, patriarchal religions, and denotata, codified as denotata has been in the ἰδέα and ideal of Empires and nation-States - has dominated mortal life for millennia to the detriment of the muliebral.

The Uncertitude Of Knowing

Empathy, with its personal horizon, is or can be the geneture of our Uncertitude Of Knowing as human beings, while the masculous is the geneture of that certitude of individual knowing that infuses codified

denotata such as ideologies and organized hierarchical religions.

Thus, in terms of numinosity, empathy presents or can present to us in the immediacy of the personal moment an individual intimation or wordless knowing of the numinous, which intimation or knowing places our mortal life, and all we connect with it or is connected to it, into a supra-personal perspective which is a-causal and of Being itself, the source of beings and all being; of which Being we as a mortal are one finite deathful emanation. Which perspective brings with it or can bring with it the wordless knowing of the unwisdom of words.

Thus, while some mythoi Greek or otherwise, some mystical traditions ancient or otherwise, some poetry and some metaphysical speculations Greek or otherwise, can or may provide some insights into our physis, their wordfull expression or expressions are subject or have been subjected to exegesis, just as written expressions of religious-type revelations always are; with such exegesis more often than not the geniture of a certitude or certitudes of knowing.

Which returns us to the personal wordless knowing of empathy and its discoverable embedded uncertainty of knowing, with personal virtues such as honour and benignitas one means - an ancient epistêmê - to try to live according to such a wordless knowing, with personal honour a melding, a hermetic ἐναντιοδρομία, of masculine and muliebral thus returning us to the physis that was cleaved asunder and which in others is still being cleaved asunder.

According to an ancient saying attributed to Heraclitus which may contain a fallible intimation of this and possibly was one of first written intimations of it:

πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα (Diogenes Laërtius, ix. 7)

All by geniture is appropriately apportioned with beings bound together again by enantiodromia.

ooo

[1] The text is included as Appendix II.

[2] The terms ἰδέα/εἶδος refer to Plato's postulation of what has been termed 'forms' - of a type of metaphysical existent such as an 'idea' - with ἰδέα used for both singular and plural instances, and εἶδος (singular) often used by Plato instead, as for instance at Phaedo 103ε, ὥστε μὴ μόνον αὐτὸ τὸ εἶδος ἀξιοῦσθαι τοῦ αὐτοῦ ὀνόματος εἰς τὸν αἰὲν χρόνον.

In regard to the use of εἶδος and the postulation, cf. Aristotle, Metaphysics, 1078β, 14-15, συνέβη δ' ἡ περὶ τῶν εἰδῶν δόξα τοῖς εἰποῦσι διὰ τὸ πεισθῆναι περὶ τῆς ἀληθείας τοῖς Ἡρακλειτείοις λόγοις ὥς πάντων τῶν αἰσθητῶν αἰὲν ῥεόντων, ὥστ' εἴπερ ἐπιστήμη τινὸς ἔσται καὶ φρόνησις, ἑτέρας δεῖν τινὰς φύσεις εἶναι παρὰ τὰς αἰσθητὰς μενούσας: οὐ γὰρ εἶναι τῶν ῥεόντων ἐπιστήμην.

[3] Fragment 1, Diels-Krantz.

[4] A short commentary on my translation is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/heraclitus-fragment-1/>

[5] Fragment B80.

[6] I have transliterated πόλεμος, and left δίκη as δίκη because both πόλεμος and δίκη should be regarded, like ψυχή (psyche/Psyche) as terms or as principles in their own right (hence the capitalization), and thus imply, suggest, and require, interpretation and explanation. To render them blandly by English terms such as 'war' and 'justice' - which have their own now particular meaning(s) - is in my view erroneous and somewhat lackadaisical, since δίκη for instance could be, depending on context: the custom(s) of a folk, judgement (or Judgement personified), the natural and the necessary balance, the correct/customary/ancestral way, and so on.

[7] Diels-Kranz, 12A9, B1

[8] In respect of χρόνος, it is not here a modern abstract measurable 'time' but 'the passing' of living or events as evident in the Agamemnon:

ποίου χρόνου δὲ καὶ πεπόρθηται πόλις 278

Then - how long has it been since the citadel was ravaged?

τίς δὲ πλὴν θεῶν ἅπαντ' ἀπήμων τὸν δι' αἰῶνος χρόνον 554-5

Who - except for the gods - passes their entire life without any injury at all?

In respect of ἀδικία, here it simply implies unbalance in contrast to the balance that is δίκη. The translation 'disorder' - like 'order' for δίκη - is too redolent of some modern or ancient morality designed to manifest 'order' in contrast to its dialectical opposite 'disorder'.

[9] Protagoras, 339δ

[10] Relevant quotations from Simonides are at 339β, 339ξ and the poem by Simonides that Plato preserved is, in the version by J. Aars, *Das Gedicht des Simonides in Platons Protagoras*, 1888,

Ἄνδρ' ἀγαθὸν μὲν ἀλαθέως γενέσθαι χαλεπὸν,
χερσὶν τε καὶ ποσὶ καὶ νόῳ τετράγωνον, ἄνευ ψόγου τετυγμένον.
<...>
οὐδέ μοι ἐμμελέως τὸ Πιττάκειον νέμεται,
καίτοι σοφοῦ παρὰ φωτὸς εἰρημένον: χαλεπὸν φάτ' ἐσθλὸν ἔμμεναι.
θεὸς ἂν μόνος τοῦτ' ἔχοι γέρας: ἄνδρα δ' οὐκ ἔστι μὴ οὐ κακὸν ἔμμεναι,
ὃν ἀμήχανος συμφορὰ καθέλη.
πράξας μὲν εὖ πᾶς ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός,
κακὸς δ' εἰ κακῶς <τις>,
καὶ τὸ πλεῖστον ἄριστοι, τοὺς κε θεοὶ φιλῶσιν.
τοῦνεκεν οὐ ποτ' ἐγὼ τὸ μὴ γενέσθαι δυνατὸν
διζήμενος κενεὰν ἐς ἄπρακτον ἐλπίδα μοῖραν αἰῶνος βαλέω,
πανάμωμον ἄνθρωπον, εὐρυεδοῦς ὅσοι καρπὸν αἰνύμεθα χθονός:
ἐπὶ δ' ὕμιν εὐρὼν ἀπαγγελέω.
πάντας δ' ἐπαίνημι καὶ φιλέω,
ἐκὼν ὅστις ἔρδη
μηδὲν αἰσχρόν: ἀνάγκη δ' οὐδὲ θεοὶ μάχονται.
<...>
<οὐκ εἰμ' ἐγὼ φιλόμωμος> ἐξαρκεῖ γ' ἐμοί,
ὃς ἂν ἢ κακὸς μηδ' ἄγαν ἀπάλαμνος, εἰδώς γ' ὄνησίπολιν δίκαν,
ὕγιης ἀνὴρ, οὐδὲ μὴ μιν ἐγὼ
μωμήσομαι: τῶν γὰρ ἡλιθίων
ἀπείρων γενέθλα:
πάντα τοι καλὰ, τοῖσί τ' αἰσχρὰ μὴ μέμικται.

The more recent arrangement and reconstruction cited as PMG 242 is somewhat different:

ἄνδρ' ἀγαθὸν μὲν ἀλαθέως γενέσθαι
χαλεπὸν χερσὶν τε καὶ ποσὶ καὶ νόῳ
τετράγωνον, ἄνευ ψόγου τετυγμένον·
<...>
οὐδέ μοι ἐμμελέως τὸ Πιττάκειον
νέμεται, καίτοι σοφοῦ παρὰ φωτὸς εἰ-
ρημένον· χαλεπὸν φάτ' ἐσθλὸν ἔμμεναι.
θεὸς ἂν μόνος τοῦτ' ἔχοι γέρας, ἄνδρα δ' οὐκ
ἔστι μὴ οὐ κακὸν ἔμμεναι,
ὃν ἂν ἀμήχανος συμφορὰ καθέλη·
πράξας μὲν γὰρ εὖ πᾶς ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός,
κακὸς δ' εἰ κακῶς [
[ἐπὶ πλεῖστον δὲ καὶ ἄριστοὶ εἰσιν
[οὓς ἂν οἱ θεοὶ φιλῶσιν.]
τοῦνεκεν οὐ ποτ' ἐγὼ τὸ μὴ γενέσθαι
δυνατὸν διζήμενος κενεὰν ἐς ἄ-

πρακτον ἐλπίδα μοῖραν αἰῶνος βαλέω,
πανάμωμον ἄνθρωπον, εὐρυεδοῦς ὅσοι
καρπὸν αἰνύμεθα χθονός·
ἐπὶ θ' ὑμῖν εὐρῶν ἀπαγγελέω.
πάντας δ' ἐπαίνημι καὶ φιλέω,
ἐκῶν ὅστις ἔρδη
μηδὲν αἰσχρόν: ἀνάγκαι
δ' οὐδὲ θεοὶ μάχονται.

<...>

[οὐκ εἰμὶ φιλόσοφος, ἐπεὶ ἔμοιγ' ἐξαρκεῖ
ὃς ἂν μὴ κακὸς ᾖ] μηδ' ἄγαν ἀπάλαμνος, εἰ-
δώς γ' ὀνησίπολιν δίκαν,
ὕγιής ἀνὴρ: οὐ τμήντ' ἐγὼ
μωμήσομαι· τῶν γὰρ ἡλιθίων
ἀπείρων γενέθλα.
πάντα τοι καλὰ, τοῖσιν
τ' αἰσχρὰ μὴ μέμικται

DL Page, Poetae Melici Graeci, Cambridge University Press, 1962

Such a reconstruction introduces the question of exegesis of not only texts but of such elements as grammar and how the personal revealing that is the wordless-knowing of empathy compares to the supra-personal wordful revealing that can be or has been deduced from written texts, spoken words or methods such as Plato's ἔλεγχος.

[11] Socrates, in Protagoras, does not associate ἀληθής with ἀγαθός but with χαλεπός, which again introduces the question as to whether ἔλεγχος is a guide to the revealing that is ἀλήθεια and thus to understanding our φύσις as human beings.

[12] In respect of αἵτιος, here the term 'sources' is apt since 'cause' can impose a particular interpretation on the text, as in the causality of 'cause and effect'.

In respect of σοφία, the Latin sapientia is apposite, as in my translation of Tractates I and XIII of the Corpus Hermeticum [Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates. 2017 ISBN 978-1976452369] because in some contexts the English word 'wisdom' does not fully reflect the meaning (and the various shades) of σοφία, especially in a metaphysical context given what the English term 'wisdom' now, in common usage and otherwise, often denotes. As in Tractates I and XIII sapientia requires contextual - a philosophical - interpretation.

[13] Regarding my translation:

i) ἐπιστήμη: epistêmê - implying skill or experience, especially in a profession or type of work or in using a methodology - rather than 'science' or 'knowledge', since 'science' has too many modern connotations while 'knowledge' is somewhat vague. In respect of experience in general, qv. Sophocles, Oedipus Tyrannus, 1115: τῇ δ' ἐπιστήμη σύ μου προύχοις τάχ' ἂν που, "about this, your experience has the advantage over mine".

ii) αἰδός: songsters, not poets, qv. Hesiod, Theogony, 95 where it is associated with the Muses and Apollo:

ἐκ γάρ τοι Μουσέων καὶ ἐκηβόλου Ἀπόλλωνος
ἄνδρες αἰδοὶ ἔασιν ἐπὶ χθόνα καὶ κιθαρισταί

iii) [epistêmê] is implied from the previous ἄνδρα δ' οὐκ ἄξιον μὴ οὐ ζητεῖν τὴν καθ' αὐτὸν ἐπιστήμην.

iv) Honourable is an accepted translation of τίμιος, with the English word honour dating from around 1200 and derived from the Latin honorem (refined, grace, beauty) via the Old French (and thence Anglo-Norman) onor/onur. An early use of the term occurs in a poem in Middle English by John Gower dating from c. 1393 which references the Greek warrior Achilles:

And riht in such a maner wise
Sche bad thei scholde hire don servise,
So that Achilles underfongeth

As to a yong ladi belongeth
Honour, servise and reverence.

Confessio Amantis. Liber Quintus vv. 2997-3001 (The Works of John Gower. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1901, edited by G.C Macaulay)

[14] Tractate I, 15-16. From my commentary on that tractate:

jumelle. For διπλοῦς. The much underused and descriptive English word *jumelle* - from the Latin *gemellus* - describes some-thing made in, or composed of, two parts, and is therefore most suitable here [...]

deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal. Θνητὸς μὲν διὰ τὸ σῶμα, ἀθάνατος δὲ διὰ τὸν οὐσιώδη ἄνθρωπον. Here, in respect of my choice of English words, I must admit to being influenced by Chapman's lovely poetic translation of the Hymn to Venus from the Homeric Hymns:

That with a deathless goddess lay a deathful man

In respect of οὐσιώδης, I prefer, given the context, 'inner' - suggestive of 'real' - rather than the conventional 'essential'; although 'vital' is an alternative translation here, suggested by what Eusebius wrote (c.326 CE) about φῶς [phaos] pre-existing even before the cosmic order, with φῶς used by Eusebius to mean Light in the Christian sense:

τό τε φῶς τὸ προκόσμιον καὶ τὴν πρὸ αἰώνων νοερὰν καὶ οὐσιώδη σοφίαν τὸν τε ζῶντα
[Historia Ecclesiastica, Book 1, chapter 2]

The Light of the proto-cosmos, the comprehension and vital wisdom existing before the Aeons

wyrd. For ἡ εἰμαρμένη. A much better choice, here, than either 'fate' or 'destiny' given how overused both those words now are and how their interpretation is also now so varied. An overview of how the concept may have been understood in the late Hellenic period (around the time the *Hermetica* was probably written) is given in the 2nd century CE discourse *De Fato*, attributed to Plutarch, which begins by stating that εἰμαρμένη has been described in two ways, as ἐνέργεια (vigorous activity) and as οὐσία (essence) - πρῶτον τοίνυν ἴσθι, ὅτι εἰμαρμένη διχῶς καὶ λέγεται καὶ νοεῖται: ἡ μὲν γάρ ἐστιν ἐνέργεια ἡ δ' οὐσία

[...]

a mysterium esoteric. For κεκρυμμένον μυστήριον. The term *mysterium* - a truth or insight or knowledge about some-thing, which is considered religious and/or metaphysical ('hermetic') and which is unknown/unrevealed to or as yet undiscovered by others, and hence 'mysterious' to them - expresses the meaning of the Greek here (as the word *mystery* by itself does not). Likewise in respect of *esoteric* - kept concealed or which is concealed/hidden to most or which is revealed to an individual by someone who already 'knows' what the *mysterium* in question is.

Hence why I write *a mysterium* here rather than *the mysterium*, and why "a *mysterium*, esoteric even to this day", is better than the rather bland "the *mystery* kept hidden until this very day".

[15] Tractate XI, 3-7

[16] In respect of *eikon*, as I wrote in my commentary on Tractate I (Pœmandres), 32:

"The meaning and significance of [εἰκὼν] are often overlooked and often lost in translation. I have transliterated εἰκὼν as here it does not only mean what the English words 'image' or 'likeness' suggest or imply, but rather it is similar to what Maximus of Constantinople in his *Mystagogia* [Patrologiae Graeca, 91, c.0658] explains. Which is of we humans, and the cosmos, and Nature, and psyche, as eikons, although according to Maximus it is the Christian church itself (as manifest and embodied in Jesus of Nazareth and the Apostles and their successors and in scripture) which, being the *eikon* of God, enables we humans to recognize this, recognize God, be in communion with God, return to God, and thus find and fulfil the meaning of our being, our existence.

According to the hermetic weltanschauung, as outlined by Pœmandres here, all physis - the being, nature, character, of beings - their essence beyond the form/appearance their being is or assumes or is perceived as - re-presents (manifests, is an eikon of) theos. That is, the physis of beings can be considered not only as an emanation of theos but as re-presenting his Being, his essence. To recognize this, to recognize theos, to be in communion with theos, to return to theos, and thus become immortal, there is the way up (anados) through the seven spheres."

[17] The masculous and the muliebral are outlined in Part Four of *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendium*.

[18] The unusual English word geniture expresses the essence of γένεσις: that which or those whom have or derive their being (and their subsequent development) from or because of something else or because of someone else. It also avoids comparisons with the Biblical use of the English 'genesis'.

[19] Tractate I, 18-19.

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A Note On Greek Terms In The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos

As I mentioned in the *A Philosophical Compendiary* chapter of my book *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, my philosophy of pathei-mathos has connexions to the culture of ancient Greece, exemplified by the many Greek terms and phrases I use in an attempt to express certain philosophical concepts. Such use of such terms also serves to intimate that my philosophy has some connexion to the Graeco-Roman mystical, and paganus, traditions, one of which traditions is outlined in the *Ἐρὸς Λόγος* tractate of the *Corpus Hermeticum* where it is written that

"...every psyche - embodied in flesh - can
By the mirificence of the circumferent deities coursing the heavens
Apprehend the heavens, and honour, and physis presenced, and the works of theos;
Can understand divine influence as wyrdful change
And thus, regarding what is good and what is bad, discover all the arts of honour." [1]

Furthermore, I also - and perhaps (as you mention) somewhat confusingly - use certain Greek and Latin terms in a specific way, such that the meaning I assign to them is not necessarily identical to how they were understood in classical times or the same as the meaning ascribed to them in modern Greek and Latin lexicons. A few examples being συμπαθεια, δίκη, φύσις, ἁρμονία, perfectus, ἅγιος, and σωφρονεῖν.

Thus I understand ἅγιος - qv. my translation of and commentary on the *Poemandres* tractate of the *Corpus Hermeticum* - not as the conventional 'holy'/sacred but rather as implying the numinous/numinosity, for I incline toward the view that the English words holy and sacred have too many modern connotations, Christian and otherwise, whereas numinous/numinosity still have the advantage of being religiously neutral and thus can intimate what an ancient paganus tradition may well have intimated. Hence also why and for example I in that tractate chose to translate ἀρχέτυπον εἶδος as 'quidditas of semblance' [2] rather than use (as some other translators have) an expression that included the word 'archetype' since that word has modern connotations that detract from (that can falsify) the meaning of the original Greek.

Another example, from the many, is φύσις which I use contextually to refer to not only its Homeric and later Aristotelian sense - of personal character, Nature, and the unfolding/change of being, respectively [3] - but also to what I have philosophically described as the unity (the being/Being) beyond the division of our φύσις, as individual mortals, into masculous and muliebral and a division we have made via abstractions (including 'forms'; the ἰδέα/εἶδος of Plato) and denotatum.

Yet another example is σωφρονεῖν which I use - in preference to σωφρονέω/σωφροσύνη - as a synonym for "a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement" (that is, thoughtful reasoning, or wisdom) whereas in classical and Hellenic terms the expression should be τὸ σωφρονεῖν/εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν which imply 'to be discreet (Ag. 1425), being moderate, having good judgement', and so on. Here, as with Δίκη (in preference to δίκη) I have used a form or variant of a specific Greek word in order to suggest a modern philosophical meaning (or principle) and differentiate it from the conventional lexicographic meaning. But it would perhaps, with the hindsight of some years, have been better to avoid confusion and instead given and then used transliterations - sophronein, Dika - as I did (following the example of Jung) with ἐναντιοδομίας/enantiodromia. That is, using the transliterations as Anglicized terms, as I do with my usage of πάθει μάθος - especially when the transliteration is employed - for such Anglicized terms do not follow the correct Greek grammatical (inflective) usage, with my writings thus employing expressions such as "a pathei-mathos", "that pathei-mathos", "which pathei-mathos", "our accumulated pathei-mathos", "my pathei-mathos", and of course "the philosophy of pathei-mathos".

In other words, my usage of some Greek terms - and the meaning I assign to some others - is somewhat idiosyncratic, often philosophical; and although I have endeavoured to explain my usage and meaning in essays and commentaries, obviously this has not always been successful or as pedantic as it perhaps should have been.

Thus when I, some years ago now, first published my translation of fragment 1 of Heraclitus - without commentary - it led to a Greek scholar, then in Oxford, to ask about my seeming neglect of ἀεὶ. In correspondence I explained my usage, later incorporating part of that correspondence into a brief commentary which I appended to the translation, writing in the commentary that "in my view, *tend* to captures the poetic sense of ἀεὶ here. That is, the literal - the bland, strident - 'always' is discarded in favour of a more Heraclitean expression of human beings having an apparently rather irreconcilable tendency - both now and as in the past - to ignore (or forget or not understand) certain things, even after matters have been explained to them (they have heard the explanation) and even after they have discovered certain truths for themselves." [4]

Therefore, and as I mentioned in the introduction to my *Poemandres*, some may well consider the words of Diogenes Laertius about Plato - *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 3.1 (64) - apposite in relation to my idiosyncratic use of some Greek terms:

χρῆται δὲ ὁ Πλάτων ἐνίοτε αὐτῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ κακοῦ: ἔστι δ' ὅτε καὶ
ἐπὶ τοῦ μικροῦ. πολλάκις δὲ καὶ διαφέρουσιν ὀνόμασιν ἐπὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ
σημαιομένου χρῆται.

David Myatt
2015

Extract from a letter to an academic correspondent, with footnotes added post scriptum.

[1] My translation, from *Ἱερός Λόγος: An Esoteric Mythos. A Translation Of And A Commentary On The Third Tractate Of The Corpus Hermeticum*. 2015.

[2] Quidditas being 11th/12th century post-classical Latin, from whence derived the scholastic term 'quiddity'.

[3] *Towards Understanding Physis*. The essay is included in *Sarigthersa: Some Recent Essays*. 2015.

[4] "Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done."

The translation - together with the Greek text and a brief commentary - is included as an appendix to *Towards Understanding Physis*.



Education And The Culture Of Pathei-Mathos

One of the many subjects that I have pondered upon in the last few years is the role of education and whether a learning of our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos – understood and appreciated as a distinct culture [1], and thence as an academic subject – could possibly aid us, as a species, to change; aid us to become more honourable, more compassionate, less egoistical, less violent, as individuals, and thus aid us to possibly avoid in our own lives those hubriatic errors, and causing the suffering, that the culture of pathei-mathos reveals are not only unethical but also which we humans make and cause and have made and caused again and again and again. That is, can a knowledge and appreciation of this culture, perhaps learnt individually and/or in institutions such as schools and colleges, provide with us with that empathic, supra-personal, perspective which I personally – as a result of my own learning and experiences – am inclined to feel could change, evolve, us not only as individuals but as a species?

Studia Humanitatis

For thousands of years – from the classical world to the Renaissance to fairly recent times – Studia Humanitatis (an appreciation and understanding of our φύσις as human beings) was considered to be the basis of a good, a sound, education.

Thus, for Cicero, Studia Humanitatis implied forming and shaping the manners, the character, and the knowledge, of young people through them acquiring an understanding of subjects such as philosophy, geometry, rhetoric, music, and *litterarum cognitio* (literary culture). This was because the classical weltanschauung was a paganus one: an apprehension of the complete unity (a cosmic order, κόσμος, mundus) beyond the apparent parts of that unity, together with the perceivation that we mortals – albeit a mere and fallible part of the unity – have been gifted with our existence so that we may perceive and understand this unity, and, having so perceived, may ourselves seek to be whole, and thus become as balanced (perfectus) [2], as harmonious, as the unity itself:

Neque enim est quicquam aliud praeter mundum quoi nihil absit quodque undique aptum atque perfectum expletumque sit omnibus suis numeris et partibus [...] ipse autem homo ortus est ad mundum contemplandum et imitandum – nullo modo perfectus, sed est quaedam particula perfecti. [3]

Furthermore, this paganus natural balance implied an acceptance by the individual of certain communal responsibilities and duties; of such responsibilities and duties, and their cultivation, as a natural and necessary part of our existence as mortals.

In the Christian societies of Renaissance Europe, Studia Humanitatis became more limited, to subjects such as history, moral philosophy, poetry, certain classical authors, and Christian writes such as Augustine and Jerome, with the general intent being a self improvement with the important proviso that this concentration on the advancement of the individual to 'noble living' by means of 'noble examples' (classical and Christian) should not conflict with the Christian weltanschauung [4] and its perceivation of obedience to whatever interpretation of Christian faith and eschatology the individual favoured or believed in. In more recent times, Studia Humanitatis has become the academic study of 'the liberal arts', the 'humanities', often as a means to equip an individual with certain personal skills – such as the ability to communicate effectively and to rationally analyse problems – which might be professionally useful in later life.

However, the culture of pathei-mathos provides an addition to the aforementioned Studia Humanitatis, and an addition where the focus is not on a particular weltanschauung (paganus, Christian, liberal, or humanist) but rather on our shared pathei-mathos: on what we and others have learnt, and can learn, about our human φύσις from experience of grief, suffering, trauma, injustice. For it is such personal learning from experience, or the records of or the influence of the experiences of others, which is not only the essence of much of what we, and others for thousands of years, have appreciated and learned from some of the individual subjects or fields of learning that formed the basis for the aforementioned Studia Humanitatis – history, *litterarum cognitio*, and music, for example – but also what, at least in my view, provides us with perhaps the deepest, but most certainly with the most poignant, insight into our φύσις as human beings.

Thus considered as an individual subject or field of learning, academic or otherwise, the culture of pathei-mathos would most certainly help to form and shape the manners, the character, the knowledge, of young people, for it has the potential to provide us with a perception and an understanding of the supra-personal unity – the mundus – of which we are a mortal part, and thus perhaps can aid us to become as inwardly balanced, as harmonious, as the unity beyond and encompassing us, bringing as such a perception, understanding, and balance, does that appreciation and empathic intuition of others which is compassion and aiding as such compassion does the cessation of the suffering that an unbalanced – a hubriatic, egoistical – human φύσις causes and has caused for so many millennia.

Can we therefore, as described in the Pœmandres tractate,

hasten through the harmonious structure, offering up, in the first realm, that vigour which grows and which fades, and – in the second one – those dishonourable machinations, no longer functioning. In the third, that eagerness which deceives, no longer functioning; in the fourth, the arrogance of command, no longer insatiable; in the fifth, profane insolence and reckless haste; in the sixth, the bad inclinations occasioned by riches, no longer functioning; and in the seventh realm, the lies that lie in wait. [5]

For is not to so journey toward the unity "the noble goal of those who seek to acquire knowledge?"

But if we cannot make that or a similar personal journey; if we do not or cannot learn from our human culture of pathei-mathos, from the many thousands of years of such suffering as that culture documents and presents and remembers; if we no longer concern ourselves with *de studiis humanitatis ac litterarum*, then do we as a sentient species deserve to survive? For if we cannot so learn, cannot so change, cannot so educate ourselves, or are not so educated in such subjects, then it seems to me we may never be able to escape to the freedom and the natural evolution, the diversity, that await among the star-systems of our Galaxy. For what awaits us if we, the unlearned, stay unchanged, are only repetitions of the periodicity of human-caused suffering until such time as we exhaust, lay waste, make extinct, our cultures, our planet, and finally ourselves. And no other sentient life, elsewhere in the Cosmos, would mourn our demise.

David Myatt
May 2014

From a letter sent to a personal correspondent. Some footnotes have been added, post scriptum, in an effort to elucidate some parts of the text and provide appropriate references.

Notes

[1] I define *the culture of pathei-mathos* as the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals, world-wide, over thousands of years, as (i) described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts; as (ii) have inspired particular works of literature or poetry or drama; as (iii) expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and as (iv) manifest in more recent times by 'art-forms' such as films and documentaries.

The culture of pathei-mathos thus includes not only traditional accounts of, or accounts inspired by, personal pathei-mathos, old and modern – such as the *With The Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa* by Eugene Sledge, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, and the poetry of people as diverse as Sappho and Sylvia Plath – but also works or art-forms inspired by such pathei-mathos, whether personal or otherwise, and whether factually presented or fictionalized. Hence films such as *Monsieur Lazhar* and *Etz Limon* may poignantly express something about our φύσις as human beings and thus form part of the culture of pathei-mathos.

[2] A pedantic aside: it is my considered opinion that the English term 'balanced' (a natural completeness, a natural equilibrium) is often a better translation of the classical Latin *perfectus* than the commonly accepted translation of 'perfect', given what the English word 'perfect' now imputes (as in, for example, 'cannot be improved upon'), and given the association of the word 'perfect' with Christian theology and exegesis (as, for example, in suggesting a moral perfection).

[3] M. Tullius Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, Liber Secundus, xiii, xiv, 37

[4] q.v. Bruni d'Arezzo, *De Studiis et Litteris*. Leipzig, 1496.

[5] My translation of the Greek text. From *Mercvrii Trismegisti Pymander de potestate et sapientia dei – A Translation and Commentary*. 2013. A pdf version is available here – [pymander-hermetica-pdf](#)

Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions

The cosmogony described in the Ιερός Λόγος tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum answers certain interesting and important metaphysical questions in a particular and ancient way:

Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεὸς καὶ θεῖον καὶ φύσις θεία. ἀρχὴ
τῶν ὄντων ὁ θεός καὶ νοῦς καὶ φύσις καὶ ὕλη, σοφία εἰς
δεῖξιν ἀπάντων ὧν· ἀρχὴ τὸ θεῖον καὶ φύσις καὶ ἐνέργεια
καὶ ἀνάγκη καὶ τέλος καὶ ἀνανέωσις [...]

τὸ γὰρ θεῖον ἢ πᾶσα κοσμικὴ σύγκρασις φύσει ἀνανεου-
μένη· ἐν γὰρ τῷ θεῷ καὶ ἡ φύσις κατέστηκεν

The numen of all beings is theos: numinal, and of numinal physis.

The origin of what exists is theos, who is Perceivation and Physis and Substance:

The sapientia which is a revealing of all beings.

For the numinal is the origin: physis, vigour, incumbency, accomplishment, renewance [...]

The divine is all of that mision: renewance of the cosmic order through Physis

For Physis is presenced in the divine. ⁽¹⁾

All such 'theological' answers - from classical Greco-Roman paganism and mysticism to Gnosticism to Christianity and Islam - lead us to enquire (i) if Being - whether denoted by terms such as acausal, born-less, θεός The One, The Divine, God, The Eternal, Μονάς - can be apprehended (or defined) by some-things which are causal (denoted by terms such as spatial, temporal, renewance), and (ii) whether this 'acausal Being' is the origin or the genesis or 'the artisan' ⁽²⁾ or the creator of both causal being (including 'time', and 'change') and of causal living beings such as ourselves.

That is, (i) has causal spatially-existing being 'emerged from' - or been created by - acausal Being, and (ii) are causal beings - such as ourselves - an aspect or emanation of acausal Being?

My admittedly fallible understanding now, after some years of reflexion and based as it is on my limited knowledge, is that formulating such a question in such terms - causal/acausal; whole/parts; eternal/temporal; ipseity/unity; emergent from/genesis of - is a mis-apprehension of what-is because such denoting is 'us as observer' (i) positing, as Plato did, such things as a theory regarding 'the ideal' ⁽³⁾, and/or (ii) constructing a form or abstraction (ἰδέα) which we then presume to project onto what is assumed to be 'external' to us,

both of which present us with only an illusion of understanding and meaning because implicit in such theories and in all such constructed forms are (i) an opposite (an 'other') and (ii) the potentiality for discord (dialectical or otherwise) between such opposites and/or because of a pursuit of what is regarded as 'the ideal' of some-thing. Hence, perhaps, why Heraclitus is reported to have written:

εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἑόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord δίκη, and that beings are naturally born by discord. [Fragment 80]

πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα

All by genesis is appropriately apportioned [separated into portions] with beings bound together again by enantiodromia. [Diogenes Laërtius, ix. 7]

In effect, our innate assumption of our existence as sentient individuals - separate from 'the other', be that other Being itself or other beings - leads us and has led us to formulate and to strive to answer certain metaphysical questions in a particular way. That is, from the position of an 'observer' whose answers are dependant on postulated concepts described or denoted by words such as 'time', 'change', God, theos/theoi, and 'the ideal'.

Is it therefore possible for us to discover our being, our physis - in effect, know Reality and discover the meaning of our existence - without such postulations, be they metaphysical or theological or otherwise? My fallible answer, based as it is on my limited knowledge and my own experience, is that it is possible; and possible by means of empathy and pathei-mathos. However, by necessity - given the personal (local) horizon of both empathy and pathei-mathos ⁽⁴⁾ - the knowing so revealed is (i) only our personal fallible answer, and also is (ii) always sans denotatum ⁽⁵⁾, a wordless empathic knowing that cannot be expressed (by words, terms) without in some way distorting it or denuding it of such numinosity as has been personally discovered (revealed) by empathy and pathei-mathos.

For empathy and pathei-mathos incline us to suggest that ipseity is an illusion of perspective: that there is, fundamentally, no division between 'us' - as some individual sentient, mortal being - and what has hitherto been understood and named as the Unity, The One, God, The Eternal. That 'we' are not 'observers' but rather Being existing as Being exists and is presenced in the Cosmos. That thus all our striving, individually and collectively when based on some ideal or on some form - some abstraction and what is derived therefrom, such as ideology and dogma - always is or becomes sad/tragic, and which recurrence of

sadness/tragedy, generation following generation, is perhaps even inevitable unless and until we live according to the wordless knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal. In this matter, Heraclitus perhaps had something interesting to say, again:

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἔοντος αἰεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ
πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ
πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν εἰκόσσι, πειρώμενοι καὶ
ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῦμαι κατὰ φύσιν
διαίρεων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅπως ἔχει· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους
λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὖδοντες
ἐπιλανθάνονται

Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done. [Fragment 1]

What, therefore, is the wordless knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal? It is the knowing manifest in our human culture of pathei-mathos. The knowing communicated to us, for example, by art, music, literature, and manifest in the lives of those who presenced, in their living, compassion, love, and honour. Germane to this knowing is that - unlike a form or an abstraction - it is always personal (limited in its applicability) and can only be embodied in and presenced by some-thing or by some-one which or who lives. That is, it cannot be abstracted out of the living, the personal, moment of its presencing by someone or abstracted out from its living apprehension by others in the immediacy-of-the-moment, and thus cannot become 'an ideal' or form the foundation for some dogma or ideology or supra-personal faith.

Plato, Art, and The Ideal

Since art can wordlessly communicate to us the wisdom, and the knowing of Reality, revealed individually by both empathy and the culture of pathei-mathos, it seems apposite to briefly consider Plato's rather influential notions of τὸ καλόν (of beauty) and of 'the ideal'.

As Isocrates wrote of Helen of Troy:

κάλλους γὰρ πλεῖστον μέρος μετέσχευ, ὃ σεμνότατον καὶ τιμιώτατον
καὶ θειότατον τῶν ὄντων ἐστίν.

Of all things valued, numinous, and divine, she had the greatest share: beauty.
[Encomium, 54]

However, with Plato, τὸ καλόν becomes impersonal, even when the subject he is writing about is human 'nobility'. That is, it becomes something unrelated to what is personally known and proven (revealed) by what is real (as for example in the deeds of a real-life individual). For Plato, it is related to or manifests ἀρετή ('virtue'), which in his philosophy becomes a hypothesized abstraction which a person may or may not possess and which, it is claimed, can be 'brought into being' by other abstractions, such as a Republic.

Thus, in Phaedo (78b), Plato writes about αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν and about αὐτὸ ἕκαστον ὃ ἔστιν: that is, of 'abstract' (true, ideal) beauty and of 'abstract' (true, ideal) being. In Kratylus 389d he has Socrates talk about 'true, ideal' naming (denotatum) - βλέποντα πρὸς αὐτὸ ἐκεῖνο ὃ ἔστιν ὄνομα.

Also in Kratylus (386d-386e), Plato has Socrates say:

μήτε ἐκάστω ἰδίᾳ ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων ἐστὶν δῆλον δὴ ὅτι αὐτὰ αὐτῶν οὐσίαν ἔχοντά τινα βέβαιόν ἐστι τὰ πράγματα

Each being has their own mode [of being] which is constant, and which is neither caused by nor related to us.

Furthermore, he writes that:

πρῶτον μὲν αἰεὶ ὄν καὶ οὔτε γιγνόμενον οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον, οὔτε αὐξανόμενον οὔτε φθίνον (Symposium 210e - 211a)

Firstly, it always exists, and has no genesis. It does not die, does not grow, does not decay.

ἀρχόμενον ἀπὸ τῶνδε τῶν καλῶν ἐκείνου ἕνεκα τοῦ καλοῦ αἰεὶ ἐπανιέναι, ὥσπερ ἐπαναβασμοῖς χρώμενον (Symposium 211c)

Starting from that beauty, that person must - because of such beauty - always as by a ladder move on, upwards.

While many other examples could be adduced, it does seem evident that Plato posits some abstraction - whether described by him in terms such as ἰδέα, εἶδος, or involving αὐτὸ (i.e. form, ideal, 'true'/of itself) - and which abstraction, because it has no genesis, does not die, does not grow, and yet which invokes change - a moving-on by, or discord resulting from, the pursuit of such an ideal by individuals - is independent of and often damaging to our living (and thus numinous) reality as individual diverse human beings possessed of the faculty of

empathy and able to learn from the culture of pathei-mathos.

In contrast, when Aristotle, in an oblique reference to Plato, writes τοῦ δὲ καλοῦ μέγιστα εἶδη τάξις καὶ συμμετρία καὶ τὸ ὠρισμένον ⁽⁶⁾ he is referring to what is real, what actually exists - ὥστε διὰ τοῦτο ὁρθῶς οἱ γεωμέτραι λέγουσι καὶ περὶ ὄντων διαλέγονται καὶ ὄντα ἐστίν: διττὸν γὰρ τὸ ὄν. That is, to the beauty of geometry as manifest, for example, by geometricians when - as in Euclid's Elements - they make logical deductions from schemata and harmony and consonancy. Aristotle goes on to write that τὸ καλόν is especially revealed (δείκνυμι) in mathematics: ἃ μάλιστα δεικνύουσιν αἱ μαθηματικαὶ ἐπιστήμαι.

Also, when Aristotle deals with ἀρετή he considers it a μέσον (meson, median, a balance between 'being' (actually existing) and 'not-being' (a potentiality), qv. Metaphysics 9.1051a) and thus discards Plato's εἶδος of an abstractive 'good' and 'bad'. Which discarding was an excellent philosophical beginning given how Plato's abstractive 'ideal' of some-thing with its implication that a person "must - because of that ideal - always as by a ladder be moving on, upwards," is and has been the genesis of discord and suffering.

Empathy and pathei-mathos, however, emphasize the importance of living in the "immediacy of the personal, living, moment", sans the pursuit of some ideal or of some assumed perfection; with what is 'good' being not some abstraction denoted by some faith, dogma, ideal, ideology, or by some collocation of words, but rather is a function of, a wordless revealing by, our personal, our individual, empathic horizon, by our pathei-mathos, and by the collected human pathei-mathos of millennia manifest as that is in the culture of pathei-mathos. Which revealing is that what-lives is more important than any ideal, than any abstraction or form, with 'the good' simply being that which does not cause suffering to, or which can alleviate the suffering of, what-lives, human and otherwise.

Thus the 'meaning' of our physis, of our living, so revealed, is just that of a certain way of living; a non-defined, non-definable, very personal way of living, only relevant to us as an individual where we - appreciating our human culture of pathei-mathos, and thus appreciative of art, music, literature, and other emanations of the numinous - incline toward not causing suffering and incline (by means of empathy, compassion, and honour) toward alleviating such suffering as we may personally encounter in the "immediacy of the personal, living, moment".

David Myatt
March 2015
(Revised JD2457094.73)

The genesis of this essay was some correspondence, in February and March 2015, with an

academic, and which correspondence concerned certain metaphysical questions. I have paraphrased parts of, or utilized quotations from, or rewritten certain passages from, several of my replies. All translations (and errors) are mine.

Notes

(1) Myatt, David, *Ιερός Λόγος: An Esoteric Mythos*. 2015. ISBN 978-1507660126.

(2) In respect of theos as artisan (δημιουργόν) qv. the Corpus Hermeticum; for example Poemandres 11.

(3) qv. *Plato, Art, and The Ideal*, below.

(4) The 'local horizon of empathy' is a natural consequence of my understanding of empathy as a human faculty, albeit a faculty that is still quite underdeveloped. For what empathy provides - or can provide - is a very personal wordless knowing in the immediacy-of-the-living-moment. Thus empathy inclines us as individuals to appreciate that what is beyond the purveu of our empathy - beyond our personal empathic knowing of others, beyond our knowledge and our experience, beyond the limited (local) range of our empathy and that personal (local) knowledge of ourselves which pathei-mathos reveals - is something we rationally, we humbly, accept we do not know and so cannot judge or form a reasonable, a fair, a balanced, opinion about.

For empathy, like pathei-mathos, lives within us; manifesting, as both empathy and pathei-mathos do, the always limited nature, the horizon, of our own knowledge and understanding.

(5) Denotatum - from the Latin, denotare - is used here in accord with its general meaning, which is "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted."

(6) *Metaphysics*, Book 13, 1078a. "The most noticeable expressions of kalos are schemata and harmony and consonancy."

Towards Understanding Physis

Since the concept of physis - φύσις - is central to my philosophy of pathei-mathos, it seems apposite to offer a more detailed explanation of the concept, and my usage of it, than I have hitherto given, deriving as the term does from Ancient Greece and used as it is by Heraclitus, Aristotle, and others, and occurring as it does in texts such as the Pœmandres and ἑρπός Λόγος tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum.

As I mentioned in my translation of Aristotle, Metaphysics 1015α [1] - and elsewhere - physis is usually translated as either 'Nature' (as if 'the natural world', and the physical cosmos beyond, are meant) or as the character (the nature) of a person. However, while the context - of the original Greek text - may suggest (as often, for example, in Homer and Herodotus) such a meaning as such English words impute, physis philosophically (as, for example, in Heraclitus and Aristotle and the Corpus Hermeticum) has specific ontological meanings. Meanings which are lost, or glossed over, when physis is simply translated either as 'Nature' or - in terms of mortals - as (personal) character.

Ontologically, as Aristotle makes clear [2], physis denotes the being of those beings who or which have the potentiality (the being) to change, be changed, or to develop. That is, to become, or to move or be moved; as for example in the motion (of 'things') and the 'natural unfolding' or growth, sans an external cause, that living beings demonstrate.

However, and crucially, physis is not - for human beings - some abstract 'essence' (qv. Plato's ἰδέα/εἶδος) but rather a balance between the being that it is, it was, and potentially might yet be. That is, in Aristotelian terms, it is a meson - μέσον - of being and 'not being'; and 'not being' in the sense of not yet having become what it could be, and not now being what it used to be. Hence why, for Aristotle, a manifestation of physis - in terms of the being of mortals - such as arête (ἀρετή) is a meson, a balance of things, and not, as it is for Plato, some fixed 'form' - some idea, ideal - which as Plato wrote "always exists, and has no genesis. It does not die, does not grow, does not decay." [3]

According to my understanding of Heraclitus, physis also suggests - as in Fragment 1 - the 'natural' being of a being which we mortals have a tendency to cover-up or conceal [4].

Furthermore, physis is one of the main themes in the Pœmandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, for the author seeks "to apprehend the physis of beings" [5] with physis often mystically personified:

"This is a mysterium esoteric even to this day. For Physis, having intimately joined with the human, produced a most wondrous wonder possessed of the physis of the harmonious seven I mentioned before, of Fire and pneuma. Physis did not tarry, giving birth to seven male-and-female humans with the physis of those viziers, and ætherean...

[For] those seven came into being in this way. Earth was muliebral, Water was lustful, and Fire maturing. From Æther, the pneuma, and with Physis bringing forth human-shaped bodies. Of Life and phaos, the human came to be of psyche and perceivance; from Life - psyche; from phaos - perceivance; and with everything in the observable cosmic order cyclic until its completion...

When the cycle was fulfilled, the connexions between all things were, by the deliberations of theos, unfastened. Living beings - all male-and-female then - were, including humans, rent asunder thus bringing into being portions that were masculous with the others muliebral." [6]

Physis is also personified in the ἑρπός Λόγος tractate:

"The divine is all of that mixion: renewance of the cosmic order through Physis
For Physis is presented in the divine." [7]

The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos

As mentioned elsewhere, what I have termed the philosophy of πάθει μάθος (pathei-mathos) is just my weltanschauung, developed between 2011 and 2013 after I had, upon reflexion, rejected much of and revised what then remained of my earlier (2006-2011) 'numinous way' [8].

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, physis is used contextually to refer to:

- (i) the ontology of beings, an ontology - a reality, a 'true nature' - that is often obscured by denotatum [9] and by abstractions [10], both of which conceal physis;
- (ii) the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being, which is of us - we mortals - as a nexion, an affective effluvium (or emanation) of Life (ψυχή) and thus of why 'the separation-of-otherness' [11] is a concealment of that relationship;
- (iii) the character, or persona, of human beings, and which character - sans denotatum - can be discovered (revealed, known) by the faculty of empathy;
- (iv) the unity - the being - beyond the division of our physis, as individual mortals, into masculous and muliebral;
- (v) that manifestation denoted by the concept Time, with Time considered to be an expression/manifestation of the physis of beings [12].

My concept of physis is therefore primarily ontological and rooted - as is my philosophy of pathei-mathos - in the

paganus culture of classical, and Hellenic, Greece.

David Myatt
March 2015

Notes

[1] I have appended to this essay my translation of, and notes on, the relevant part of 1015α.

[2] See Appendix 1, below, and also my *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*.

[3] πρῶτον μὲν αἰὲν ὄν καὶ οὔτε γιγνόμενον οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον οὔτε αὐξανόμενον οὔτε φθίνον (Symposium 210e - 211a).

[4] See Appendix 2.

[5] Pœmandres 3; qv. my *Mercvrii Trismegisti Pymander de potestate et sapientia dei: A Translation and Commentary*, 2013.

[6] Pœmandres 16-18.

[7] Ιερός Λόγος 3; qv. my *Ιερός Λόγος: An Esoteric Mythos. A Translation Of And A Commentary On The Third Tractate Of The Corpus Hermeticum*, 2015.

[8] Refer to my *Concerning The Development Of The Numinous Way*, 2012.

[9] In my philosophy of pathei-mathos, I use the term denotatum - from the Latin, denotare - in accord with its general meaning which is "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted."

[10] An abstraction is a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed.

Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future. Abstractions are often assumed to provide some 'knowledge' or some 'understanding' of some-thing assigned to or described by a particular abstraction.

[11] Refer, for example, to my *The Error of The-Separation-of-Otherness in The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, 2012.

[12] *Time And The Separation Of Otherness - Part One*. 2012.

Appendix 1

Some Notes on Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015α

Text

ἐκ δὴ τῶν εἰρημένων ἡ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἡ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὕλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικῇ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐνυπάρχουσα πῶς ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ.

Translation

Given the foregoing, then principally - and to be exact - physis denotes the quidditas of beings having change ment inherent within them; for substantia has been denoted by physis because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are change ments predicated on it. For physis is inherent change ment either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.

Commentary And Notes

physis. φύσις. A transliteration, since (i) this is a fundamental philosophical principle/term that requires contextual interpretation, and (ii) the English words 'nature' and Nature not only do not adequately describe this principle but also lead to and have led to certain misunderstandings of Aristotle in particular and of classical Greek culture in general.

quidditas. οὐσία. Quidditas - post-classical Latin, from whence the English word 'quiddity' - is more appropriate here

than 'essence', given the metaphysical (ontological) context and given that 'essence' now has so many non-philosophical connotations. An interesting alternative would be the scholastic term *haecceity*. As with *physis*, *quidditas* is a philosophical term which requires contextual interpretation.

change ment inherent. The expression ἀρχὴν κινήσεως is crucial to understanding what Aristotle means in respect of *physis*. In regard to κίνησις, since Aristotle here does not mean 'motion' or 'movement' in the sense of Newtonian physics (with its causal concepts of force, mass, velocity, kinetic energy), and since such physical movement is what the English words 'motion' and 'movement' now most usually denote, then alternatives must be found. Hence the translation 'change ment'.

For what Aristotle is describing here is 'change', as for example in the natural development, the unfolding, the growth, of some-thing living that occurs because it is living; because it is possessed of Life and which Life is the ἀρχή of the change ment, the 'original being' (the φύσις) from whence being-becomes to be often perceived and classified by us in orderly ways.

What is described is an a-causal change, of being-becoming - of being unfolding - and thus fulfilling the potentiality of being within it. Hence why here Aristotle writes ἀρχὴν κινήσεως, which describes the potential change ment inherent in certain beings.¹ That is, the a-causal origin of beings-becoming, or having become, and which beings (having changed, developed, unfolded) we then perceive and classify in orderly ways², such as by shape or usefulness to us, or by a notion such as causality: in terms of physical- 'movement'. Which is why, in Aristotle, there is a relation between φύσις, μορφή, and εἶδος - εἶδος in the sense of 'perceivation' and not, as in Plato, denoting an abstract 'form' or an 'ideal' - διὸ καὶ ὅσα φύσει ἔστιν ἢ γίγνεται, ἤδη ὑπάρχοντος ἔξ οὗ πέφυκε γίγνεσθαι ἢ εἶναι, οὕτω φαμέν τὴν φύσιν ἔχειν ἔαν μὴ ἔχη τὸ εἶδος καὶ τὴν μορφήν.

Thus φύσις is what is a-causal in beings and which acausality is the origin of the 'natural' order that unfolds because of the potentiality of being to become, to presence in the causal, whence to be perceived by us in various orderly arrangements and/or arranged in terms of usefulness, and which arrangements/usefulness include τὸ καλόν - and thus schemata, τάξις³ - and ἀρετή.

substantia. ὕλη. I have chosen to use the etymon of the English word 'substance' - qv. *substantia* in Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia libri Metaphysicae* - to again (i) emphasize the need for contextual interpretation in respect of a specific philosophical term, and (ii) to avoid whatever misunderstandings may arise from the modern (non-ontological) connotations of words such as 'matter' and 'substance'.

as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are change ments predicated on it. καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. The sense of γένεσις here implies a 'coming-into-being' rather than just 'generation', just as φύω implies a being 'burgeoning' - unfolding, revealing itself (its *physis*) - rather than just 'growing'.

the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is. The Greek word ἐντελεχεία is compounded from ἐν ελεῖ ἔχει and the sense here - in relation to ἐνυπάρχουσα - seems to be twofold: of a being as an unchanged being, and of what a being has become (or is becoming) as a result of a change, for both types of being actually exist, are real. One exists as a being as it is and has remained, and one exists as the being it has become (or is in the process of becoming) through the potential for change ment inherent within it. Thus, for Aristotle, *physis* denotes the being of both types of being.

DWM
March 2015

[1] In respect of ἀρχή as implying what is primarily inherent, qv. 1012b-1013a.

[2] As Thomas Aquinas wrote: "Sciendum est autem, quod principium et causa licet sint idem subiecto, differunt tamen ratione. Nam hoc nomen principium ordinem quemdam importat; hoc vero nomen causa, importat influxum quemdam ad esse causati." *Sententia libri Metaphysicae*, liber 5, lectio 1, n 3.

[3] Regarding 1078a, τοῦ δὲ καλοῦ μέγιστα εἶδη τάξις καὶ συμμετρία καὶ τὸ ὠρισμένον (the most noticeable expressions of *kalos* are schemata and harmony and consonancy), my view - given the context - is that τάξις here is best translated as "schemata", rather than "order" or "arrangement" both of which are vague, open to mis-interpretation, and unrelated to the context, which context is mathematical beauty. Similarly, ὀρίζω (to me) suggests consonancy, echoing as that (now somewhat obscure) English word does both by its use by, among others, Shakespeare (*Hamlet*, Act 2, Scene 2, 286) and also by its relation to the almost 'mathematical beauty' of some music (as evident for example in the counterpoint of JS Bach).

Furthermore, just because the Greek has συμμετρία it does not necessarily follow that the English word 'symmetry' is an appropriate translation, considering how the word symmetry is now used and has been used, in the West for many centuries, and especially in relation to art (in terms, for example, of objects and the human body).

Given that Aristotle in 1078a is referring to geometry in particular and mathematics in general, then an appropriate translation is 'harmony' - as in "a collation of representative signs or marks, so arranged that they exhibit their agreement and account for their discrepancies or errors." A harmony, in other words, that is most evident (as I mentioned in my essay) in Euclid's *Elements*, as schemata and consonancy are therein evident, most of the contents (theorems) of which book - deriving from people such as Pythagoras - were known to Aristotle.

Thus, a translation such as "the chief forms of beauty are order and symmetry and definiteness" can in my opinion lead to projecting onto Aristotle what he may not necessarily have meant; and projecting onto in respect of how we now, over two thousand years after Aristotle, understand and use such common English terms. Hence, also, why I sometimes use obscure English words (which may suggest a relevant meaning) or transliterations (as in physis).

Appendix 2

Some Notes on Heraclitus Fragment 1

Text

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος αἰεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν εἰκόσσι, πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῖμαι κατὰ φύσιν διαιρέων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅκως ἔχει· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὖδοντες ἐπιλανθάνονται

Translation

My translation of the fragment is:

Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done.

Comments

1. λόγος

In respect of fragments 80 and 112 I have suggested that it is incorrect to interpret πόλεμος simplistically as 'war', strife, or kampf ^[1] and that, instead of using such words, it should be transliterated so as to name a distinct philosophical principle that requires interpretation and explanation with particular reference to Hellenic culture and philosophy. For, more often than not, such common English words as 'war' are now understood in a non-Hellenic, non-philosophical, context and explained in relation to some ideated opposite; and in the particular case of the term 'war', for example, in contrast to some-thing named, explained, or defined, as 'peace' or a state of non-belligerence.

In respect of fragment 1 ^[2], does λόγος suggest a philosophical principle and therefore should it, like πόλεμος, be transliterated and thus be considered as a basic principle of the philosophy of Heraclitus, or at least of what, of that philosophy or weltanschauung, we can adduce from the textual fragments we possess? Or does λόγος, as I suggested in respect of fragment 112 and 123 ^[3] imply:

both a *naming* (denoting), and a *telling* – not a telling as in some abstract explanation or theory, but as in a simple describing, or recounting, of what has been so denoted or so named. Which is why, in fragment 39, Heraclitus writes:

ἐν Πριήνῃ Βίας ἐγένετο ὁ Τευτάμεω, οὗ πλείων λόγος ἢ τῶν ἄλλων ^[4]

and why, in respect of λέγειν, Hesiod wrote:

ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα,
ἴδμεν δ', εὖτ' ἐθέλωμεν, ἀληθέα γηρύσασθαι ^[5]

I contend that fragment 1 also suggests a denoting, in the sense of expressing some-thing by denoting it or describing it by a 'name'. That is, that λόγος here does not refer here to what has often be termed Logos, and that the 'ambiguous' αἰεὶ ^[6] is not really ambiguous at all.

For one has to, in my view, take account of the fact that there is poetry in Heraclitus; a rather underrated style that sometimes led others to incorrectly describe him as ὁ σκοτεινός, the ambiguous (or the obtuse) one, and led Aristotle to write:

τὰ γὰρ Ἡρακλείτου διαστίξαι ἔργον διὰ τὸ ἄδηλον εἶναι ποτέρῳ πρόσκειται, τῷ ὕστερον ἢ τῷ πρότερον, οἷον ἐν τῇ ἀρχῇ αὐτῇ τοῦ συγγράμματος: φησὶ γὰρ "τοῦ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος αἰεὶ ἀξύνετοι ἄνθρωποι γίνονται": ἄδηλον γὰρ τὸ αἰεὶ, πρὸς ποτέρῳ δεῖ διαστίξαι. ^[6]

It is the poetic style of Heraclitus that I have tried, however badly, to express in my often non-literal and rather idiosyncratic translations/interpretations of some of the fragments attributed to him. Hence my interpretation of the first part:

Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists – human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it.

The 'which I explain' being implicit in the sense of λόγος here as a naming and expression by a particular individual, contrasted (as often with Heraclitus) rather poetically with a generality; in this instance, contrasted with human beings - 'men' - in general.

2. ἀεὶ

In my view, "tend to" captures the poetic sense of ἀεὶ here. That is, the literal - the bland, strident - 'always' is discarded in favour of a more Heraclitean expression of human beings having an apparently rather irreconcilable tendency - both now and as in the past - to ignore (or forget or not understand) certain things, even after matters have been explained to them (they have heard the explanation) and even after they have discovered certain truths for themselves.

3. διαιρέων and Φύσις

I take the sense of διαιρέων here somewhat poetically to suggest not the ordinary 'divide' but the more expressive 'cleave', with it being undivided Physis that is cleaved into parts by "such naming and expression" as Heraclitus has revealed. That is, Heraclitus is not saying that he has described or expressed each thing 'in accordance with its true nature' (or divided things correctly, or something of the kind) but rather that the process of naming and categorization is or has divided Physis, obscuring the true nature of Being and beings, and it is this process, this obscuring, or concealment, of Physis - of cleaving it into separate parts or each thing, 'each' contrasted with a generality ^[7] - that he has revealed and is mentioning here, as he mentioned it in fragment 123:

Φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ

Concealment accompanies Physis ^[8]

Which is why I have transliterated Φύσις as referring to a general philosophical principle of the philosophy of Heraclitus, or at least of what, of that philosophy or weltanschauung, we can adduce from the textual fragments we possess.

4. πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων

In respect of ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, the Homeric usage ^[9] is, for me, interesting as it implies a proverbial kind of saying rather than just 'words' and 'deeds':

Τηλέμαχ', οὐδ' ὄπιθεν κακὸς ἔσσει οὐδ' ἀνοήμων,
εἰ δὴ τοι σοῦ πατρὸς ἐνέστακται μένος ἦϋ,
οἷος κείνος ἔην τελέσαι ἔργον τε ἔπος τε:

Telemachus – you will not be unlucky nor lacking in resolution
If you hereafter instill into yourself the determination of your father
Whose nature was to accomplish those deeds he said he would.

Furthermore, I take the sense here of πειρώμενοι poetically to suggest a "fumbling about" - as the inexperienced often fumble about and experiment until, often by trial and error, they have gained sufficient experience to understand and know what they are doing and what is involved, which rather reminds one of a saying of Pindar ^[10]:

γλυκὺ δὲ πόλεμος ἀπείροισιν, ἐμπείρων δέ τις
ταρβεῖ προσιόντα νιν καρδίᾳ περισσῶ

5. ἐγερθέντες and εὐδοντες

Given that, as mentioned above, there is poetry in Heraclitus, I am inclined to avoid the literal, and usual, understanding of ἐγερθέντες and εὐδοντες, particularly given the foregoing πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων which renders such a literal understanding not only out of context and disjointed but decidedly odd. Human beings forgetting things when they sleep? If, however, and for example, ἐγείρω here poetically suggests alertness, an interest or excitement - as ἤγειρεν in the Agamemnon suggests an alertness and excitement, an interest in what has occurred, and thence the kindling of a pyre ^[11] - then there is, as often in Heraclitus, a flowing eloquence and that lack of discordance one might expect of an aphorism remembered and recorded long after the demise of its author.

Notes

[1] qv. *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*, and *Some Notes on Πόλεμος and Δίκη in Heraclitus B80*

As mentioned in *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*:

"In addition, Polemos was originally the *δαίμων* [not the god] of kindred strife, whether familial, or of one's *πόλις* (one's clan and their places of dwelling). Thus, to describe Polemos, as is sometimes done, as the god of conflict (or war), is doubly incorrect."

[2] qv. Sextus Empiricus: *Advenus Mathematicos* VII. 132

[3] Regarding 123 - *Φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ* - qv. *Physis, Nature, Concealment, and Natural Change*, e-text 2010

[4] "In Priene was born someone named and recalled as most worthy - Bias, that son of Teutamas."

[5]

We have many ways to conceal - to name - certain things
And the skill when we wish to expose their meaning

[6] Aristotle: *Ars Rhetorica* Book 3, chapter 5 [1407b]

[7] As in Homer et al, for example *Iliad*, Book VII, 215 -

Τρῶας δὲ τρόμος αἰνὸς ὑπήλυθε γυῖα ἕκαστον

But over the Trojans, a strange fear, to shake the limbs of each one there

[8] qv. my *Physis, Nature, Concealment, and Natural Change* [Notes on Heraclitus fragment 123], e-text 2010

[9] *Odyssey*, Book II, 272

[10] Fragment 110

[11] Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 296-299

σθένουσα λαμπὰς δ' οὐδέπω μαυρουμένη,
ὑπερθοροῦσα πεδῖον Ἀσωποῦ, δίκην
φαιδρᾶς σελήνης, πρὸς Κιθαιρῶνος λέπας
ἤγειρεν ἄλλην ἐκδοχὴν πομποῦ πυρός.

The torch, vigorous and far from extinguished,
Bounded over the Asopian plain
To the rocks of Cithaeron as bright as the moon
So that the one waiting there to begin that fire, jumped up

Note that here the watchman is not awakened from sleep.

Musings On Suffering, Human Nature, and The Culture of Pathei-Mathos

This is an extract from a written reply, in September 2013, to a personal correspondent. It has been revised for publication here, with some footnotes added in an effort to elucidate some parts of the text.

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In respect of the question whether I am optimistic about our future as a species, I vacillate between optimism and pessimism, knowing as I - and so many - do from experience that the world contains people who do good things [1], people who do bad things, and people who when influenced or led or swayed by some-thing or someone can veer either way; and given that it seems as if in each generation there are those - many - who have not learned or who cannot learn from the pathei-mathos of previous generations, from our collective human πάθει μάθος that has brought-into-being a culture of pathei-mathos thousands of years old. Historically - prior to, during after the time of Cicero, and over a thousand years later during and after the European Renaissance - this culture was evident in *Studia Humanitatis*, and is now presenced in works inspired by or recollecting personal pathei-mathos and described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts; in particular works of literature, poetry, and drama; in non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and by art-forms such as films and documentaries.

This culture of pathei-mathos reveals to us the beauty, the numinosity, of personal love; the numinosity of humility, and compassion; and the tragic lamentable unnecessary suffering caused by hubris, dishonour, selfishness, inconsiderance, intolerance, prejudice, hatred, war, extremism, and ideologies [2]. A world-wide suffering so evident, today, for example in the treatment of and the violence (by men) toward women; in the continuing armed conflicts - regional and local, over some-thing - that displace tens of thousands of people and cause destruction, injury, and hundreds of thousands of deaths; and evident also in the killing of innocent people [3] by those who adhere to a harsh interpretation of some religion or some political ideology.

Do good people, world-wide, outweigh bad ones? My experiences and travels incline me to believe they may do, although it seems as if the damage the bad ones do, the suffering they cause, sometimes and for a while outweighs the good that others do. But does the good done, in societies world-wide, now outweigh the bad done, especially such large-scale suffering as is caused by despots, corruption, armed conflict, and repressive regimes? Probably, at least in some societies. And yet even in such societies where, for example, education is widespread, there always seem to be selfish, dishonourable, inconsiderate, people; and also people such as the extremist I was with my hubriatic certitude-of-knowing inciting or causing hatred and violence and intolerance and glorifying war and *kampf* and trying to justify killing in the name of some abstraction or some belief or some cause or some ideology. People mostly, it seems, immune to and/or intolerant of the learning of the culture of pathei-mathos; a learning available to us in literature, music, Art, memoirs, in the aural and written recollections of those who endured or who witnessed hatred, violence, intolerance, conflict, war, and killing, and a learning also available in the spiritual message of those who taught humility, goodness, love, and tolerance. Immune or intolerant people who apparently can only change - or who could only possibly change for the better - only when they themselves are afflicted by such vicissitudes, such personal misfortune and suffering, as is the genesis of their own pathei-mathos.

Thus, and for example, in Europe there is the specific pathei-mathos that the First and the Second World Wars wrought. A collective learning regarding the destruction, the suffering, the brutality, the horror, of wars where wakeful machines and mass manufactured weapons played a significant role.

All this, while sad, is perhaps the result of our basic human nature; for we are *jumelle*, and not only because we are "deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal" [4] but also because it seems to me that what is good and bad resides in us all [5], nascent or alive or as part of our personal past, and that it is just so easy, so tempting, so enjoyable, sometimes, to indulge in, to do, what is bad, and often harder for us to do what is right. Furthermore, we do seem to have a tendency - or perhaps a need - to ascribe what is bad to being 'out there', in something abstract or in others while neglecting or not perceiving our own faults and mistakes and while asserting or believing that we, and those similar to us or who we are in agreement with, are right and thus have the 'correct', the righteous, answers. Thus it is often easier to find what is bad 'out there' rather than within ourselves; easier to hate than to love, especially as a hatred of impersonal others sometimes affords us a reassuring sense of identity and a sense of being 'better' than those others.

Will it therefore require another thousand, or two thousand, or three thousand years - or more or less millennia - before we human beings en masse, world-wide, are empathic, tolerant, kind, and honourable? Is such a basic change in our nature even possible? Certainly there are some - and not only ideologues of one kind or another - who would argue and who have argued that such a change is not desirable. And is such a change in our nature contingent, as I incline to believe, upon the fair allocation of world resources and solving problems such as hunger and poverty and preventing preventable diseases? Furthermore, how can or could or should such a basic change be brought about - through an organized religion or religions, or through individual governments and their laws and their social and political and economic and educational policies, or through a collocation of governments, world-wide; or through individuals reforming themselves and personally educating others by means of, for example, the common culture of pathei-mathos which all humans share and which all human societies have contributed to for thousands of years? Which leads us on to questions regarding dogma, faith, and dissent; and to questions regarding government and compulsion and

'crime and punishment' and whether or not 'the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few'; and also to questions regarding the efficacy of the reforming, spiritual, personal way given that spiritual ways teaching love, tolerance, humility, and compassion - and virtuous as they are, and alleviating and preventing suffering as they surely have - have not after several thousand years effected such a change in humans en masse.

I have to admit that I have no definitive or satisfactory answers to all these, and similar, questions; although my own pathei-mathos - and my lamentable four-decade long experience as an extremist, an ideologue, and as a selfish opinionated inconsiderate person - incline me to prefer the reforming, spiritual, personal way since I feel that such an approach, involving as it does a personal study of, a personal transmission of, the culture of pathei-mathos - and a personal knowing and a living of the humility that the culture of pathei-mathos teaches - is a way that does not cause nor contribute to the suffering that still so blights this world. A personal preference for such a numinous way even though I am aware of three things: of my past propensity to be wrong and thus of the necessary fallible nature of my answers; of the limited nature and thus the long time-scale (of many millennia) that such a way implies; and that it is possible, albeit improbable except in Science Fiction, that good people of honourable intentions may some day find a non-suffering-causing way by which governments or society or perhaps some new form of governance may in some manner bring about that change, en masse, in our human nature required to evolve us into individuals of empathy, compassion, and honour, who thus have something akin to a 'prime directive' to guide them in their dealings with those who are different, in whatever way, from ourselves.

Were I to daydream about some future time when such a galactic 'prime directive' exists, directing we spacefaring humans not to interfere in the internal affairs of non-terrans who are different, in whatever way, from ourselves, then I would be inclined to speculate that unless we by then have fundamentally and irretrievably changed ourselves for the better then it would not be long before some human or some human authority, somewhere, manufactured some sly excuse to order to try and justify ignoring it. For that is what we have done, among ourselves, for thousands of years; making then breaking some treaty or other; making some excuse to plunder resources; having some legal institution change some existing law or make some new law to give us the 'right' to do what it is we want to do; or manufacture some new legislative or governing body in order to 'legalize' what we do or have already done. Always using a plethora of words - and, latterly, legalese - to persuade others, and often ourselves, that what we do or are about to do or have already done is justified, justifiable, necessary, or right.

Perhaps the future excuse to so interfere contrary to a prime directive would be the familiar one of 'our security'; perhaps it would be an economic one of needing to exploit 'their' resources; perhaps it would be one regarding the threat of 'terrorism'; perhaps it would be the ancient human one, hallowed by so much blood, of 'our' assumed superiority, of 'their system' being 'repressive' or 'undemocratic' or of they - those 'others' - being 'backward' or 'uncivilized' and in need of being enlightened and 're-educated' by our 'progressive' ideas. Or, more probable, it would be some new standard or some new fashionable political or social or even religious dogma by which we commend ourselves on our progress and which we use, consciously or otherwise, to judge others by.

The current reality is that even if we had or soon established a terran 'prime directive' directing we humans not to interfere in the internal affairs of other humans here on Earth who are different, in whatever way, from ourselves, it is fairly certain it "would not be long before some human or some human authority, somewhere, manufactured some sly excuse to order to try and justify ignoring it..."

Which mention of a terran 'prime directive' leads to two of the other questions which cause me to vacillate between optimism and pessimism in regard to our future as a species. The question of increasing population, and the question of the finite resources of this Earth. Which suggests to me, as some others, that - especially as the majority of people now live in urban areas - a noble option is for us, as a species, to cooperate and betake ourselves to colonize our Moon, then Mars, and seek to develop such technology as would take us beyond our Solar System. For if we do not do this then the result would most probably be, at some future time, increasing conflict over land and resources, mass migrations (probably resulting in more conflict) and such governments or authorities as then exist forced by economic circumstance to adopt policies to reduce or limit their own population. Global problems probably exasperated still further by the detrimental changes that available evidence indicates could possibly result from what has been termed 'climate change' [6].

But is the beginning of this noble option of space colonization viable in the near future? Possibly not, given that the few countries that have the resources, the space expertise and the technology necessary - and the means to develop existing space technology - do not consider such exploration and colonization as a priority, existing as they seem to do in a world where nation-States still compete for influence and power and where conflict - armed, deadly, and otherwise - is still regarded as a viable solution to problems.

Which leads we human beings, with our jumelle character, confined to this small planet we call Earth, possibly continuing as we have, for millennia, continued: a quarrelsome species, often engaged (like primates) in minor territorial disputes; in our majority unempathic; often inconsiderate, often prejudiced (even though we like to believe otherwise); often inclined to place our self-interest and our pleasure first; often prone to being manipulated or to manipulating others; often addicted to the slyness of words spoken and written and heard and read; often believing 'we' are better than 'them'; and fighting, raping, hating, killing, invading here, interfering there. And beset by the problems wrought by increasing population, by dwindling resources, by mass migrations, by continuing armed conflicts (regional, local, supranational, over some-thing) and possibly also affected by the effects of climate change.

Yet also, sometimes despite ourselves, we are beings capable of - and have shown over millennia - compassion, kindness, gentleness, tolerance, love, fairness, reason, and a valourous self-sacrifice that is and has been inspirational.

But perhaps above all we have, in our majority, exuded and kept and replenished the virtue of hope; hoping, dreaming, of better times, a better future, sometime, somewhere - and not, as it happens, for ourselves but for our children and their children and the future generations yet to be born. And it is this hope that changes us, and has changed us, for the better, as our human culture of pathei-mathos so eloquently, so numinously, and so tragically, reveals.

Thus the question seems to be whether we still have hope enough, dreams enough, nobility enough, and can find some way to change ourselves, to thus bring a better - a more fairer, more just, more compassionate - future into-being without causing or contributing to the suffering which so blights, and which has so blighted, our existence on Earth.

Personally, I am inclined to wonder if the way we need - the hope, the dream, we need - is that of setting forth to explore and colonize our Moon, then Mars, and then the worlds beyond our Solar System, guided by a prime directive.

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Notes

[1] I understand 'the good' as what alleviates or does not cause suffering; what is compassionate; what is honourable; what is reasoned and balanced. Honour being here, and elsewhere in my recent writings, understood as the instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous.

[2] I have expanded, a little, on what I mean by 'the culture of pathei-mathos' in my tract *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God*.

[3] As defined by my 'philosophy of pathei-mathos', I understand innocence as "an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us, are therefore unjudged us by and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence of others - until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise - is the fair, the reasoned, the numinous, the human, thing to do. Empathy and πάθει μάθος incline us toward treating other human beings as we ourselves would wish to be treated; that is they incline us toward fairness, toward self-restraint, toward being well-mannered, and toward an appreciation and understanding of innocence."

[4] Pœmandres (Corpus Hermeticum), 15 - διὰ τοῦτο παρὰ πάντα τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς ζῶα διπλοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ ἄνθρωπος

As I noted in my translation of and commentary on the Pœmandres tract, "Jumelle. For διπλοῦς. The much underused and descriptive English word jumelle - from the Latin gemellus - describes some-thing made in, or composed of, two parts, and is therefore most suitable here, more so than common words such as 'double' or twofold."

[5] qv. Sophocles, Antigone, v.334, vv.365-366

πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ κούδεν ἄνθρωπου δεινότερον πέλει...
σοφόν τι τὸ μηχανόεν τέχνας ὑπὲρ ἐλπίδ' ἔχων
τοτὲ μὲν κακόν, ἄλλοτ' ἐπ' ἐσθλὸν ἔρπει

There exists much that is strange, yet nothing
Has more strangeness than a human being...
Beyond his own hopes, his cunning
In inventive arts - he who arrives
Now with dishonour, then with chivalry

[6] Many people have a view about 'climate change' - for or against - for a variety of reasons. My own view is that the scientific evidence available at the moment seems to indicate that there is a change resulting from human activity and that this change could possibly be detrimental, in certain ways, to us and to the other life with which we share this planet. The expressions 'seems to indicate' and 'could possibly be' are necessary given that this view of mine might need to be, and should be, reassessed if and when new evidence or facts become available.



Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God

Some Personal Musings

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Introduction

For the past three or so years, as I developed my 'numinous way' and then last year refined it into the philosophy of pathei-mathos, I have reflected more and more on questions concerning good, evil, honour, God, and religion and ethics in general; related as these matters are (at least according to my fallible understanding) to our nature, and possible development, as human beings, and thence to matters such as society, culture, and the jurisprudence by which modern societies function, or endeavour or aspire to function; and manifesting, as answers to such questions should, at least some explanations concerning the evidence that we human beings possess, and have possessed for thousands upon thousands of years, a paradoxical character, capable of - and having done - both honourable and dishonourable deeds, of being both 'good' and 'bad'.

Thus some of the questions of concern are: (i) what is 'good' and 'bad'; (ii) have the definitions and thence the theology and epistemology and the morality of religions, over millennia, enabled more and more of us to avoid doing or causing what is 'bad'; (iii) what, if anything, can or perhaps should replace such definitions, such theology, such epistemology, such morality - such religions - for those who do not or cannot accept such religious answers and the guidance so offered; (iv) does jurisprudence - and thence The State - offer an acceptable alternative; and, perhaps most importantly, as I have endeavoured to intimate in some other recent musings, (v) can we as a species change, sans a belief in some reward or the threat of punishment - be such karmic, eschatological, or deriving from something such as a State - or "are we fated, under Sun, to squabble and bicker and hate and kill and destroy and exploit this planet and its life until we, a failed species, leave only dead detritic traces of our hubris?" [1]

Today - thousands of years after the births of Lao Tzu, of the Buddha, of Moses, of Jesus of Nazareth, of Muhammad - horrid things still happen every minute of every day to people who do not deserve them, who have done nothing dishonourable. Horrid things caused by other human beings, and it certainly seems to me that we, as a species - en masse, world-wide - cannot seem to prevent ourselves from doing what is bad, here understanding and accepting, initially at least, 'the bad' as that which harms or kills or causes suffering to others. All we seem to have done is manufacture more excuses for ourselves and for others in order to try and justify the harm done, and the killings and the suffering caused, and thus

"...latterly, in the name of some country, or some nation, or some political ideal, or some cause, or on behalf of some-thing supra-personal we believed in, we sallied for to war or did deeds that caused

suffering, death, destruction, and inflicted violence on others. Defending this, or attacking that. Invading here; or colonizing there. Dreaming of or determined to find glory. Always, always, using the excuse that our cause, our ideal, our country, our nation, our security, our prosperity, our 'way of life', our 'destiny', hallowed our deeds; believing that such suffering, death, destruction as we caused, and the violence we inflicted on others, were somehow justified because 'we' were right and 'they' our foes, were wrong or in some way not as 'civilized' or as 'just' as us since 'their cause' or their 'way of life' or way of doing things was, according to us, reprehensible." [2]

But is 'the bad' really that which harms or kills, or causes suffering to, others, and if so, is it necessary - moral - to qualify this understanding by appending 'without just cause' to it, and what, therefore - as others, from the *Jus Papirianum* attributed to Sextus Papirius to Augustine of Hippo to Thomas Aquinas and beyond, have sought to define - is a 'just cause' so that 'the bad' is then understood to be "that which harms or kills or causes suffering to others without just cause".

This essay presents some musings of mine regarding such questions.

David Myatt
April 2013

Part One

Good and Evil - An Early Christian Perspective

Given the influence of Christianity over individuals in the West during the past two millennia, especially in terms of eschatology and jurisprudence, it seems apposite to consider how the concepts of 'good' and 'evil' are presented in Christian scripture.

In Genesis 3.5 it is written that:

ἦδει γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ὅτι ἐν ἡ ἡμέρᾳ φάγητε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, διανοιχθήσονται ὤμῶν οἱ ὀφθαλμοί, καὶ ἔσεσθε ὡς θεοὶ γινώσκοντες καλὸν καὶ πονηρόν. [3]

What, therefore, is meant by γινώσκοντες καλὸν καὶ πονηρόν? Most

translations - modern and otherwise - provide something akin to "knowing good and evil" which we, after two thousand years, presume to associate with some theological ideation such as 'the forces/realm of good' contrasted with (or verses) 'the forces/realm of evil' as if both have or can have an existence independent of the physical world and independent of ourselves, an existence or a force associated, or seemingly associated, with a being described, in the Hebrew scriptures, as שָׁרָפִי - a serpent - and in LXX as ὄφις, a mythological creature familiar to readers of Hesiod's *Theogony* [4] and from myths and legends concerning the oracle at Delphi and the Πύθων, which is both curious and interesting given that שָׁרָפִי can signify divination (qv. Genesis 44.15, for example) and the whisper (the hiss) of a soothsayer or an enchantress.

But, in respect of this 'good and evil', might the Greek of LXX - and the Hebrew text - suggest something other than such a theological ideation? That is, how might the Greek text have been understood in its time?

The Greek of LXX contrasts κάλος with πονηρόν. Now, κάλος is classically understood (as often in Homer) as 'what is pleasing' (as in pleasing to look upon) and that which is considered beneficial and/or admirable (as in admirable deeds); whence what is beautiful/healthy and what is noble or honourable. Classically understood, πονηρόν is 'wearisome' (as in Hesiod, for instance in reference to the tasks that Hercules has to endure) and also what is considered dishonourable or cowardly, as in Sophocles, *Philoctetes* v.437 - πόλεμος οὐδέν' ἄνδρ' ἐκὼν αἰρεῖ πονηρόν, ἀλλὰ τοὺς χρηστοὺς αἰεὶ (battle does not willingly take cowards, but - as of old - the honourable).

The classical meaning of the Genesis text - of the Greek still understood at the time of LXX (c. 250 BCE) and before later interpretations [5] - might therefore seem to suggest some contrast between what is beneficial/admirable/beautiful/noble/honourable and what is wearisome/cowardly/dishonourable.

Interestingly, the sense of the Hebrew text of Genesis 3.5 seems to follow the sense of the Greek, or vice versa [6] - יָדָעַי טוֹב וְרָע . That is, "knowing tov and rah," with טוֹב suggesting pleasing, pleasant, beautiful; and רָע suggesting adversity, unpleasant, harmful, injurious.

In Genesis 8.21, πονηρόν also occurs, again usually translated as some abstract 'evil' - man's heart is evil from his youth, and so on - even though the classical/Hebrew understanding of the term suggests the former more personal sense of dishonourable/injurious, as does its occurrence in the New Testament, as, for example, in Luke 6.45 where it is - interestingly - contrasted not with κάλος but with ἀγαθός, and where the context - of a healthy (a good, κάλος) tree not bearing rotten/bad (σαπρός) fruit, καλὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν σαπρόν - also

suggests not some abstract (demonic) 'evil' but a dishonourable (a bad, cowardly) person bringing forth some-thing bad, burdensome, dishonourable, and thus unhealthy, as rotten fruit is unhealthy and harmful, and with Luke 6.43-5 therefore translated thus:

For no healthy tree brings forth rotten fruit just as a rotten tree cannot bring forth healthy fruit. For each tree is judged by its fruit. A good person from the store of good in their heart brings forth what is good, and a bad person from their bad store brings forth what is bad; for it is because of an overflowing heart that the mouth speaks.

Οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν δένδρον καλὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν σαπρὸν, οὐδὲ πάλιν δένδρον σαπρὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν καλόν, ἕκαστον γὰρ δένδρον ἐκ τοῦ ἰδίου καρποῦ γινώσκεται· ὁ ἀγαθὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ θησαυροῦ τῆς καρδίας προφέρει τὸ ἀγαθόν, καὶ ὁ πονηρὸς ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ προφέρει τὸ πονηρόν· ἐκ γὰρ περισσεύματος καρδίας λαλεῖ τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ

This 'healthy tree' and 'rotten fruit' make sense, for how can a tree be evil? Similarly, the contrast of πονηρόν with ἀγαθός also makes sense in referring to a bad person and good person, for ἀγαθός is classically understood as brave; honourable; well-bred (as often in Homer) and as implying a personal quality, such as prowess, excellence, in some-thing - or good at some-thing - as in The Agamemnon of Aeschylus:

ὅστις δ' ἀγαθὸς προβατογνώμων,
οὐκ ἔστι λαθεῖν ὄμματα φωτός,
τὰ δοκοῦντ' εὐφρονος ἐκ διανοίας
ὑδαρεῖ σαίνειν φιλότῃτι.

Yet to he who has a good knowledge of his herd
A person's eyes cannot conceal what is a feeble begging for friendship
Behind a pretence of reasoned good judgement. (vv. 795-798)

and as in Oedipus Tyrannus by Sophocles:

ὄρᾳς ἔν' ἤκεις, ἀγαθὸς ὦν γνώμην ἀνὴρ,
τοῦμὸν παριεῖς καὶ καταμβλύνων κέαρ;

Observe where you have come to with your prowess in reason
By me giving way and blunting my passion. (vv. 687-8)

The scriptural contrast of rottenness and health is also evident, for instance, in Romans 12.21:

μὴ νικῶ ὑπὸ τοῦ κακοῦ ἀλλὰ νίκα ἐν τῷ ἀγαθῷ τὸ κακόν

where ἀγαθός is contrasted with κακός rather than with πονηρόν. Although the verse is often translated along the lines of 'Do not let evil conquer you, instead conquer evil with good,' classically understood, κακός is what is 'bad' in the sense of some-thing rotten or unhealthy, or - the opposite of κάλος - what is displeasing to see. κακός is also what is unlucky, a misfortune, and/or injurious, as for example in The Agamemnon

τὸ μὲν γυναιῖκα πρῶτον ἄρσενος δίχα
ῥῆσθαι δόμοις ἔρημον ἔκπαγλον κακόν

Primarily, for a lady to be separate from her mate -
To remain unprotected by family - is a harsh misfortune (vv. 862-3)

Given the sense of ἀγαθός previously mentioned (with reference for example to Luke 6.45) and this sense of κακός, then Romans 12.21 might suggest: "Do not let what is rotten win; instead, overpower what is rotten with what is good," and good in the sense of beneficial and healthy, so that an alternative would be "Do not let what is harmful win; instead, overpower what is harmful with what is healthy."

Similarly, Romans 12.17 - with its contrast of κακός and κάλος - would imply:

Do not render what is bad with what is bad; rather, show concern for what all see is good.

μηδενὶ κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἀποδιδόντες, προνοοῦμενοι καλὰ ἐνώπιον πάντων ἀνθρώπων·

Understood thus, the impression is not of 'fire and brimstone' preaching but of something rather gentle, something much more human and appealing and understanding of human nature; something evident, for example, in the well-known passage (Romans 13.10) ἡ ἀγάπη τῷ πλησίον κακὸν οὐκ ἐργάζεται· πλήρωμα οὖν νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη: love brings no harm to the neighbour; love is the completion of the law.

Furthermore, it is this love which is healthy and good; which can 'overpower what is harmful', what is bad.

What these examples reveal - and many other examples from Christian scripture could be adduced - is not abstract, impersonal, theological concepts of 'good' and 'evil' but rather something personal that individuals can relate to and understand, and it is tempting therefore to suggest that it was later, and theological, interpretations and interpolations which led to a harsh dichotomy,

an apocalyptic eschatology, a 'war' between an abstract 'good' and 'evil', and that with such interpretations and interpolations - much in evidence in the persecution of alleged heretics - the simple gospel message of the health of love was somehow lost for a while, to be, later on, re-expressed by people such as William Penn, who wrote, in his *Some Fruits of Solitude*, "Let us then try what love can do."

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Notes

[1] *Blue Reflected Starlight*. 2012

[2] *qv. A Slowful Learning, Perhaps*. 2012

[3] Septuaginta - Vetus Testamentum. c. 250 BCE.

[4] *qv. the Chimaera* (vv. 319ff), described as having three heads, one of which - ἡ δ' ὄφις - was a serpent, a dragon: ὄπιθεν δὲ δράκων.

[5] The current consensus is that LXX was written around 250 BCE, give or take a few decades. This is the Hellenistic era of Euclid and Archimedes; a period when Homer was still recited, and the classic tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and others, some two or more centuries before, were still understood and appreciated, just as the language of Shakespeare - and his plays - are understood and appreciated today. This appreciation of classical Greek literature continued into the Roman era and beyond, with the cultured Cicero, for example, often explaining classical Greek terms for his Latin readers, and with Marcus Aurelius - Roman Emperor a century after the time of Jesus of Nazareth - writing his 'meditations', Τὰ εἰς ἑαυτὸν - in the same (possibly Attic derived) κοινή Greek as that of LXX and the New Testament.

It is therefore seems likely that the scribes of LXX - and possibly those of the New Testament - were also familiar with the earlier classical literature.

[6] The date of the Hebrew scriptures has been much discussed. The earliest fragments of extant texts of both LXX and the Hebrew scriptures currently known suggest that LXX is slightly (but not much) older than the written text of the Hebrew scriptures of which papyrus fragments survive. However, according to Jewish aural tradition the scrolls of the Torah were first written c. 1000 BCE and thus would predate LXX by many centuries.

Part Two

Good and Evil - A Muslim Perspective

The classical and the early Christian sense of a human, and a natural, and not an abstract, dogmatical, good and bad, briefly outlined in part one, is also found in Islam: in the Quran, in the Sunnah, and in Shariah. For the sense of 'the bad' - الخبيث - is of what is rotten, unhealthy, dirty, unclean, defective; with the sense of 'the good', of 'good things' - الطيبات - being pleasing, pure, healthy, natural, beautiful, noble.

Consider, for example, Surah 5, Ayah 100 of the Quran:

قُلْ لَا يَسْتَوِي الْخَبِيثُ وَالطَّيِّبُ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ كَثْرَةُ
الْخَبِيثِ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

A fallible 'interpretation of meaning' [1] is:

"The dirty and the clean are not alike even though, being ubiquitous, what is dirty may entice [أَعْجَبَكَ] you." [2]

In Surah 61, Ayah 12, 'good' - طيبة - is what is beautiful, pleasant:

يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَيُدْخِلْكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ وَمَسَاكِنَ طَيِّبَةً فِي جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ
الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٢﴾

" [Allah] will forgive your transgressions [ذُنُوبَكُمْ] and guide you to Jannah wherein are rivers, cascading down, and those beautiful dwellings set within perpetually-flowering gardens. And this is the success that matters." [Interpretation of meaning]

Consider also Surah 2, Ayah 267:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّا
أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ۖ وَلَا تَيَمَّمُوا الْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ وَلَسْتُمْ
بِتَّخَذِيهِ إِلَّا أَنْ تُغْمِضُوا فِيهِ ۚ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ ﴿٢١٧﴾

"From what We give you from the earth and from the good things you have earned - disburse; but do not look toward [تَيَمَّمُوا] disbursing those defective things, which you would never take [for yourself] unless your eyes were closed." [Interpretation of meaning]

As with the New Testament, what these examples reveal - and many other examples could be adduced - is not abstract concepts of 'good' and 'evil' but rather something that is understandable by individuals and related to themselves and the world around them [3].

Jurisprudence and Society

Islam and Christianity have both developed traditions relating to the scope, detail, intent, and the implementation, of the laws necessitated by a society [4] - a jurisprudence - as well as traditions, or doctrines, concerning the nature of the authority that has or asserts it has the power to enforce such laws, and which laws often seek to criminalize 'the bad' and thus offer an interpretation of 'the good' and 'the bad'.

The traditional Christian view, evident in the Catholic tradition, is one of not only canon law but of the exercise of spiritual influence, direct and indirect, over civil authority to the extent, for example, that the Code of Justinian of 529-534 CE begins with *In Nomine Domini Nostri Jesu Christi* and (i) enshrined in law the authority of the Church, (ii) enshrined in law the requirement that all persons subject to the jurisdiction of the code be Christian, and thus that society be a Christian one; and (iii) detailed in law what constituted heresy.

For Muslims, Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) - the textual sources of which are the Quran and Sunnah - is a legal and an ethical guide to what is good and what is bad; that is, to what is halal (beneficial) and what is haram (harmful) from the perspective of the only success that, for a Muslim, matters: the success of being guided by Allah to dwell in the perpetually-flowering Gardens of Paradise, wherein are rivers, cascading down.

Being a legal as well as an ethical guide, fiqh deals not only with religious worship but also with civil, business, and domestic matters such as transactions, ownership, funds, and inheritance, and thus provides a framework for a society whose aim is to assist Muslims who live together in a particular area to know and follow the precepts and the way of life revealed by Muhammad: to do and inspire what is good, and avoid and dissuade others from doing what is bad, *تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ* (Amr bil Maroof wa Nahi anil Munkar) [5].

However, it seems to me that the problem with jurisprudence, Muslim and Christian, is and was our fallible, human, understanding of the revelation, of the original message; a problem classically understood in Islam by the distinction made by Muslim scholars between fiqh - our fallible understanding and attempts at interpretation - and Shariah, the divine and perfect guidance given by Allah, based as fiqh (classical Islamic jurisprudence) is on the principles of acceptance of diversity (of scholarly opinion), on custom [6], and on reasoned deductions by individuals that are stated to be fallible and thus not immutable. A distinction that allows for reasoned change, accepts the necessity of diverse opinions, the necessity of individual independent scholarly judgement in trials, arbitrations, and determining penalties, and manifests both the non-hierarchical nature of the religion of Islam and the original understanding of the good and the bad.

In modern times, in the Muslim world, this necessary distinction between fiqh and Shariah, this allowance for reasoned change based on diverse scholarly opinion, and the necessity of individual independent scholarly judgement in trials, arbitrations, and determining penalties, often seems to be overlooked when attempts are made by governments in Muslim lands to introduce 'Shariah law' with the result that inflexible penal codes and immutable penalties are introduced backed by the claim, contrary to fiqh, that such governments have a mandate to impose and enforce such dogmatical interpretations as are an inevitable part of such government-sponsored codified law.

Even in the past this distinction between fiqh and Shariah, and the need for an acceptance of a diversity of scholarly and reasoned opinion, was often neglected, especially by powerful rulers or ruling cliques, leading to societies which were Muslim in name only where 'the good' came to be more the embodiment of the will or the desire or the need of the powerful, the privileged, than it was of the original religious revelation, and where 'the law' became inflexible, impersonal, and often corrupt, with regular conflict between the powerful, the privileged within a society and/or between societies, and which conflicts were sometimes justified by appeals to a particular religious

interpretation. Similarly with Christianity, as shown by the tumultuous conflicts - religious and civil, and causing immense suffering - within the West since the time of Justinian.

Thus does the original meaning - the message - of the revelation seem to become somewhat lost; the message, in the case of Christianity, of love and humility, of redemption through suffering (crucifixus), of Ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ [7]; the message, in the case of Islam, of an individual reliance only on Allah, of Adab [8], of respect for diversity and custom.

Which leads to the question as to whether a jurisprudence based on a spiritual revelation works, given the nature of such a religion and the fact that it seems that our paradoxical human nature and our societies were not effectively changed, and have not been effectively changed, by such jurisprudence, or at least not changed for long. Do these religions - does religion, spirituality, in general - require, demand, that the believers reform, or try to reform, the world? If so, is that contrary to such personal, human, notions of the good and the bad that have been described above? [9] Is two thousand years - in the case of Christianity - a sufficient time to judge such change, such societies, such jurisprudence? Is one and a half thousand years - in the case of Islam - a sufficient time to judge such change, such societies, such jurisprudence?

The problem seems to be that for revelatory religions such as Islam and Christianity the priority is salvation of the individual and thus the distinction made between this, our mortal, life and the next; a priority and a distinction that has, for centuries, been used to explain, and often justify - by individuals, governments, factions, and authorities - harsh deeds and practices, and harsh punishments and policies. Thus, what has tended to occur is that such salvation has become a 'just cause', used for century after century to justify or to try and justify (i) the persecution, torture, and killing of those deemed to be heretics, (ii) wars (bellum iustum), conflicts, and violent religious schisms; and (iii) the harsh treatment of 'non-believers'. All in the name of, for example, 'saving souls', and/or based on the belief, the interpretation, that this is what God has commanded; for such suffering and horrors that are caused or occur in this life are really of lesser importance than being admitted into Heaven. Hence the concepts of martyrdom and of us bearing our misfortunes, our pain, our suffering, the horrors inflicted by others and on others, because of the hope, the promise, the reward, of an everlasting life in eternal bliss.

The Modern State

Such an understanding - such questions and such answers regarding religion

and religious jurisprudence - are not new, and led, centuries ago, to the idea of the secular State, to the theory of governance termed liberal democracy, and to a new or at least a revised jurisprudence [10]. That is, to such sentiments as are expressed in the 1776 Declaration of Independence:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."

The focus is not on salvation, not on Heaven or Jannah, but on Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. A focus, a governance, a jurisprudence, and a sentiment, that have certainly changed the West, and some other parts of the world, for the better. As I have mentioned elsewhere:

"The simple truth of the present and so evident to me now - in respect of the societies of the West, and especially of societies such as those currently existing in America and Britain - is that for all their problems and all their flaws they seem to be much better than those elsewhere, and certainly better than what existed in the past. That is, that there is, within them, a certain tolerance; a certain respect for the individual; a certain duty of care; and certainly still a freedom of life, of expression, as well as a standard of living which, for perhaps the majority, is better than elsewhere in the world and most certainly better than existed there and elsewhere in the past.

In addition, there are within their structures - such as their police forces, their governments, their social and governmental institutions - people of good will, of humanity, of fairness, who strive to do what is good, right. Indeed, far more good people in such places than bad people, so that a certain balance, the balance of goodness, is maintained even though occasionally (but not for long) that balance may seem to waver somewhat.

Furthermore, many or most of the flaws, the problems, within such societies are recognized and openly discussed, with a multitude of people of good will, of humanity, of fairness, dedicating themselves to helping those affected by such flaws, such problems. In addition, there

are many others trying to improve those societies, and to trying find or implement solutions to such problems, in tolerant ways which do not cause conflict or involve the harshness, the violence, the hatred, of extremism." [11]

Interestingly, many of the 'multitude of people of good will, of humanity, of fairness' dedicated to helping those within such now secular societies, and many of those trying to improve those societies, are people of faith: Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist... Which perhaps explains, or partly explains, why Christianity and, to a lesser extent, Islam have begun, by the necessity of interaction and by social practicalities, to adapt to the changes that the modern State - with its liberal democracy and modern jurisprudence - has wrought over the past two centuries; changes manifest, for example, not only in an increased standard of living for many (especially in the lands of the West) but also in attitudes, perception, and expectation, especially in relation to human rights. A change that has begun to lead many Christians, and some Muslims, to re-discover the simple message of their respective - and in many ways quite similar - revelations; a change that has led others to reject the more harsh interpretations of their faith and seek reform within their faith (Christian, Jewish, and Muslim); and a change which is leading others to question whether such messages of revelation are even compatible with the rights, the life, the liberty, and the happiness, of certain people, such as those whose love is for someone of the same gender.

Good and Evil - The Perspective of Pathei-Mathos

The pathei-mathos of individuals over thousands of years, often described in literature, poetry, memoirs, aural stories, and often expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, has resulted in an accumulation of insights; what we might with some justification describe as a culture, which, while often redolent of the spiritual, is not religious. That is, not doctrinal, not codified, not organized, and not presenting or manifesting a theology. A culture that is supra-national, containing as it does, among many other treasures, the observations of Lao Tzu, Siddhartha Gautama, Ovid, and Mohandas K. Gandhi; the thoughts of Aeschylus, Sappho, and Sophocles; the writings of Marcus Aurelius and Jane Austen; the allegory, the mysterium, of Jesus of Nazareth; and, importantly, the experiences - written, recorded, and aural - of those who over the centuries have endured suffering, conflict, disaster, tragedy, and war, and who were forever changed by the experience.

As often in respect of a culture, as with a religion or a spiritual Way of Life, individuals may favour some insights over others, and may and probably will differ over how certain insights should be understood or interpreted. As for me, I find in this vast cultural treasure three important things.

First, an understanding of the impermanence of temporal things; of how abstract ideations - given some practical form and maintained via striving human beings - over decades and centuries always by their nature wreck havoc and cause or contribute to suffering often despite the decent intentions of those who brought them into being and maintain or maintained them; and of how all such forms, in the perspective of millennia, 'hath but a short time to live'.

Second, that even the modern State with its liberal democracy and its jurisprudence and its benefits and positive change, is not only impermanent but also, for some, a cause of suffering, of havoc, and that the benefits and the positive change do not necessarily offset such suffering, such havoc, as are caused, as have been caused, and as may continue to be caused; and that it is for each one of us to decide how to, or whether to, engage with such an impermanent form, by and for example following the moral advice given some two millennia ago - Απόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ - and/or by perhaps trying to improve those societies, "in tolerant ways which do not cause conflict or involve the harshness, the violence, the hatred, of extremism."

Third, that there is in this culture of pathei-mathos a particular ethos: the tone of harmony, ἀρμονίη; of a natural balance, or rather of how certain human actions are hubris - ὕβρις - and not only disrupt this needful harmony but also cause or contribute to suffering. Of the importance, and perhaps the primacy, of human love; of how Eris is the child of Polemos and Hubris, and of how a lovelorn Polemos follows Hubris around, never requited. Of how the truths of religions and spiritual ways are, in their genesis, basically simple, always numinous, and most probably the same: guides to living in such a way that we can rediscover the natural balance, appreciate the numinous, and avoid hubris.

All of which lead to an understanding of (i) how good and bad are not 'out there' and cannot be manifest or assumed to be manifest in some form, by some ideation, or in 'them' (the others), without causing or contributing to or being the genesis of suffering, but instead are within us as individuals, a part of our nature, our character, our φύσις, and often divergently expressed; and (ii) of how, in my view at least, personal honour and not a codified law, not a jurisprudence, is the best, the most excellent, way to define and manifest this 'good', with honour understood, as in my philosophy of pathei-mathos [12], as an instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous. An honourable person is thus someone of manners, fairness, reasoned judgement, and valour; with honour being a means to live, to behave, in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις; in order try and avoid causing suffering, and in order to rediscover, to acquire, ἀρμονίη, that natural balance that presences the numinous (sans denotatum and sans dogma) and thus

reveals what is important about life and about being human.

For, in effect, the truths concerning honour and dishonour, and of our propensity for both honour and dishonour, are the essence of what we can learn from the supra-national, the living, and the thousands of years old, human culture of pathei-mathos.

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Notes

[1] The fallible interpretations of meaning that are given here are mine.

[2] In respect of **وَلَا تُعْجِبْكَ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَأَوْلَادُهُمْ** - **أَعْجَبَكَ** , qv. Surah 9, Ayah 85 - do not let their wealth and their children enchant you. That is, do not be impressed by their wealth and marvel at their (apparently fine) offspring.

[3] It is to be expected that some, or many, will find this conclusion of mine regarding good and evil in Christian scripture and/or in Islam a controversial one, as no doubt some will query my (fallible) interpretation of the texts, and which interpretations often avoid conventional readings, for three reasons.

First, to hopefully give some readers a sense - an intimation - of the vibrancy, the immediacy, that I find in the texts that I have endeavoured to translate/interpret here, and endeavoured in the past to translate/interpret elsewhere.

Second, as I noted in *Explanation Of Humility and The Need for Tolerance* with respect to the Quran and **الرُّعْبَ** :

My, admittedly fallible, view now - after some years of reflexion and study - is that, in an English interpretation of the meaning of a work as revered, and misunderstood, as the Quran, English words in common usage must be carefully chosen, with many common words avoided, and that it would sometimes be better to choose an unusual or even archaic word in order to try and convey something of the sense of the Arabic. Thus, with a careful interpretation common misunderstandings of the text - by non-Muslims unversed in Arabic - can possibly be avoided, especially if - as might be the case with unusual words - the reader has to pause to consider the meaning or make the effort to find the meaning, if only in a glossary appended to the interpretation. A pause and/or an effort that is suited to reading a

work revered by millions of people around the world.

Hence why in the matter of Ayah 151 of Surah Al 'Imran, my interpretation of meaning, employing just such an unusual English word with a literary provenance, was:

Into the hearts of they who disbelieve We shall hurl redurre because they, without any authority revealed about such things, associate others with Allah; and for their home: The Fire, that harrowing resting place of the unjust.

Third, to perhaps inspire some to scholarly consider, again, both the text themselves and the accepted interpretation(s) given that in my view translation/interpretation of texts to English from an ancient (no longer spoken) language or from a text revered in the way the Quran is (i) not 'an exact science' but more akin to an art to be approached with (a) an artistic appreciation of what was (in the case of ancient texts) a living vibrant language and in the case of the Quran is a poetic and numinous language, (b) with a certain humility, and (c) with a lack of preconceptions about the accepted 'meaning' of certain words and which accepted meanings are often only the attempts of others in the past to approximate an assumed meaning, and (ii) that the rich diversity, vibrancy, and flexibility of the English language has, in my view, been much underused, and an underuse that has sometimes led to bland interpretations of texts.

[4] Society is understood here, as elsewhere in my philosophy of pathei-mathos, as a collection of individuals who live in a particular area and who are subject to the same laws (or customs) - whether written or aural - and the same institutions of authority, however that authority has been obtained and is manifest.

Jurisprudence is understood here as describing a systematic (often codified) system of law - written or aural, and whether practical, implemented, or theorized - and the scope, nature, and intent of those laws. The *Jus Papirianum* attributed to Sextus Papirius and the Code of Justinian are thus examples of jurisprudence.

[5] Surah 3, Ayah 110.

[6] One of the five principle maxims of Islamic jurisprudence (which five principles are regarded as expressing the essence of fiqh) is لعادة محكمة . That is, that the customs of a society or culture are important and a factor to be considered if they do not conflict with the guidance of Quran and Sunnah.

[7] Matthew 22:21. Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God, the things that are God's.

[8] The importance of Muslim Adab - the manners, the morals, the culture, of Muslims - in defining and understanding Islam is something that many non-Muslims, especially those critical of Islam, are either ignorant of or dismiss.

An appreciation of Adab can be gleaned from reading Bukhari's book *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad* and also An-Nawawi's collection *Forty Ahadith*.

[9] qv. Part Three.

[10] Important parts of this jurisprudence concern international law and laws relating to human rights.

[11] *Notes on The Politics and Ideology of Hate* (2012)

[12] qv. *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos* and *Recuyle of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*.

Part Three

Religion, Law, and The Reformation of Individuals

The overview in parts one and two of how, in my view, good and evil are understood in the culture of pathei-mathos and by early Christianity and Islam presented several musings, based as that overview was and those musing are on my experiences, study, and reflexion, over some forty years. One of my musings was that, in the case of Islam and Christianity - two of the most influential spiritual ways of life in the last two millennia - the understanding of good and evil was not originally of some dogmatical and theological abstraction divorced from human life, but a more directly personal one related to the behaviour of individuals, with the promise that good behaviour - as outlined in the gospels and in the Quran and Sunnah - would most probably be rewarded with a place in Heaven or Paradise, and that the powerful and the leaders of governments are accountable to God [1].

In the case of the culture of pathei-mathos, it not only provides, as does the modern State, a perspective (and a teleology) unrelated to the judgement of a supreme deity and the promise of an after-life, but also points us toward

answers rather different from those provided by proponents of the State, of liberal democracy, and of a jurisprudence concerned with international law and codifying and criminalizing what politicians, and/or some political theory, ideology, dogma, or agenda, deem to be bad. For what that culture provides is an understanding of how all forms - be they considered political [2], or codified ideologically [3] or in the form of a dogmatic hierarchical religion - have caused suffering, or do cause suffering sooner or later, because they are judgemental, supra-personal; and that such suffering is unjustified because it is individual human beings and indeed the other life with which we share this planet who and which are important; and that to alleviate and to prevent and remove the causes of suffering is necessary because a manifestation of what is good; that is, a manifestation of reasoned, balanced, compassionate, personal judgement, and of that learning, that knowledge, the insights, that personal experience of conflict, war, disaster, tragedy, havoc, violence, hatred, and pain, have taught and revealed to individuals for some three thousand years.

Thus it is that this culture contains the judgement, the insights, and the experience, of people as diverse in their origins, their life, and in some of their views, as Lao Tzu, Sappho, van Gogh, Solzhenitsyn, and Mohandas K. Gandhi. Sappho, for instance, moved by personal love, wrote over two and half thousand years ago that:

For some - it is horsemen; for others - it is infantry;
For some others - it is ships which are, on this black earth,
Visibly constant in their beauty. But for me,
It is that which you desire.

To all, it is easy to make this completely understood
For Helen - she who greatly surpassed other mortals in beauty -
Left her most noble man and sailed forth to Troy
Forgetting her beloved parents and her daughter
Because [the goddess] led her away [...]

Which makes me to see again Anactoria now far distant:
For I would rather behold her pleasing, graceful movement
And the radiant splendour of her face
Than your Lydian chariots and foot-soldiers in full armour.. [4]

While Gandhi, motivated by a desire for communal change and a vision of the future, more recently wrote that civilization, correctly understood, does not mean and does not require cities and centralized government and vast industries - and thus a modern State - but rather means and requires a certain personal moral conduct, a "mastery over our mind and our passions" [5],

non-violence, the simplicity of village life [6], and communities voluntarily cooperating together in pursuit of collective, and personal, development.

Which two examples illustrate what are, perhaps, the two main answers that the culture of pathei-mathos offers and has so far offered to the question, posed in the Introduction of this essay, of what, if anything, can or perhaps should (i) replace the answers of religions for those who do not or cannot accept such religious answers and the theological perspective and guidance so offered, and/or (ii) replace the answers offered by the jurisprudence of nation-States and the political theories of governance of such States for those who adjudge that the suffering such States cause is, on balance, unacceptable [7]. These two answers - founded on or inspired by the insight of a personal rather than an impersonal, dogmatical, good and bad - are the internal one of a personal life, focused on personal love (and/or on Art, music, and so on), and the external one of seeking change by means such as the non-violence of passive resistance [8] and through personal example.

How to choose? What criteria, moral or otherwise, to use to judge these two answers, and the other answers that over millennia and by pathei-mathos, have been lived and/or proposed? The criterion of the reformation - the development, the change - of the individual? If so, a change from what to where? Or, perhaps, the criterion should be personal honour? Indeed, should there be, or can there even be, some suprapersonal judgemental criteria that others may employ?

Given the nature of pathei-mathos [9], and the nature of a criterion, I incline toward the view that there is no criteria beyond the very individual, the reasoned, the personal, non-transferable, and fallible, judgement which derives from our own pathei-mathos, our own empathy, our own experience, our own life, and our own understanding of the causes of suffering.

Good, Evil, and The Criteria of Progress

To formulate some standard or rule or some test to try to evaluate alternatives and make choices in such matters is to make presumptions about what constitutes progress; about what constitutes a 'higher' level - or a more advanced stage - and what constitutes a 'lower' level or stage. That is, to not only make a moral judgement connected to what is considered to be 'good' and 'evil' - right and wrong, correct and incorrect - but also to apply that judgement to others and to 'things'. To judge them, and/or the actions of others, by whether they are on a par with, or are moving toward or away from, that 'right' and that 'wrong'.

This is, in my view, a veering toward hubris, away from the natural balance, and

thus away from that acknowledgement of our fallibility, of our uncertainty of knowing, that is the personal virtue of humility. For the essence of the culture of pathos-mathos, and the genesis, the ethos, of all religious revelations and spiritual ways before or until they become dogmatical [10], seems to be that we can only, without hubris, without prejudice, judge and reform ourselves.

For what the culture of pathos-mathos reveals is that we human beings, are - personally - both the cause and the cure of suffering; and that our choice is whether or not we live, or try to live, in a manner which does not intentionally contribute to or which is not the genesis of new suffering. The choice, in effect, to choose the way of harmony - the natural balance - in preference to hubris. But how, if we choose the way of harmony, are we to live? Are we to try and judge the lives and works of those who in the past have so chosen, or seem to us to have so chosen, or whose life and works seems to manifest a certain harmony or a particular numinous understanding which resonates with us? Are we then to try and judge and compare the passive resistance of Gandhi to the life and works of William Penn to the poetry of Sappho to the life and work of van Gogh to the influence of Lao Tzu or Jesus of Nazareth. Who are we to do this, and why? Does non-violent activism toward and in the name of 'progress', and/or a message of spiritual reformation and redemption, have - or should have - a higher value than poetry or Art or music or a life lovingly devoted to a partner or to cultivating Wu-Wei?

Or do we see the empathic, the human, the personal, scale of things, and our own human limitations, and accept that we do not need to so judge and so choose because we incline toward the view that all we can hope to do without veering toward hubris - toward upsetting the natural balance of Life, and thus causing more suffering - is to gently and with humility to try and personally alleviate some suffering somewhere in our own small way by, for instance, being compassionate and honourable in the immediacy of the living moment? With thus little or no concern for, or presumptions about, what others believe constitutes some-thing termed progress, and with little or no concern either about the promise, the reward, of an afterlife or about some suprapersonal human manufactured form, such as a State, that in some shape or other exists during our own brief mortal life? If so, then what - if anything - is the meaning, the purpose, of our so brief human living?

Notes

[1] "For what can a Man give in Exchange for his Life, as well as Soul? And though the chiefest in Government are seldom personally exposed, yet it is a Duty incumbent upon them to be tender of the Lives of their People; since without all Doubt, they are accountable to God for the Blood that is spilt in their Service. So that besides the Loss of so many Lives, of importance to any

Government, both for Labour and Propagation, the Cries of so many Widows, Parents and Fatherless are prevented, that cannot be very pleasant in the Ears of any Government, and is the Natural Consequence of War in all Government." William Penn. *An Essay towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe*. 1693 CE

[2] By the term politics is meant: (i) The theory and practice of governance, with governance itself founded on two fundamental assumptions; that of some minority - a government (elected or unelected), some military authority, some oligarchy, some ruling elite, some tyrannos, or some leader - having or assuming authority (and thus power and influence) over others, and with that authority being exercised over a specific geographic area or territory; (ii) The activities of those individuals or groups whose aim or whose intent is to obtain and exercise some authority or some control over - or to influence - a society or sections of a society by means which are organized and directed toward changing/reforming that society or sections of a society, either in accordance with a particular ideology or not.

[3] By the term ideology is meant a coherent, organized, and distinctive set of beliefs and/or ideas or ideals, and which beliefs and/or ideas and/or ideals pertain to governance, and/or to society, and/or to matters of a philosophical or a spiritual nature.

[4] From fragment 16 (7th century BCE), the full text of which, from P. Oxy. 1231 and 2166, is, with square brackets indicating conjectures and missing text:

οἱ μὲν ἱππῶν στρότον οἱ δὲ πέσδων,
οἱ δὲ νάων φαῖς' ἐπ[ι] γᾶν μέλαι[ν]αν
ἔ]μμεναι κάλλιστον, ἔγω δὲ κῆν' ὅτ-
τω τις ἔραται·
πά]γχυ δ' εὖμαρες σύνετον πόησαι
π]άντι τ[ο]ῦτ', ἃ γὰρ πόλυ περσκέθοισα
κάλλος [ἀνθ]ρώπων Ἑλένα [τὸ]ν ἄνδρα
τὸν [ἀρ]ιστον
καλλ[ίποι]σ' ἔβα 'ς Τροίαν πλέοι[σα
κωὺδ[ὲ πα]ῖδος οὐδὲ φίλων το[κ]ήων
πά[μπαν] ἐμνάσθη, ἀλλὰ παράγαγ' αὐταν
[]σαν
[
[]αμπτον γὰρ [
[
[]...κούφως τ[]ση[.]ν
[
..]με νῦν Ἀνακτορί[ας ὁ]νέμναι-

σ' οὐ] παρείσας,
τᾷς <κ>ε βολλοίμαν ἔρατόν τε βᾶμα
κάμάρυγμα λάμπρον ἴδην προσώπω
ἦ τὰ Λύδων ἄρματα κᾶν ὄπλοισι
[πεσδομ]άχεντας.

[5] *Hind Swaraj*, part 13. 1909 CE

[6] Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, October 5, 1945 CE

[7] The argument here is along the following lines. That nation-States accept both the primacy of a codified law based on the maintenance of internal order according to that law, and the need to ensure the security, the interests, and the preservation, of the nation-State, both of which often necessitate or have necessitated the following: (i) the killing of and/or the use of violence against human beings in their own lands, and/or elsewhere by means of war or otherwise; (ii) the imprisonment/persecution of human beings both for deeds/dissent deemed illegal and for 'crimes against the State'; (iii) actions which cause pain and suffering and hardship to others, such as internal economic policies and/or external economic/trade sanctions; (iv) the commercial exploitation of the resources of this planet and of the other life with which we share this planet.

[8] "Passive resistance is a method of securing rights by personal suffering, it is the reverse of resistance by arms. When I refuse to do a thing that is repugnant to my conscience, I use soul-force [...] Passive resistance, that is, soul-force, is matchless. It is superior to the force of arms." Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, part 17. 1909 CE

Concerning governments, he wrote, also in *Hind Swaraj*, that: "They do not say: 'You must do such and such a thing,' but they say: 'if you do not do it, we will punish you'."

[9] qv. my *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary*.

[10] As William Penn wrote in his tract *The Great Case of Liberty of Conscience Once More Briefly Debated and Defended*, published in 1670 CE:

"They overturn the Christian Religion: 1. In the Nature of it, which is Meekness; 2. In the Practice of it, which is Suffering."

Part Four

Ontology and Denotatum

To find answers to questions such as (i) how to live in a manner which does not intentionally contribute to or which is not the genesis of new suffering, and (ii) is there a meaning to our existence beyond the answers of God and 'the pursuit of liberty and happiness' requires reformulating the questions based on the ontological presumptions that underlie them. That is, we need to understand ourselves, our nature, and to pose and answer questions regarding being, beings, and the relationship between beings.

Conventional religions - such as Christianity and Islam - begin with a supreme being and a revelation, the promise, of an afterlife following a judgement, by the supreme being, of we humans as individuals. That is, there is guidance given as to what is good and bad and as to one's expected behaviour, as well as individuals who can commit transgressions - who can 'sin' - or who, by following the correct guidance, can progress toward salvation. The ontology here is of a transcendent, immortal, God, or Allah, and of separate mortal beings who possess the potential - for example, an immortal soul - to gain an existence beyond the death of their corporeal body. The immortal being has the ability (the power) to punish, or to reward, the mortal beings, and is stated to be a real being with an existence independent of us.

In respect of The State, the ontology is one of an entity - The State, the nation-State, the government - and of individuals ('citizens') who are less powerful than this entity, with this entity, however named, having the ability (the power) to punish, or to reward, the citizens. There is guidance given, by powerful entity, in the form of laws - of what is bad and good and one's expected behaviour - and the promise of such things as 'Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness' and reward of, a possible progress toward (in this life), security, health, and (possibly) wealth or at least a reasonable standard of living. Here, the powerful entity is a human ideation, of varied and variable specification, and which specifications have been manufactured - brought into being - by humans at various times during the past three hundred years and more.

In respect of the culture of pathei-mathos, I find within it an alternative to these two influential, but in many ways quite similar, ontologies with their powerful entities, their guidance, their punishments and rewards, and the progression of individuals toward some-thing which the powerful entity asserts or promises it

can provide.

This alternative is the ontology of us - we human beings - as a transient affective and effective connexion to other living beings [1], an emanation of the flux of Life, of ψυχή [2]. That is, of the separation-of-otherness - of I and of 'them', the others - being the result of a causal-only perception, and of denotatum: of our propensity to give names to, or to describe by means of terms, that which we observe to be or that which we assume to be is different to and separate from us, whereas, as empathy reveals, 'we' are part of, an aspect, of 'them' since 'they' are also finite, transient, emanations of ψυχή.

There is no abstract 'good' and 'evil' here; no division or cleaving asunder of φύσις (physis). There is only us in harmony, in balance, with our nature, our φύσις, or us not in harmony with our nature as an affecting and effecting, finite, transient, mortal, aspect of Life. If we are harmony - in balance with Life, with other life - we do not cause or contribute to or are not the genesis of suffering: we do not affect Life in a harmful way, and as I have intimated elsewhere [3] love, compassion, humility, empathy, and honour, are a possible means whereby we, in harmony with our φύσις, can avoid harming Life and its emanations, be such life our fellow human beings or the other life with which we share this planet.

In effect, this is the ontology of the illusion of self and of the unity, sans denotatum, of all living beings; of how we - presenced as human beings - can and do affect, and have affected, other life including other humans, often in ways we are not aware of; and of how our perception of I and of 'them' (the separation-of-otherness) has often led to us affecting other life in a harmful way, thus causing or contributing to or being the genesis of suffering, for that other life and often for ourselves. The ontology where there is no distinction, in being, between us - the emanations - and what emanates; there is only the appearance of difference due to our use of a causal-only perception and of denotatum. That is, we are ψυχή as ψυχή is both within us and us. We are the flux, the changing, of Life; changing as it changes.

There is therefore no suprapersonal supreme being who punishes and rewards; no requirement to actively agitate for or against the State; no afterlife separate from us because what exists after us is, partly, us transformed in being and, partly, what we aid or harm by virtue of the fact that we are an affective and effective connexion - a part of - Life. Furthermore, there is no need to strive to progress toward a some-thing because we already are that some-thing; that is, we already are what we are meant to be, except we often - or mostly - do not know this, or do not know what we are doing charmed as we seem to be by the charisma of words, by denotatum. As Heraclitus expressed it:

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἔοντος αἰεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ
πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ
πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν εἰκόσσι, πειρώμενοι καὶ
ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῖμαι κατὰ φύσιν
διαίρεων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅπως ἔχει· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους
λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὐδοντες
ἐπιλανθάνονται

Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done. [4]

The Simple Way of Harmony

This alternative ontology, derived from the culture of pathei-mathos, suggests that the answer to the question regarding the meaning of our existence is simply to be that which we are. To be in balance, in harmony, with Life; the balance that is love, compassion, humility, empathy, honour, tolerance, kindness, and wu-wei [5].

This, by its nature, is a personal answer and a personal choice; an alternative way that compliments and is respectful of other answers, other choices, and of other ways of dealing with issues such as the suffering that afflicts others, the harm that humans do so often inflict and have for so long inflicted upon others. The personal non-judgemental way, of presumption of innocence [6] and of wu-wei, balanced by, if required, a personal valourous, an honourable, intervention in a personal situation in the immediacy of the moment [7].

There is, in this alternative, no guidance required; and no-thing - such as an afterlife, or enlightenment, or liberty or happiness - to be attained. No need for dogma or too many words; no need for comparisons; no 'just cause' to excuse our behaviour. No mechanisms and no techniques to enable us to progress toward some-thing because there is no need or requirement to progress toward what is not there to be attained. There is only a personal living in such a way that we try to be compassionate, empathic, loving, honourable, kind, tolerant, gentle, and humble. And this is essentially the wisdom, the insight, the way of living - sans denotatum - that thousands upon thousands of people over millennia have contributed to the culture of pathei-mathos, as well as the essence of the message which many if not all spiritual ways and religions, in their genesis, perhaps sought to reveal: the message of the health of love and of our need, as fallible beings often inclined toward the unbalance of hubris, for

humility.

Notes

[1] An affective connexion is an operative one, which therefore can affect or influence what it is connected to, and specifically in a non-causal and thus synchronistic manner; that is, without necessarily having a prior cause. An effective connexion is one of an effect; that is, is the result of some-thing else or causes some-thing else as result of that or some other prior cause.

[2] Life *qua* being. qv. my *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary*, and *Conspectus of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*. (2012)

[3] qv. *Recuyle of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*, and *Conspectus of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*. (2012)

[4] Myatt. *Some Notes on Heraclitus Fragment 1*. (2013)

[5] Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in my philosophy of pathei-mathos to refer to a personal 'letting-be' - a non-interference - deriving from humility and from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, their φύσις, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive - that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous.

In respect of non-interference and hubriatic striving, refer to my 2012 essay, *Some Personal Musings On Empathy - In relation to the philosophy of πάθει μάθος*

[6] As mentioned in my philosophy of pathei-mathos, innocence is regarded as an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us and beyond the purvue of our empathy, are therefore unjudged us by and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence of others - until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise - is the fair, the reasoned, thing to do.

[7] In respect of such valourous intervention in personal situations, the following quotation is from my *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical*

Compendiary.

"The personal virtue of honour, and the cultivation of wu-wei, are - together - a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἀρμονίη. For personal honour is essentially a presencing, a grounding, of ψυχή - of Life, of our φύσις - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη. This balancing of compassion - of the need not to cause suffering - by σωφρονεῖν and δίκη is perhaps most obvious on that particular occasion when it may be judged necessary to cause suffering to another human being. That is, in honourable self-defence. For it is natural - part of our reasoned, fair, just, human nature - to defend ourselves when attacked and (in the immediacy of the personal moment) to valorously, with chivalry, act in defence of someone close-by who is unfairly attacked or dishonourably threatened or is being bullied by others [...]

This use of force is, importantly, crucially, restricted - by the individual nature of our judgement, and by the individual nature of our authority - to such personal situations of immediate self-defence and of valorous defence of others, and cannot be extended beyond that, for to so extend it, or attempt to extend it beyond the immediacy of the personal moment of an existing physical threat, is an arrogant presumption - an act of ὕβρις - which negates the fair, the human, presumption of innocence of those we do not personally know, we have no empathic knowledge of, and who present no direct, immediate, personal, threat to us or to others nearby us. Such personal self-defence and such valorous defence of another in a personal situation are in effect a means to restore the natural balance which the unfair, the dishonourable, behaviour of others upsets. That is, such defence fairly, justly, and naturally in the immediacy of the moment corrects their error of ὕβρις resulting from their bad (their rotten) φύσις; a rotten character evident in their lack of the virtue, the skill, of σωφρονεῖν. For had they possessed that virtue, and if their character was not bad, they would not have undertaken such a dishonourable attack."

Part Five

A Very Personal Conclusion

Twenty years ago, someone whom I loved who loved me died, too young and having harmed no one. Died, leaving me bereft, if only for a while. For too soon my return to those hubriatic, selfish, suffering-causing, and extremist, ways of my pasts. As if, despite the grief, the pain of loss, I personally had learned nothing, except in such moments of such remembering that did not, unfortunately, impact too much upon my practicalities of life; at least until

another bereavement, thirteen years later, came to shock, shake, betake me far from my arrogant presumptions about myself, about life, to thus lead, to so slowly lead, to me on a clear cold day yet again interiorly dwelling on what, if anything, is our human purpose of being here and why such bereavements, such early deaths, just seem so unjust, unfair.

For they - as so many - having harmed no one, died, while I - as so many - lived on to continue causing mayhem, chaos, suffering, and grief, no God it seemed to stay us or to slay us for our miscreant mischief. That, to me, seems to be no deity of empathy and compassion; only one explanation to maybe betake our grief, our tears, our fears, away.

I admit I could be wrong, but - having perhaps at least in some ways, and partially, understood the errors of both my selfish and my extremist suffering-causing pasts - I still cannot accept that such a compassionate, empathic, deity would, could, sanction such a taking of such innocence and allow such infliction of suffering to continue. For that makes no sense to me, given how I now do not believe there is another life awaiting us where we, *judicium divinum*, are rewarded or condemned. I find no comfort there; no satisfying explanation for the suffering that afflicts so many now as in the past: as if that, such suffering, as was written once, many times, is some sort of *casus belli* for our life, to be endured until such time as such a deity deems fit to end it.

Man, that is born of a woman, hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down, like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay. In the midst of life we are in death. Of whom may we seek for succour, but of thee, O Lord...

Must we therefore be resigned to suffering, to misery, to injustices, to the iniquity, to the continuing iniquity, of selfish, hubriatic, individuals who bully, rape, scheme, subjugate, manipulate, injure, maim, and kill? Reassured by *judicium divinum* or - perhaps - hoping, trusting, in the pending justice of some judge, some government, or some State?

Is it wrong for me to still feel the need for someone, some many, somewhere, to somehow in some way forestall, prevent, such deeds by such persons as may unjustly harm some others so that there is no waiting for the divine justice of a deity; no waiting for some Court somewhere to - possibly, and sometimes - requite a grievous wrong. No waiting for that promised idealistic idyllic future society when we humans - having somehow (perhaps miraculously) been changed in nature *en masse* - have ceased to so grievously, harmfully, selfishly, inflict ourselves on others.

My own and only fallible answer to the question of how to deal with the suffering that blights this world therefore seems to be the answer of a personal honour. That is, for each of us to gently try to carry that necessary harmony, that balance, of δίκη, wordlessly within; to thus restrain ourselves from causing harm while being able, prepared, in the immediacy of the moment, to personally, physically, restrain - prevent - others when we chance upon such harm being done. This, to me, is Life in its wholesome natural fullness - as lived, presenced, by the brief, mortal, consciously aware, emanations we are; mortal emanations capable of restraint, reason, culture, and reforming change; of learning from our pathei-mathos and that of others. My personal answer to personal questions, perplexion, and to grief and doubt. The answer which is to live in hope - even need - of a personal loyal love; to live with empathy, gentleness, humility, compassion, and yet with strength enough to do what should be done when, within the purvue of our personal space, we meet with one or many causing suffering and harm, no thought then for the fragility of our own mortal life or even for personal consequences beyond the ἀρμυγή we, in such honourable moments, are.

In Loving Remembrance of Sue, died 4th April 1993

cc David Myatt 2013
(First Edition)

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Image credit: NASA/STS107 (Columbia) - Moon Over the Atlantic Ocean



In Pursuit of Wisdom

For thousands of years, we human beings have been aware – or could discover, for ourselves – a certain wisdom, a particular conscious knowledge concerning our own nature.

From Aeschylus to Sophocles to Siddhārtha Gautama, from the mythos of the *Μοῖραι* [1] to the postulate of samsara, from the notion of Fate to the Sermon on the Mount, and beyond, we have had available to us an understanding of *Δίκη* [2]: of how we human beings are often balanced between honour and dishonour; balanced between *ὑβρις* and *ἀρετή*; between our animalistic desires, our passions, and our human ability to be noble, to achieve excellence; a balance manifest in our known ability to be able to control, to restrain, ourselves, and thus find and follow a middle way, of *ἁρμονίη*.

For several Aeons, this understanding, this middle way, was of two essential things. First, of how such a middle way enabled us to avoid causing or contributing to that suffering which our own *πάθει μάθος* – our learning from the sorrows of personal experience – informed us was unwise because contrary to the natural balance (the numinosity) that such *πάθει μάθος* intimately revealed to us. Second, of how this balance – this self control – was preferable for us, as individuals, since to upset this balance – for example to go beyond the limits established by our ancestral customs – was: (1) to invite a personal retribution (or misfortune) from the gods; or (2) to invite punishment from a supreme deity; or (3) condemn us to be reborn again and thus have to toil yet again to obtain reward (karma) enough to progress in accord with the *bhavacakra*.

As Sophocles wrote, over two thousand years ago – *ὑβρις φυτεύει τύραννον* [3]. That is, *ὑβρις* (hubris) plants the *τύραννον*, although the sense of *τύραννος* here is not exactly what our fairly modern term *tyrant* is commonly regarded as imputing. Rather, it refers to the intemperate person of excess who is so subsumed with some passion or aim or a lust for power that they go far beyond the due, the accepted, bounds of behaviour and thus exceed the limits of or misuse whatever authority they have been entrusted with. Thus do they, by their excess, by their disrespect for the customs of their ancestors, by their lack of reasoned, well-balanced, judgement [*σωφρονεῖν*] offend the gods, and thus, to restore the balance, do the *Ἐρινύες* take revenge. For it is in the nature of the *τύραννος* that they forget, or they scorn, the truth, the ancient wisdom, that their lives are subject to, guided by, *Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες*.



Λυκοῦργος and the Ἐρινύες

Thus the knowledge that our pride, our arrogance, our uncontrolled desires, our lack of *σωφρονεῖν*, are the genesis of the disruption of the natural balance – both within ourselves, and exterior to ourselves.

Or, as Milton expressed it in the terms of one particular mythos:

The infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile,
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived
The mother of mankind.

The received wisdom was personal avoidance of the error of *ὑβρις* because we, we individuals and possibly our

immediate family, would suffer: either in this life (by for example receiving bad luck, inviting misfortune, or having some tyrant foisted upon our community) or in some afterlife we believed in. Hence what we would now describe as ethical behaviour, for individuals – our control of our instincts, our desires – essentially derived from something supra-personal, such as ancestral customs, some belief in some gods, some faith in some supreme deity, or acceptance of some postulate such as karma or nirvana. In the terms of Christian theology, the belief being that we need to replace the guidance, the temptations, the guile, of The Infernal Serpent with the guidance, the love, of Christus Redemptor.

More recently, we human beings have committed a new kind of *ὑβρις*. Or more correctly perhaps, our *ὑβρις* has acquired a new form, new manifestations. That is, we have manufactured causal abstractions – ideals, ideas, *-isms* and *-ologies* – which we have identified with and/or striven to attain, both for ourselves, and for others; so that it has become apposite to write that causal abstractions are the genesis of suffering, for both ourselves, and for others. because such abstractions disrupt the natural balance of Life [*ψυχή*]: the life within us, within other sentient beings, and the Life that is presented to us as Nature, leading thus to a loss of *ἁρμονίη*. This kind of *ὑβρις* also plants the *τύραννος*, but the impersonal kind of *τύραννος* that lives in the practical implementation of such abstractions, internally and externally – so that, for instance, we allow ourselves to become subjects of some *-ism* or some *-ology* (whether described as or deemed to be political, social, or religious) or we become actual subjects of some impersonal entity such as a State, controlled, constrained, by laws, taxation, and the ever-present threat of the use of force by the ‘officially appointed’ minions of such an entity, so that such an impersonal entity has, in all but name, usurped our older gods, our *Μοῖραι*, our God, our karma.

Thus, the reality now is often of either (1) obedience to the *dictat* of some entity such as The State, our government, or the mandates of some supra-national body such as the United Nations, because to dissent would render us liable to punishment; or (2) a belief in – an acceptance of – such entities as the provider of ‘good fortune’, of ‘justice’ [4], and of prosperity, for us and our family.

Here, the threat of exterior, practical, punishment – the always present threat of imprisonment, the use of force against us by such entities as the Police, and ultimately the armed forces – has largely replaced the interior threat we hitherto might have imposed upon ourselves by our acceptance of such things as retribution from the gods, or punishment from some supreme deity. That is, ethical behaviour, for individuals still essentially derives from something supra-personal involving an *us* and *them*, the others.

The Pursuit of Wisdom

Despite these approaches, ancient and modern – that is, despite the ethical behaviour these two approaches encouraged and even demand, or tried to encourage – human beings, *en masse*, do not seem to have significantly changed. Thus, the world is still replete with individuals who cannot control their desires and who thus commit dishonourable deeds, the error of *ὑβρις*. For every minute of every day, year following year, human beings are murdered, brutalized, bullied, raped, injured, tortured, humiliated, abused – just as deception, theft, robbery, fraud, and malfeasance, occur with monotonous regularity.

The world is still rife with bloody murderous conflict, except that new causes of conflict have been added to the ancient ones of personal greed, personal dishonour, and the desires of some *τύραννος* or other. For the new entities that we have manufactured – such as nation-States – have themselves caused suffering, of a magnitude arguably greater than caused by some *τύραννος* and far greater than could be caused by individuals unable to control their dishonourable urges, their greed. For example, conflicts between the modern nation-States of the West, and internal conflict within such States, have resulted in the deaths of an estimated one hundred million human beings in just over a century [5].

Thus, it seems as if the ancient wisdom of *Δίκη* has remained the preserve of a minority, and thus that the accumulated *πάθει μάθος* of millennia – manifest in such things as literature, Art, music, ancestral culture, and spiritual Ways of Life – has little or no relevance for or been a significant influence upon the majority, even in those modern States which have had, for nigh on a century, compulsory education for children.

Since murderous conflict, the error of *ὑβρις*, and a lack of reasoned judgement, and thus suffering, remain – despite a variety of middle ways over millennia to divert us from such things, and despite numerous individuals over millennia, in their own ways, understanding *Amr bil Maroof wa Nahi anil Munkar* [6] – it is perhaps pertinent to consider if there is, or might be, a better expression of that wisdom, that particular conscious knowledge, concerning our own nature and how we might find and express that balance which enables us to restrain ourselves and avoid the error of *ὑβρις*.

That is, is there a Way which does not mean or imply a belief in some ancient mythos, or demand of us some faith in some supreme deity and some afterlife, or involve us in obedience to some supra-personal entity whose authority ultimately derives from the threat or the use of force or acceptance of some suffering-causing *-ism* or *-ology* whose nature is enshrined in the cliché that the abstraction of happiness, the abstraction of the welfare, the abstraction of the security, the abstraction of the prosperity, of the majority is more important than the fate of some individuals, and that thus for such abstractions to be obtained, in some (mythical) future the suffering of some or even of many individuals is an ‘acceptable price’ to pay?

In brief, a Way which does not of necessity involve us in considering matters as we have hitherto almost invariably done: by whether or not we, as individuals, are rewarded or punished (in this life, or in some believed in afterlife). That is, which does not of necessity posit some personal abstraction for us to accept or believe in – be such an abstraction some personal prosperity or some peace (in this or some next life such as Heaven or Jannah), or some supreme deity, or some notion such as nirvana or even some mythos such as *Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ’ Ἐρινύες*.

For such things – and the middle ways derived from them in the past – are, correctly appreciated and thence

understood, only pointers toward a deeper truth, which is that of the error of the self, and an error revealed by the nature of the causality implicit in this individual desire to seek some reward and avoid punishment, or, in Buddhism, avoid the periodicity of samsara.

Even in Buddhism, where this truth concerning the self has been dis-covered, revealed, in a rather rational manner, the practical reality for the majority is of *individual* striving, and the assumption of a goal for individuals. Hence the reason of the individual doing what they do – meditation, giving alms, striving to avoid causing suffering, for example – because they themselves seek liberation, nirvana; because they are concerned about *their* karma. Thus there is still a judgement based on the concept of individual reward. Hence, also, the striving for a posited goal, a striving exemplified by the *bhavacakra*.

The Error of The Self and The Natural Balance of Empathy

The error of the self is the error of a simple cause-and-effect predicated on the separation of living beings and upon a separate goal which the separated individual could attain by a given causal process.

Thus, and for example in Buddhism, the goal is nirvana and the process the Eight-Fold Path; in Christianity the goal is Heaven and the process is acceptance of Christus Redemptor; in Islam the goal is Jannah and the process is complete submission to Allah (and acceptance of Quran, Sunnah, and Shariah); in Hellenic culture the goal was *ἀρετή* (and thence a good place in Hades) by means such as avoidance of *ὑβρις*. In modern times, for the plethora of agnostics and atheists, the goal is happiness/prosperity by means such as The State, whether actively or passively accepted [7].

This assumption of self – of the separation of living beings, and such a causal process – is inherent in most if not all hitherto spiritual Ways which posit and require a praxis, and in the modern abstraction of The State, and also forms the basis of the ethics deriving from such Ways as well as the ethics of that modern abstraction. That is, either (1) The State defines what is moral, by means such as enforceable laws, or (2) such spiritual Ways posit what is moral based on their particular given goal and their given causal process and praxis of achieving that goal.

Why is this assumption of self an error? Because of empathy, which uncovers the nature of Being and beings that has hitherto been obscured by such spiritual Ways and by abstractions such as The State. For empathy – the innate (if still little used and underdeveloped) human faculty of *συμπάθεια* [*συν-πάθος*] – reveals the separation of living beings for the assumption, the limitation, it is.

For empathy reveals the *a-causal* nature (the numinous nature) of living beings – and the nexions that they are to Being, thus establishing a human ethics independent of the hitherto assumed cause-and-effect of separate human beings striving for some assumed goal by means of some given causal process.

Empathy thus establishes a new (or possibly a re-expressed older) understanding of our human nature – both existing and potential – and a new (or possibly a re-expressed older) knowing of how we might avoid *ὑβρις* and thus the suffering that *ὑβρις* brings. This understanding and knowing is of the numinous manifest in the indivisibility of living beings: of how the joy, the pain, the sorrow, the suffering, the very life, of what has hitherto been causally perceived as *the-separate-others* is in essence our joy, pain, sorrow, suffering, and life. For this, this natural balance, this *ἀρμονίη*, is what empathy, in the living moment, reveals – or rather what empathy by its very nature naturally and wordlessly and effortlessly moves us toward: what empathy brings-into-being.

Hence the empathic human being avoids Al-Munkar (and thus avoids causing suffering), and inclines toward Al-Maruf, just by being human – by using the faculty of empathy in the same way the faculties of sight, smell, taste, touch are used. That is, naturally as wordless perceptions of what-is, and not of what is assumed or believed. There is thus no naming and no ideation necessary or involved in this use of empathy; only a living in the transient moment. For it is not correct to give names to – to denote by names and terms – some-things, some existents; since such naming, such denoting, implies the causality of separation between subject and object, and it is this causality that empathy transcends.

There are therefore no given or assumed causal means – no techniques, methods, or teachings, no praxis, no texts, no faith in some-thing or some-one – as there is no goal, assumed and/or to be striven for. There is only empathy, and its development and use: only the empathy of the living changeful transient moment, and *us-as-Being* (The Numen, the acausal Unity, The Cosmos) presenced, temporarily, as one living nexion (*one being*) on one planet orbiting one star in one Galaxy.

How then to develop, to cultivate, empathy? By letting-go of all abstractions (all *-isms* and all *-ologies*). By ceasing to denote living beings by causal terms but instead perceiving them wordlessly in the moment of our perception. By ceasing to prejudge other human beings, either by some outer perceived form/appearance or by some assumption or assumptions manufactured or made by others – and instead relating to them as hitherto newly-known beings in the natural immediacy of the moment of our meeting with them. By placing ourselves in The Cosmic Perspective – that is, by an acceptance of ourselves as but one fragile fallible microcosmic nexion only temporarily presenced on one planet orbiting one star in one Galaxy in a Cosmos of billions of Galaxies. This is the essence of *wu-wei* – a knowing, a feeling, of Being; a knowing, a feeling, of The Numen, the acausal Unity, the Cosmos itself; and a knowing, a feeling, once described in that ancient wisdom termed Tao, and yet which even then, as now, could not and cannot be described by or contained within that one, or any, particular term.

Notes

[1]

τίς οὖν ἀνάγκης ἐστὶν οἰακοστροφός.
Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἑρινύες

Who then compels to steer us?
Trimorphed Moirai with their ever-heedful Furies!

Aeschylus (attributed), *Prometheus Bound*, 515-6

[2] Δίκη is that noble, respectful, balance understood, for example, by Sophocles (among many others) – for instance, Antigone respects the natural balance, the customs and traditions of her own numinous culture, given by the gods, whereas Creon verges towards and finally commits, like Oedipus in *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the error of ὕβρις and is thus “taught a lesson” (just like Oedipus) by the gods because, as Aeschylus wrote -

Δίκη δὲ τοῖς μὲν παθοῦσ-
ιν μαθεῖν ἐπιρρέπει

In respect of Δίκη, I write and spell it thus – in this modern way and with a capital Δ – to intimate a new, a particular and numinous, philosophical principle, and differentiate it from the more general δίκη. As a numinous principle, or axiom, Δίκη suggests what lies beyond and what was the genesis of δίκη personified as the goddess, Judgement – the goddess of natural balance, of the ancestral way and ancestral customs.

Thus, Δίκη implies the balance, the reasoned judgement, the thoughtful reasoning – σωφρονεῖν – that πάθει μάθος brings and restores, and which accumulated πάθει μάθος of a particular folk or πόλις forms the basis for their ancestral customs. δίκη is therefore, as the numinous principle Δίκη, what may be said to be a particular and a necessary balance between ἀρετή and ὕβρις – between the ὕβρις that often results when the personal, the natural, quest for ἀρετή becomes unbalanced and excessive.

[3] *Oedipus Tyrannus*, 872

[4] The modern notion of an impersonal abstract ‘justice’ – said to be obtainable by the making and enforcement of laws – has replaced the older, wiser, personal notion of the natural balance which was manifest in Δίκη and in the Ἑρινύες.

[5] For example, sixty million people in the Second World War, sixteen million in the First World War, and over twenty million in the Soviet Union mostly as a result of Stalin. Estimates of the number of people killed by the Mongol tyrant Genghis Khan range from a possible fifteen to twenty million, to a speculative eighty million.

[6]

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

(Quran, 3:104) ” Let there rise among you a group Calling others to Al-Maruf [the honourable] and forbidding Al-Munkar [what is dishonourable], for these are the ones who will achieve success [Jannah].” Interpretation of Meaning

[7] Such happiness/prosperity of the majority – together with what is termed their ‘security’ – may be said to be the stated or the assumed *raison d’être* of The State. Given that in modern times most human beings live in areas where States have assumed or obtained ‘authority’ over them, by whatever means, it might well be argued that The State with its aims and goals (based on some and various *-isms* and *-ologies*, including that of δημοκρατία) has, for those uncommitted to spiritual Ways, become an idealized weltanschauung supplanting more spiritual Ways, and a weltanschauung when not actively affirmed is at least passively accepted by a majority of such uncommitted, non-religious, ones – and even by many religious ones in agreement with that modern abstract division between State and Religion which many supporters and/or theorists of The State assume exists or believe should exist.

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Attic Vase c. 480 BCE, depicting Athena (Antikensammlungen, Munich)

Apulian red-figure vase c. 450 BCE – Λυκοῦργος and the Ἑρινύες (Antikensammlungen, Munich)

Time And The Separation Of Otherness - Part One

Causal Time and Living Beings

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, Time is considered to be an expression of the φύσις of beings [1], and thus, for living beings, is a variable emanation of ψυχή, differing from being to being and representing how a living being can change or may change or has changed, which such change being a-causal [2].

Thus, Time – as conventionally understood and as measured/represented by a terran-calendar with durations marked hours, days, weeks, and years – is regarded as an abstraction [3], and an abstraction which attempts to interpret living beings as functions of or as limited to a linear cause-and-effect described by separated moments progressing from a past to a present and thence to some future 'time'. Such conventional measured causal time may therefore be said to contribute to the concealment of the nature of living beings.

This conventional idea of time can be conveniently described as linear or causal-time, and considered as aptly represented by the term duration, a term which is a better translation of the Greek χρόνος than the English word 'time', as for example in Oedipus Tyrannus vv. 73-75:

καί μ' ἤμαρ ἤδη ξυμμετρούμενον χρόνῳ
λυπεῖ τί πράσσει: τοῦ γὰρ εἰκότος πέρα
ἄπεστι πλείῳ τοῦ καθήκοντος χρόνου

But I have already measured the duration
And am concerned: for where is he? He is longer than expected
For his absence is, in duration, greater than is necessary.

Such causal-time is the time of sciences such as physics and astronomy, with the universe, for instance, considered to be an entity 'expanding' as such expansion is measured by fixed linear points termed past, present, and future. Similarly, space itself is construed as a causal, dimensional, space-time manifold [4]. Thus and conventionally, to understand matter/energy is to 'know' (to observe or to theorize) how causal entities – such as elementary particles, or physical objects such as planets and stars – move and change and relate to each other (and other matter/energy in terms of composition and interactions) in this posited space-time manifold. There is thus a sense of physical order; a hierarchy of sub-atomic » atomic » 'classical mechanics' » gravitational » cosmological, with events occurring in the causal sequence past-present-future, and with interactions described in terms of certain fundamental physical forces, be such descriptions based on 'string theory', quantum theory [5], relativity theory, classical mechanics, or some theory which attempts to unify current descriptions of the aforementioned causal hierarchy.

This causal time is a quantity; a measurement of the observed or the assumed/posited/predicted movement of 'things' according to a given and a fixed pre-determined scale, and which measurement and fixed scale allows comparisons to be made regarding the movement or 'change' in position of 'things'.

While this understanding of time, and of space, has provided a useful understanding of the external world and aided the construction of machines and the development of a modern technology – and thus enabled humans to set foot on the Moon and send spacecraft to photograph the planets in our solar system – it is nonetheless limited in respect of revealing and understanding the φύσις of beings and thus the relation between living beings.

The Error of Causality As Applied to Living Beings

The understanding of Time as a manifestation of the φύσις of beings is derived from the acausal knowing that empathy provides [6]; and a knowing that allows us to make a philosophical distinction, in respect of Time, between an observed or posited movement and 'a change'; with the former – movement – applicable to observed or posited physical things and the latter – change – to living beings. For example 'change' describes how a tree – a living organism – grows and which change includes, but is not limited to, the measured movement (in causal time and causal space) of its branches and its trunk as measured in fixed units such as girth and height and the position and size of branches in relation to other branches and nearby objects. Such change – of a living being – is an effluvium, a fluxion [7].

That is, living beings possess or manifest a type of Time – a species of change, manifest as a fluxion – that is different from the movement (the time) of things and thus different from the time used in sciences such as physics.

Furthermore, there is not only a distinction between a living being and a thing, but also the distinction regarding the assumed separation of beings. As a finite emanation (or presencing) of ψυχή, a living being is not, according to its φύσις, a separate being; as such, it cannot be 'known' – its nature cannot be understood – by external causal observations or by 'measuring'/describing it (in terms of 'space') in relation to other living beings or to 'things' and/or by using such observations/observational-classifications/measurements/descriptions to formulate a theory to characterize a 'type' (or genus or species) that such a living being is regarded as belonging to. For its φύσις is manifest – known – by its acausal relation to other living beings and by the acausal interconnectivity of such beings. Such a knowing is numinous; that is, an awareness of living (and often dependant) connexions and of the unity of Life beyond the finite, mortal, emanation we, as an individual human being, are.

In personal terms, the error of applying causal time, and the perception derived therefrom, to living beings is most evident in causal abstractions, and in what we may refer to as the dialectic of egoism: of ourselves as one distinct, self-

interested, human being contrasted with (or needing to be contrasted with) and often opposed to (or needing to be opposed to or seen to be opposed to) other humans. Thus, for millennia we have manufactured causal abstractions and identified with one or more of them, sought to bring them into being; as we have opposed other abstractions and especially those humans who identify with some abstraction or whom we have assigned to some abstraction, such as some group or some faith or some nation or some ethnicity or some ideology regarded as 'inferior' to 'ours' or as 'bad' compared to 'ours'. Similarly, we humans have for millennia often felt compelled to place our own self-interest, our welfare, before that of other humans – and before the welfare of Nature [8] – just as we have been often compelled and often are still compelled to strive, competitively or otherwise, against other humans in order to establish or reaffirm our personal identity, our difference from them (or their 'inferiority' compared to us). Thus has there been, and thus is there, hubris and suffering. Thus has there been, and thus is there, a lack of appreciation of the numinous and a lack of understanding of our φύσις and that of the φύσις of the other living beings (including other humans) who share this planet with us.

In summary, applying causal time to living beings creates and maintains division and divisiveness; while the perception of acausal time brings an appreciation of the numinous and thus a knowing of the inherent unity behind our ordinary understanding of separate living beings.

David Myatt
November 2012

Notes

[1] While it is convenient to understand φύσις simply as the 'nature' of a being, the term, as used in the philosophy of pathei-mathos, implies a revealing of not only the true 'nature' of beings but also of the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being.

[2] In respect of the acausal, refer to my text [Toward Understanding the Acausal](#) (2011).

Furthermore, it is useful to make a distinction, in terminology, between living beings/existents and non-living beings/existents. Thus, a 'thing' is used to describe matter or objects (natural or constructed) which do not possess the quality termed life, and which life is possessed by organisms. Currently, we observe or assume life by the following seven attributes: a living organism respire; it moves or can move without any external force being applied as cause of such movement; it grows or changes; it excretes waste; it is sensitive to, or aware of, its environment; it can reproduce itself, and it can nourish itself.

ψυχή is 'Life qua being', with our own being (as a human) understood as a mortal emanation of ψυχή. Thus ψυχή is what 'animates' us and what gives us our φύσις, as human beings. ψυχή is also how we can begin to apprehend Being and how we relate to Being.

[3] An abstraction is defined, in the philosophy of pathei-mathos, as:

"A manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed. Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future.

All abstractions involve a causal perception, based as they are on the presumption of a linear cause-and-effect (and/or a dialectic) and on a posited or an assumed category or classification which differs in some way from some other assumed or posited categories/classifications, past, present or future. When applied to or used to describe/classify/distinguish/motivate living beings, abstractions involve a causal separation-of-otherness; and when worth/value/identity (and exclusion/inclusion) is or are assigned to such a causal separation-of-otherness then there is or there arises hubris." [Vocabulary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos](#) (2012)

The separation-of-otherness is a term used to describe the implied or assumed causal separateness of living beings, a part of which is the distinction we make (instinctive or otherwise) between our *self* and *the others*. Another part is assigning our self, and the-others, to (or describing them and us by) some category/categories, and to which category/categories we ascribe (or to which category/categories has/have been ascribed) certain qualities or attributes.

Given that a part of such ascription/denoting is an assumption or assumptions of worth/value/difference and of inclusion/exclusion, the separation-of-otherness is the genesis of hubris; causes and perpetuates conflict and suffering; and is a path away from ἀρμονίη, δίκη, and thus from wisdom.

The separation-of-otherness conceals the nature of Beings and beings; a nature which empathy and pathei-mathos can reveal.

[4] Current exotic theories – such as 'string theory' (including M-theory) – are still based on an ideation of space-time that involves a causal-only time (time as a measurable and a separate quantity).

'String' theories posit not only transformations of a non-zero 'string' or strings in a causal space-time instead of a 'zero-

dimensional point' (or points) as in a classical three-dimensional Lorentz transformation or a four-dimensional Riemannian space, but also in possible manifolds whose dimensions are > 4 (as in a Hilbert space). Also, while they do not describe space-time as a Riemannian manifold (as general relativity does), such theories posit manifolds or structures – such as H-flux and topological 'branes' – which, and whose changes, are described by or come to be described by mathematical equations which involve a causal time – a measured or measurable movement – in relation to other properties (such as extension/space), be those other properties mathematical (as in a topology) or physical (as in a metric, Riemannian or otherwise). Thus, in perturbation theory and in order to consider possible experimental results of the theory, a space-time is posited consisting of a four-dimensional extended Minkowski space combined with a compact Riemannian manifold; and as in M-theory where an 11-dimensional Minkowski space has been assumed with the extra seven dimensions being 'compactified' or compactable.

All such theories are currently 'exotic' because they have not yet [as of 2012] led to any unique predictions that could be experimentally verified.

[5] Like 'string theory' and cosmological theories (such as general relativity) quantum mechanics is based on a posited causal space-time. Therefore, a quantum theory cannot be used to describe the $\phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$ of living beings or acausality.

[6] In respect of acausal knowing, see 'The Nature and Knowledge of Empathy' in [The Way of Pathei Mathos: A Philosophical Compendium](#).

[7] The use of the term *fluxion* dates from the sixteenth century (ce) with the term describing a change that occurs naturally and also one that arises from or because of itself (an effluvium). A description used by John Davies in his 1616 (ce) work *Mirum in Modum*: "If the fluxion of this instant Now Effect not That, noight wil that Time doth know."

As used here, fluxion describes how a particular living being not only changes/develops/manifests (that is, in an acausal manner) but also the fact of its (acausal) relation to other living beings and to Being.

[8] Nature is here understood as 'the creative force' that is the genesis of, and which maintains the balance of, the life which inhabits the Earth, and which life includes ourselves. This 'creative force' (or manifestation/presencing of $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$) can be and often has been understood as a particular type of living being, as 'Nature' personified.

The Natural Balance of Honour

The personal virtue of honour, and the cultivation of wu-wei, are – together – a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἁρμονίη.

For personal honour is essentially a presencing, a grounding, of ψυχὴ – of Life, of our φύσις [1] – occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν [2] and in accord with δίκη. [3]

This balancing of compassion – of the need not to cause suffering – by σωφρονεῖν and δίκη is perhaps most obvious on that particular occasion when it may be judged necessary to cause suffering to another human being. That is, in honourable self-defence. For it is natural – part of our reasoned, fair, just, human nature – to defend ourselves when attacked and (in the immediacy of the personal moment) to valorously, with chivalry, act in defence of someone close-by who is unfairly attacked or dishonourably threatened or is being bullied by others, and to thus employ, if our personal judgement of the circumstances deem it necessary, lethal force.

This use of force is, importantly, crucially, restricted – by the individual nature of our judgement, and by the individual nature of our authority – to such personal situations of immediate self-defence and of valorous defence of others, and cannot be extended beyond that, for to so extend it, or attempt to extend it beyond the immediacy of the personal moment of an existing physical threat, is an arrogant presumption – an act of ὕβρις – which negates the fair, the human, presumption of innocence of those we do not personally know, we have no empathic knowledge of, and who present no direct, immediate, personal, threat to us or to others nearby us.

Such personal self-defence and such valorous defence of another in a personal situation are in effect a means to restore the natural balance which the unfair, the dishonourable, behaviour of others upsets. That is, such defence fairly, justly, and naturally in the immediacy of the moment corrects their error of ὕβρις resulting from their bad (their rotten) φύσις; a rotten character evident in their lack of the virtue, the skill, of σωφρονεῖν. For had they possessed that virtue, and if their character was not bad, they would not have undertaken such a dishonourable attack.

David Myatt
2012

Extract from *The Numinous Balance of Honour in The Way of Pathei-Mathos – A Philosophical Compendiary*. 2012

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Appendix: Some Definitions

It would perhaps be useful to give definitions of some of the terms used since such definitions (and etymologies, if applicable) might help to avoid confusion and mis-understandings in respect of my use of those terms.

Compassion

The English word compassion dates from around 1340 CE and in its original sense (the sense meant in my writings) the word means *benignity* [4]. Hence, by compassion is meant being kindly disposed toward and/or feeling a sympathy with someone (or some living being) affected by pain/suffering/grief or who is enduring vicissitudes.

The word compassion is derived from *com*, meaning together-with, combined with *pati*, meaning to-suffer/to-endure, and thus useful synonyms for compassion, in this original sense, are *compassivity* and *benignity*.

Honour

The English word honour dates from around 1200 CE, deriving from the Latin *honorem* (meaning refined, grace, beauty) via the Old French (and thence Anglo-Norman) *onor/onur*. By the term honour I mean an instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous. An honourable person is thus refined: that is, they are noble and hence distinguished by virtue of their character, which is one of manners, fairness, natural dignity, and valour.

In respect of early usage of the term, two quotes may be of interest. The first, from c. 1393 CE, is taken from a poem, in Middle English, by John Gower:

And riht in such a maner wise
Sche bad thei scholde hire don servise,
So that Achilles underfongeth
As to a yong ladi belongeth
Honour, servise and reverence. [5]

The second is from several centuries later:

" Honour - as something distinct from mere probity, and which supposes in gentlemen a stronger abhorrence of perfidy, falsehood, or cowardice, and a more elevated and delicate sense of the dignity of virtue, than are usually found in vulgar minds." [6]

Empathy

Etymologically, this fairly recent English word, used to translate the German *Einfühlung*, derives, via the late Latin *sympathia*, from the Greek συμπάθεια - συμπαθής - and is thus formed from the prefix σύν (sym) together with παθ- [root of πάθος] meaning *enduring/suffering*, feeling: πάσχειν, to endure/suffer.

In my writings, empathy - *ἐμπάθεια* - is used to describe a particular and natural human faculty: that is, a noble intuition about another human being or another living being. When empathy is developed and used, as envisaged by my 'philosophy of pathei-mathos', it is a specific and extended type of *συμπάθεια*. That is, it is a type of and a means to knowing and understanding another human being and/or other living beings - and thus differs in nature from compassion.

Wu-Wei

Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in The Way of Pathei-Mathos/The Numinous Way to refer to a personal 'letting-be' deriving from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, their φύσις, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive - that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous.

In practice, the knowledge, the understanding, the intuition, the insight that is wu-wei is a knowledge, an understanding, that can be acquired from empathy, πάθει μάθος, and by a knowing of and an appreciation of the numinous.

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Notes

[1] In respect of φύσις, see my brief essay *Toward Understanding Physis*.

[2] I use σωφρονεῖν (sophronein) in preference to σωφροσύνη (sophrosyne) since sophrosyne has acquired an English interpretation - "soundness of mind, moderation" - which in my view distorts the meaning of the original Greek. As with my use of Greek terms such as πάθει μάθος (pathei-mathos) I use σωφρονεῖν in an Anglicized manner with there thus being no necessity to employ inflective forms.

[3] Depending on context, δίκη could be the judgement of an individual (or Judgement personified), or the natural and the necessary balance, or the correct/customary/ancestral way, or what is expected due to custom, or what is considered correct and natural, and so on. The sense of δίκη as one's ancestral customs is evident, for example, in Homer (*Odyssey*, III, 244).

[4] The word benignity derives from the Latin *benignitatem* and the sense imputed by the word is of a kind, compassionate, well-mannered character, disposition, or deed. It came into English usage around the same time as compassion; for example, the word occurs in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* [ii. 483] written around 1374 CE.

[5] John Gower, *Confessio Amantis*. Liber Quintus vv. 2997-3001 [Macaulay, G.C., ed. *The Works of John Gower*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1901]

[6] George Lyttelton. *History of the Life of Henry the Second*. London, Printed for J. Dodsley. M DCC LXXV II [1777] (A new ed., cor.) vol 3, p.178



Concerning The Development Of The Numinous Way

Background

What I term The Numinous Way, as a philosophy and as a way of life, was not the result of a few or many moments of inspiration striking close together in causal Time as measured by a terran-calendar and thus separated from each other by days, weeks, or even a few years.

Rather, it resulted from some nine years of reflexions, intuitions, and experiences, beginning in 2002 when - for quite a few months - I wandered as a vagabond in the hills and fells of Westmorland and lived in a tent, and during which time I communicated some of my musings, by means of handwritten letters, to a lady living in Oxford whom I had first met well over a decade before.

These musing concerned Nature, our place - as humans - in Nature and the Cosmos; the purpose, if any, of our lives; whether or not the five Aristotelian essentials gave a true understanding of the external world; and whether or not God, or Allah, or some sort of divinity or divinities, existed, and thus - if they did not - whence came mystical insight, knowledge, and understanding, and what value or validity, if any, did such mystical insight, knowledge, and understanding, possess.

During the previous thirty or more years I had occasional intuitions concerning, or feelings, regarding, Nature, divinity, the Cosmos, and 'the numinous'; insights and feelings which led me to study Taoism, Hellenic culture, Buddhism, the Catholic mystic tradition, and become a Catholic monk. Later on, such intuitions concerning the numinous - and travels in the Sahara Desert - led me to begin a serious study of Islam and were part of the process that led me to convert to that way of life.

But these intuitions, feelings - and the understanding and knowledge they engendered - were or always eventually became secondary to what, since around 1964, I had considered or felt was the purpose of my own life. This was to aid, to assist, in some way the exploration and the colonization of Outer Space, and it was enthusiasm for - the inspiration of - that ideal which led me to seriously study the science of Physics, and then to seek to find what type of society might be able to make that ideal a reality, a seeking initially aided by my study of and enthusiasm for Hellenic culture, a culture - manifest in Greek heroes such as Odysseus and in the warrior society home to the likes of the sons of Atreus - which I came to regard as the ideal prototype for this new society of new explorers and new heroes.

After considering, and then rejecting, the communist society of the Soviet Union [1], an intuition regarding National-Socialist Germany [2] led me to seriously study that society and National-Socialism, a study ended when I peremptorily concluded that I had indeed found the right type of modern society. Thus I became a National-Socialist, with my aim - the purpose of my life - being to aid the foundation of a new National-Socialist State as a prelude to the exploration and the colonization of Outer Space, and thus the creation of a Galactic Imperium, a new Galactic, or Cosmic, Reich.

As I wrote in part one of some autobiographical scribblings issued in 1998 and which were based on some writings of mine dating back to the 1970's:

"It is the vision of a Galactic Empire which runs through my political life just as it is the quest to find and understand our human identity, and my own identity, and our relation to Nature, which runs through my personal and spiritual life, giving me the two aims which I consistently pursued since I was about thirteen years of age, regardless of where I was, what I was doing and how I was described by others or even by myself..."

For it was this aim of the exploration and the colonization of Outer Space, and my rather schoolboyish enthusiasm for it, which - together with the enjoyment of the struggle - inspired my fanaticism, my extremism, and which re-inspired me when, as sometimes occurred during my NS decades, my enthusiasm for politics, for a political revolution, waned, or when my intuitions, my feelings, concerning the numinous and my love of women - the dual inspiration for most of my poetry - became stronger than my political beliefs and my revolutionary fervour.

The aim, the purpose, this idealization, regarding Outer Space even partly motivated my study of and thence my conversion to Islam in 1998. For example, not long before that conversion, in an essay entitled *Foreseeing The Future*, I wrote:

" I firmly believe that Islam has the potential to create not only a new civilization, governed according to reason, but also a new Empire which could take on and overthrow the established world-order dedicated as this world-order is to usury, decadence and a god-less materialism [...] I also believe that a new Islamic Empire could create the Galactic Empire, or at least lay the foundations of it. Perhaps the first human colonies on another world will have as their flag the Islamic crescent, a flag inscribed with the words, in Arabic, In the Name of Allah, The Compassionate, The Merciful."

Thus, as when a National-Socialist, I dedicated myself to my 'new cause', to an ideal I idealistically carried in the headpiece of my head: the cause of Jihad, of disrupting existing societies as a prelude to manufacturing a new one. In this instance, a resurgent Khilafah.

As with National-Socialism, it was the ideal, the goal, the struggle, which was paramount, important; and I - like the extremist I was - hubriatically placed that goal, that ideal, that struggle for victory, before love, fairness, compassion, reason, and truth, and thus engendered and incited violence, hatred, and killing.

In addition, I always felt myself bound by honour to be loyal to either a cause, an ideology, or to certain individuals and so do the duty I had sworn by oath to do and be loyal to those I had sworn to be loyal to. Hence when doubts about my beliefs arose during my decades as a nazi I always had recourse to honour and so considered myself - even during my time as a monk - as a National-Socialist, albeit, when a monk, as a non-active one for whom there was ultimately no contradiction between the NS ethos and the ethos of a traditional Catholicism, for there was the Reichskonkordat and the agreement Pope Pius XII reached with Hitler.

During my Muslim years I felt bound by the oath of my Shahadah; an oath which negated my NS beliefs and led me to reject racism and nationalism, and embrace the multi-racialism of the Ummah; and which general oath, together (and importantly) with a personal oath sworn a few years after my conversion, would always - until 2009 - bring me back, or eventually cause me to drift back, to Islam and always remind me of the duty I felt I was, as a Muslim, honour-bound to do.

2002-2006

This drift back toward Islam is what occurred after my musings in 2002. I tried to forget them, a task made difficult when later that year I went to live on a farm and also work on another nearby farm. For that living and such work brought a deep personal contentment and further intuitions and feelings, and a burgeoning understanding, regarding the numinous, and especially concerning Nature; some of which intuitions and feelings I again communicated by means of handwritten letters, mostly to the aforementioned lady.

For a while I sought to find a synthesis, studied Sufism, but was unable to find any satisfactory answers, and thus began an interior struggle, a personal struggle I made some mention of in *Myngath*. A struggle, a conflict, between my own intuitions, insights, and burgeoning understanding - regarding the numinous and human beings - and the way of faith and belief; between what I felt was a more natural, a more numinous way, and the necessary belief in Allah, the Quran, the Sunnah that Islam, that being Muslim, required.

For a while, faith and belief and duty triumphed; then I wavered, and began to write in more detail about this still as yet unformed 'numinous way'. Then, yet again honour, duty, and loyalty triumphed - but only a while - for I chanced to meet and then fell in love with a most beautiful, non-Muslim, lady. And it was our relationship - but most of all her tragic death in May 2006 - that intensified my inner struggle and forced me to ask and then answer certain fundamental questions regarding my past and my own nature.

As I wrote at the time:

" Thus do I feel and now know my own stupidity for my arrogant, vain, belief that I could help, assist, change what was [...] I know my blame, my shame, my failure, here. Thus am I fully humbled by my own lack of insight; by my lack of knowing; by an understanding of my selfishness and my failure - knowing myself now for the ignorant, arrogant person I was, and am. How hypocritical to teach, to preach, through writings, feeling as I do now the suffering of words."

I did not like the answers about myself that this tragedy forced me to find; indeed, I did not like myself and so, for a while, clung onto Islam, onto being Muslim; onto the way of faith, of God, of ignoring my own answers, my own feelings, my own intuitions. For there was - or so it then seemed - expiation, redemption, hope, and even some

personal comfort, there. But this return to such surety just felt wrong, deeply wrong.

2006-2009

For there was, as I wrote in *Myngath*,

"...one uncomfortable truth from which even I with all my sophistry could not contrive to hide from myself, even though I tried, for a while. The truth that I am indebted. That I have a debt of personal honour to both Fran and to Sue, who died - thirteen years apart - leaving me bereft of love, replete with sorrow, and somewhat perplexed. A debt to all those other women who, over four decades, I have hurt in a personal way; a debt to the Cosmos itself for the suffering I have caused and inflicted through the unethical pursuit of abstractions.

A debt somehow and in some way - beyond a simple remembrance of them - to especially make the life and death of Sue and Fran worthwhile and full of meaning, as if their tragic early dying meant something to both me, and through my words, my deeds, to others. A debt of change, of learning - in me, so that from my pathei-mathos I might be, should be, a better person; presencing through words, living, thought, and deeds, that simple purity of life felt, touched, known, in those stark moments of the immediacy of their loss.

But this honour, I have so painfully discovered, is not the abstract honour of years, of decades, past that I in my arrogance and stupid adherence to and love of abstractions so foolishly believed in and upheld, being thus, becoming thus, as I was a cause of suffering. No; this instead is the essence of honour, founded in empathy; in an empathy with and thus a compassion for all life, sentient and otherwise. This is instead a being human; being in symbiosis with that-which is the essence of our humanity and which can, could and should, gently evolve us - far away from the primitive unempathic, uncompassionate, beings we have been, and unfortunately often still are; far away from the primitive unempathic, uncompassionate, often violent, person I had been."

Thus I was prompted - forced - to continue to develop my understanding in what began to be and became my own 'numinous way' and which thus and finally and, in 2009 publicly, took me away from Islam and my life as a Muslim.

2009-2012

Given that the essence of The Numinous Way is individual empathy, an individual understanding, the development of an individual judgement, and the living of an ethical way of life where there is an appreciation of the numinous, the more I reflected upon this 'numinous way' between 2011 and Spring 2012, the more I not only realized my mistakes, but also that it was necessary to remove, to excise, the detritus that had accumulated around the basic insights and the personal pathei-mathos that inspired me to develop that 'numinous way'. Mistakes and detritus because for some time, during the development of that 'numinous way', I was still in thrall to some abstractions, still thinking in terms of categories and opposites, and still fond of pontificating and generalizing, especially about The State [3]. I therefore began to re-express, in a more philosophical manner, the personal, the individual, the ontological, the ethical and spiritual nature, of The Numinous Way, and thus emphasized the virtues of humility, love, and of wu-wei - of balance, of tolerance, of non-interference, of individual interior (spiritual) reformation, of non-striving, of admitting one's own uncertainty of understanding and of knowing.

The year-long [2011-2012] process of refinement, correction, and reflexion resulted in me re-naming what remained of my 'numinous way' the 'philosophy of pathei-mathos', and which philosophy I attempted to outline in the two texts *Reculye of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos* and *Summary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*, the latter of which was also published under the title *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*.

As I mentioned in *Society, Politics, Social Reform, and Pathei-Mathos* [Part Four of *Reculye of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*] -

"Given that the concern of the philosophy of pathei-mathos is the individual and their interior, their spiritual, life, and given that (due to the nature of empathy and pathei-mathos) there is respect for individual judgement, the philosophy of pathei-mathos is apolitical, and thus not concerned with such matters as the theory and practice of governance, nor with changing or reforming society by political means [...]

This means that there is no desire and no need to use any confrontational means to directly challenge and confront the authority of existing States since numinous reform and change is personal, individual, non-political, and not organized beyond a limited local level of people personally known. That is, it is of and involves individuals who are personally known to each other working together based on the understanding that it is inner, personal, change - in individuals, of their nature, their character - that is the ethical, the numinous, way to solve such personal and social problems as exist and arise. That such inner change of necessity comes before any striving for outer change by whatever means, whether such means be termed or classified as political, social, economic, religious. That the only effective, long-lasting, change and reform is understood as the one that evolves human beings and thus changes what, in them, predisposes them, or inclines them toward, doing or what urges them to do, what is dishonourable, undignified, unfair, and

uncompassionate.

In practice, this evolution means, in the individual, the cultivation and use of the faculty of empathy, and acquiring the personal virtues of compassion, honour, and love. Which means the inner reformation of individuals, as individuals.

Hence the basis for numinous social change and reform is aiding, helping, assisting individuals in a direct and personal manner, and in practical ways, with such help, assistance, and aid arising because we personally know or are personally concerned about or involved with those individuals or the situations those individuals find themselves in. In brief, being compassionate, empathic, understanding, sensitive, kind, and showing by personal example."

The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos

It is the philosophy of pathei-mathos which represents my weltanschauung. For I now consider that most of my writings, my pontifications, concerning 'the numinous way' - written haphazardly between 2002 and Spring 2012 - are unhelpful; or of little account; or irrelevant; or hubriatic; or detract from or obscure the basic simplicity of my weltanschauung, a simplicity I have endeavoured to express in *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*.

DWM
24th April 2012
(Revised November 2012)

Notes

[1] During this study of communism, in the 1960's, I began to learn Russian and would regularly listen to communist radio broadcasts such as those from Rundfunk der DDR, something I continued to do for a while even after becoming a National-Socialist. Indeed, on one occasion I wrote a letter to Radio Berlin which, to my surprise, was read out with my questions answered and this - occurring as it did during the Cold War - may well have been when I first came to the attention of the British security services.

[2] As I have mentioned elsewhere - for example, in *Myngath* - this intuition regarding the Third Reich arose as a result of me reading an account of the actions of Otto Ernst Remer in July of 1944. For I admired his honour and his loyalty and his commitment to the duty he had sworn an oath to do. Here, I felt, was a modern-day Greek hero.

[3] These un-numinous, errorful, hubriatic, pontifications about 'the state' included essays such as the reprehensible January 2011 text *The Failure and Immoral Nature of The State* and the February 2011, text *A Brief Numinous View of Religion, Politics, and The State*.

Among the abstractions (categories) which needed to be excised from a supposedly abstraction-less and empathic numinous way were 'the clan', and 'culture', and the divisive category 'homo hubris', a divisive category I hubriatically pontificated about in essays such as the 2009 text *Homo Hubris and the Disruption of the Numinous*, based as that text was on an earlier, 2002, essay.

Acknowledgements:

This article is based on - and summarizes and/or quotes from - several replies sent to various correspondents during April of this year (2012)

cc David Myatt 2012

(Second Edition)

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Image credit: Attic Vase c. 480 BCE, depicting Athena (Antikensammlungen, Munich, Germany)

So Much Remorse

(Extract from a letter to a friend)

So much remorse, grief, and sorrow, within me for the unwise suffering-causing deeds of my past. Yet all I have in recompense for decades of strife, violence, selfishness, hate, are tears, the cries, alone – and words, lifeless words, such as this; words, to – perhaps, hopefully – forewarn forswear so that others, some few, hearing, reading, may possibly avoid, learn from, the errors that marked, made, and were, my hubris.

Such an elixir of extremism ^[1] which I, with paens born of deluded destiny, refined, distilled, made and – like some medieval fake apothecary – sought to peddle as cure for ailments that never did exist.

Then her – Francine's – death that day late May such that for so long a time such feelings of remorse, grief, and sorrow, overwhelmed so that Sleep when he deigned to arrive arrived to take me only fitfully, slowly, back to Night and usually only after I, in darkness, lay to listen to such music as so recalled another aetheral, beautiful, older, world untainted by the likes of me; a world recalled, made manifest, to me in the sacred music of Josquin Desprez, Dunstable, Tallis, William Byrd, Tomás Luis de Victoria...

Such a longing then in those lengthy days longer nights to believe, to reclaim the faith – Christe Redemptor Omnium – of decades past to then presence, within, a sanctified expiation that might could remove that oppressive if needed burden. Of remorse, grief, sorrow, guilt. But was it only pride – stubborn pride – that bade me resist? Or some feeling of failures, before? Some memory primordial, pagan perhaps, of how why Night – She, subduer of gods, men ^[2] – alone by Herself brought forth day from dark and caused us all to sleep to dream to somewhere and of necessity to die? I do not know, I do not know that why.

For there was then only interior strife until such time as such longing for such faith slowly ceased; no words in explanation, expiation. Ceased, to leave only the pain of a life mis-spent, left in memories of tears that lasted years. No prayer, no invocations; not even any propitiation to redeem, protect, to save. Only, and now, the minutes passing to hours to days as Sun – greeting, rising, descending, departed – passes from to return to the dark only to be born again anew; each newness unique, when seen.

I have no excuses; the failure of decades was mine. A failure of compassion, empathy, honour. A failure as a human being. There are no excuses for my past, for deeds such as mine. No excuses for selfishness, for a hubris of personal emotion. No excuse for deceit, deception, lies. No excuse for extremism, for racism, for the politics, the religion, of hate. For the simple truth – if so lately-discovered by me – is that the giver the bringer the genesis of Life is Love.

Awed by her brightness
Stars near the beautiful Moon
Cover their own shining faces
When She lights earth
With her silver brilliance
Of love... ^[3]

David Myatt
February 2012

Some Notes (Post Scriptum)

[1] It might be useful to explain how I, in the light of my forty years practical experience of and involvement with extremism, understand terms such as extremism. By *extreme* I mean *to be harsh*, so that an *extremist* is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious nature. Here, *harsh* is: rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic. Thus *extremism* is considered to be: (i) the result of such harshness, and (ii) the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists. In simple terms, an extremist is someone who lacks empathy, compassion, reason, and honour.

Racism is one example of extremism, with racism being a prejudice and antagonism toward people regarded as belonging to another 'race', as well as the immoral belief that some 'races' are better than or superior to others, and that what is termed 'race' defines and explains, or can define and explain, the behaviour and the character of the people considered to belong to some postulated 'race'.

[2] Homer, Iliad xiv, 259 – εἰ μὴ Νῦξ δμήτειρα θεῶν ἑσάωσε καὶ ἀνδρῶν

[3] My translation. Sappho, Fragment 34 [Lobel and Page] –

Ἄστερες μὲν ἀμφὶ κάλαν σελάνναν
ἄψ ἀπυκρύπτοισι φάεννον εἶδος,
ὅπποτα πλήθοισα μάλιστα λάμπη
γᾶν [ἐπὶ πᾶσαν]
[...] ἀργυρία [...]

Almost Mid-Summer

Another beautifully warm and Sunny day, bright with the light remembered from childhood years in Africa and the Far East: so different from the normally dullish light of temperate England.

Thus, here in the warm Sun and as so often, there is a time of reflexion; a stasis as life becomes reviewed through memories. And it is occurring to me more and more that this is all that there is, beyond the immediacy of the moment: only memories of moments past.

So many memories which slowly fade as bright colour exposed to Sun: as the bright checks of my Tweed cap have slowly faded over the years, unrenewed as the greens of the grass, the bush, the tree, become renewed each year, through Spring. Only memories, as of Fran; to be savoured but perhaps now not too much to be dwelt upon in almost unbearable sadness, for thus is – for thus has – a type of balance returned; that balance, that dwelling in immediacy, which I from learning feel and know is the essence of wu-wei.

This is a change within me, regarding the life and death of Fran, and the life and death of Sue; regarding my own diverse journeys and explorations. A change toward a being-settled that has partly arisen from at last forsaking abstractions and partly from accepting that it is immediacy and remembrance of memories which convey the only correct meaning we human beings have or can find and which is numinous. No projection, thus, of an abstractive life-beyond this mortal life; no need for a religious type of faith; no battle or desire to strive to be in accord with any abstraction; and even no need to believe in, or even un-numinously desire, some-thing. No depth of unfathomable wordless sadness to bring that ultimate life-ending despair such as I assume Fran felt in the last hours of her own mortal living.

For there is only the bright Sun; the slight breeze in bush and tree; the verdant, living, green of grass; the yellow Buttercups that are profusely sprinkled there in the old Orchard of old Apple trees whose lower branches have been windfallen, or become broken with age, or stripped of bark by the two Goats who roam there, where Chickens range, food-seeking. Only the passing billowing fair-weather white Cumulus clouds below the sky-blue of Earth's earthly mortal life.

Across from where I sit – at the back of the Farmhouse – that Barn whose Summer Swallows swoop in and out to feed their still nesting young who gape and chatter as their food is brought. And I am only this moment, only this moment, as the young Farm dog who comes to lay down in the grass beside me is only the young Farm dog. He looks up at me once – three times – tail wagging, before settling down to sleep.

There is no world beyond, for us here; for the life here. Only the weather; only the changing weather; only some natural need to move us, slowly by our limbs. A need for shelter, water, food. Only the Seasons changing as they change. Only the gentle companionship of a gentle acceptance that lives, grows, changes, slowly, as all natural life lives, grows – changes – slowly, as Sun through cloudless Summer sky.

My decades long mistake of unbalanced stupidity has been to be un-rooted; to be of unnatural unneeded haste. To cease to dwell within each immediacy of each moment. To be swayed by, persuaded by, in thrall to – to even love – un-numinous and thus un-ethical abstractions. To be thus that which we human beings have become: a stage between animal – talking – and compassionate, empathic being aware of and treasuring each small pulse of life that lives near, within, us because there is no separation unless we in hubris and by abstraction create such separation.

Thus are we now struggling, halting, wasting ourselves and all of Life around us; infected now with the virus of abstractions so that, upon this living Earth, we – in our new de-evolution – despoil, disrupt, destroy the Life that is our Life and the genesis of The Numinous, often in the name of that un-ethical abstraction called “progress”. And yet we have a cure for our millennia-long debilitating sickness; have always had a cure, although so many for so long, as I, have failed in our blind stupidity to see it.

So, this is all that there is: only the bright Sun; the slight breeze in bush and tree; the verdant, living, green of grass; the yellow Buttercups that are profusely sprinkled here where, now, The Numinous lives, on another beautifully warm and Sunny day, bright with light remembered...

David Myatt
June 2008

Extract from a letter to a friend

May 2013 Edition

Myngath

Some Recollections of a Wyrdful and Extremist Life
by David Myatt



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Part One

Apologia

This work is a concise recalling - as an aural recollection to a friend, recorded and then transcribed - of some events in my wyrdful and sometimes quite eventful life. A concise recalling of some events (with much left unwritten), because it is the essence of this particular life, recalled, that in my fallible view is or rather may be instructive, and I have tried to present this essence in a truthful way and thus be honest about my failings, my mistakes, my past activities, and my feelings at the time.

As a friend who read a draft of Myngath commented, "It is a strange work because the supra-personal adventures gradually give way to very personal encounters..."

Which in many ways sums up my life - a hubriatic quest, by an arrogant selfish opinionated violent young man, which led to involvement with various extremisms and certain dubious activities; then, via πάθει μάθος, to a certain critical self-understanding often, or mostly, deriving from personal relationships; then to a rejection of all extremism; and finally to the

development of a rather mystical philosophy - the philosophy of pathei-mathos - based on empathy and personal virtues such as compassion and humility.

A somewhat strange life, therefore; although, as I wrote in *Pathei-Mathos, Genesis of My Unknowing*:

"There are no excuses for my extremist past, for the suffering I caused to loved ones, to family, to friends, to those many more, those far more, 'unknown others' who were or who became the 'enemies' posited by some extremist ideology. No excuses because the extremism, the intolerance, the hatred, the violence, the inhumanity, the prejudice were mine; my responsibility, born from and expressive of my character; and because the discovery of, the learning of, the need to live, to regain, my humanity arose because of and from others and not because of me.

Thus what exposed my hubris - what for me broke down that certitude-of-knowing which extremism breeds and re-presents - was not something I did; not something I achieved; not something related to my character, my nature, at all. Instead, it was a gift offered to me by others..."

DWM
2010

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Early Years

Africa

My earliest - and some of my fondest - memories are of colonial Africa in the 1950s, where I, as a quite young child, spent many happy years. There are memories of travelling, with my father, in a car - with running boards and coach doors - along an upward road in the Great Rift Valley, and which road seemed to drop precipitously on one side, and which steep slopes held many a crashed vehicle, recent, and otherwise. There are memories of travelling to a European-only resort - by Lake Naivasha, I seem to recall - where there was a path down to the lake strewn with beautiful flowering plants, and where one could spend many happy hours while, in the clubhouse, elderly (to

me) memsaabs would down their G&T's.

There are memories of playing in a shallow river near our dwelling in East Africa - no one around for miles - and of a family picnic by another, quite distant and deeper, far wider, river on whose bank was a wooden sign with the inscription *Beware of the Crocodile*. There are memories of going AWOL and walking - with the younger of my two sisters - miles and miles along a road, into the bush, and which road I had been told was off-limits to Europeans. We stopped once, as the Sun descended on that travelling day, to drink from our canteen of water and open the tin of beans I carried which we ate, cold (being even then of a practical outdoor nature, I had ensured I had a can opener). I seem to recall the Police - a European officer and his Askari - found us as dark fell, and I could not understand what all the fuss was about. Since everybody said we should not go there, I simply had to go and see what was there - which turned out to be just a road from somewhere to somewhere else.

There are memories of climbing trees - and falling from one and breaking my left arm. My younger sister - a companion on many such outdoor exploits - for some reason knew what to do, and made a sling from my shirt. Memories of - inadvertently I must add in my defence - smashing the glass counter of an Asian owned shop in the nearest village, whose owner demanded my father pay for the damage, which, of course, he did. I just had, you see, to try and juggle with some of the brass weights the shopkeeper used for his balancing scales. There is a memory of walking through some trees not far from my favourite stream and instinctively, with the panga I often carried while outdoors, chopping the head off a Cobra which, startled, reared up in front of me.

My interests were the interests I found by being outdoors. There was a colony of safari ants, for instance, that I chanced upon one day while out wandering, and I would spend hours watching them as their wide columns moved and marched across the reddish ground. Then there were the Chameleons I once, for some reason, long forgotten, wanted to find, and did, bringing one home to keep as a pet, which I did until I lost interest.

Once - for perhaps a year, or possibly more - I was packed off to some Catholic prep school, about which I remember very little except falling asleep a few times in lessons, and wandering off, into the grounds, when something interested me, or when I wanted to climb some tree. I do remember having a rather large magnifying glass and spending what seemed like many happy hours peering at things, outside. Perhaps I should have been in class - for I have vague recollections of being shouted at, by some adults, who seemed somewhat angry, and being somewhat bemused by all the fuss, as I recall on

one occasion receiving six strokes of the cane for - something. Perhaps it was because - once, when the Sun reached in through a classroom window - I accidentally set fire to some papers on my desk using my magnifying glass. But, for whatever reason, I was soon and gladly returned to my parents (perhaps I got expelled), and life for me continued as before, mostly outdoors, mostly day-dreaming, and quite often exploring.

Far East

Africa faded into the Far East - as the decade of the fifties faded to a few years past a new one - and to life in what was then a rural area, not far from a lovely sandy beach by the South China Sea, and a service-taxi ride from the still then rather ramshackle and quixotic city of Singapore with its riverside cluttered with row upon row of Junks, and many of its streets festooned with stalls.

For some reason I soon had to go to school, every day, and by Gharry. At first, I loathed it - bumph to read, sitting at some desk, sometimes in the air-conditioned main building, and sometimes in the much better open-air Attaps in the grounds. Then - and quite why I do not now recall - I began to enjoy it. Perhaps it was the running track, where I loved to run, barefoot in the tropical heat; perhaps it was the young, gorgeous, blonde, English teacher who would often sit on one of the desks at the front, her legs crossed, and read to us some story, some poem, or some part of some classic novel. Whatever it was, I began to look forward to that school where by the end of the term, I was "second in the class", and top in several subjects, including (if my ageing memory is correct) English and Maths. I developed an almost insatiable appetite for knowledge, and began to read voraciously - especially about Physics, Astronomy, and History. In addition, I learnt ancient Greek, and Sanskrit, and studied formal logic.



It was as if I had suddenly, quite unexpectedly, acquired a new way of seeing the world around me; as if some unseen force, some *wyrd*, some *δαίμων*, had shaken me and awoken within me certain dormant faculties. Or perhaps it was just the lovely tropical weather, the quixotic surroundings.

Whatever, through and with these faculties, with the knowledge I imbibed

from books, a feeling, an insight, came to dwell within me. This was of our potential, as human beings; of how we might - and indeed should - change ourselves in a conscious way through overcoming challenges, as I had grown in strength and insight through running, training, through swimming often almost a mile out to sea, and through devouring knowledge. This insight became a vision of, as I have written elsewhere, "us freeing ourselves from the chains of this world and venturing forth to explore and colonize the stars. For I felt that it was this new freedom, brought by venturing forth to the stars, which would give us the great challenges needed to evolve still further, and naturally, into another type of being. And it was the pursuit of this ideal which I believed would create noble individuals and a noble, civilized, society..." [1]

By this time, both my sisters had left home, to be properly educated in England, something which I had wilfully resisted. One became - for some years - a Nun; the elder, a nurse at a teaching hospital in London, at a time when competition for such places at such a place was fierce, and required, I seem to recall, two 'A' levels.

As for me, I was enjoying my new life. Some years previously, I had taught myself to play chess, and now I began to play it at every opportunity, including at a local chess club (almost exclusively European, again if my ageing memory is correct) where I was the only boy. Some visiting Chess grandmaster was giving a simultaneous display - at the Singapore Polytechnic - and so off I went, one among perhaps thirty or so competitors, and one of only a few to manage to draw against him. And it was there, while wandering around, that I first saw a display of Martial Arts. It was almost balletic; full of seemingly effortless grace, and I felt at once that I wanted to be able to do that, to move so gracefully with the ability to generate, direct and control a certain physical power. So, youthful, vibrant, and arrogantly naive, I approached them. At first they - those Chinese men - seemed surprised, if not somewhat amused, that a young European boy (wearing white socks, khaki shorts, white shirt, and sandals) would be interested. But I persisted, and was invited to meet them a week later, at the place where they practised.

I remember that journey well. The service taxi dropped me near the Capitol cinema in Singapore city and, with a mixture of excitement and nervousness, I walked past that restaurant - much frequented by my father and I - that served rather good steak, chips, and fried tomatoes, for what seemed a long way. The young men were surprised to see me, although an elderly gentleman was not, and thus began my training. To be honest, I never became very good, and certainly no match for most of those there, and subsequently. But I doggedly persisted - so much so that, after many weeks, I

was invited to join them on their usual post-session foray among the eating stalls by the river, and did not arrive back home until well past midnight, much to the relief of my mother who was on the verge of calling the Police.

Thus began my interest in and study of what, at the time, we colonial Europeans often called Oriental Philosophy, and thus was I invited to the rather splendid home - complete with garden - of one of the Masters of that particular Martial Art. From this developed an interest, both practical and theoretical, in philosophy, and religions, in general, including Hindu, Chinese, and Buddhist philosophy, religion, and practices, and Singapore was certainly a good place to learn about such things, given its diversity of culture, and replete as it was with Buddhist, Hindu, Taoist, temples and places of gathering. A good place, also, to be initiated, as a boy, into the delights of women; or, more correctly, learning of and from the delights of young delightful foreign ladies.

Fenland Beauty

Fade, to England on a dull, cloudy, cold day. An aeroplane; a long journey, broken by some days in Ceylon. The descent down through the clouds on the way to landing in England was quite bleak, for me. Everything looked so enervating, and for several weeks after arriving in England my only desire was to return to the Far East, or Africa. My father felt the same, and began to seek alternative employment in Africa, while I, to alleviate my boredom and inner bleakness, took to cycling the fenland country around and beyond the small village where we were, temporarily, staying. There was talk of school, but I artfully resisted, manufacturing a variety of excuses while I waited for my father to succeed. He did, some place further south in Africa than where we had lived, and near the Zambezi river, which rather interested me, although my initial joy on learning this was tempered by the reality of us - my mother and I - having to wait six months before we could join him, given the relative isolation of the place, his need to find us accommodation, and other sundry practical matters. The desire I had nurtured, for some time, to study assiduously, and go to an English University to read Physics, slowly dwindled; the dull cold bleakness of the English weather as water thrown upon that fire.

So I left home, at age fifteen, to lodge with a widowed lady in the nearby town, and spend what I assumed would be only six months at some College morosely and not at all seriously studying for 'O' levels. College work was easy, and at times boring, and I spent most weekends cycling mostly southwards, coming to enjoy the physical exertion, the landscape itself, and almost always taking a selection of books with me, carried in my saddlebag.

But there was something else, engendered by these journeys. A sense, a feeling - a wordless intuition - of not being apart from that particular fenland landscape, with its vast panorama of sky, its fertile soil, its often wide drainage ditches that, though hewed by humans, centuries of natural change had melded into being a part of Nature, there. It was as if this land - of small hamlets, small villages, scattered farms, with its panorama of horizons - was alive in an almost unique way.

I took to staying out on clear and moonlit nights. To cycling lanes by light of moon. There was a strange, eerie, beauty there, at these times - almost as if I, myself, was not quite real; that there lay a hidden world, an older, world, a far slower, world, where one might hear the whisperings of trees or hear the distant call of someone calling; someone long dead but not quite gone from the land, here; someone who did not belong in the other, modern, world that now edged this older fenland country.



Fenland

There is no rational explanation for how or even why I met her. Perhaps - as I thought thereafter - it was she who met me, and meant to. Who somehow might have enchanted me to be there on that day at that hour in that year of my youth. As if she, also, was from, or part of, this other esoteric living land.

There were mysteries there that I did not then consciously fathom, but rather lived with and through, and which even now - over forty years later - I have only just begun to rationally understand as a natural and muliebral presencing of The Numen. Mysteries, perhaps, I felt then, of an ancient way never written down, and which no words, no book, could bind, contain, restrain, reveal. Mysteries of the connexion that links all Life together.

All I knew then was the occupant of that solitary small house along a narrow

isolated lane near where the fenland waters, still, in those days, rose in some years to flood the land around and where a boat was kept, with daily life lived, if needed, on upper floors as in olden days. All I felt then, in the moment of that meeting and the hour beyond, was such an intense desire to stay as almost subsumed me. To stay - as one would stay stunned momentarily by the gorgeosity of some sunset, or by some vista suddenly chanced upon. No words sufficed, were needed, but we then idly talked nonetheless - I, leaning on my bicycle; she standing beside the broken fence that seemed to mark the inner sanctum of her sacred world.

It was not that I expected, then - or even hoped for - some kind of sexual tryst. But there she was, somewhat older than me, pretty in a comely way, standing, smiling, as I had slowly passed. It was not that I was lost and needed directions; a recent map was always carried in my bag. Not that I needed water. I had my flask of milkless Oolong tea. Not that I... But I stopped, nevertheless, dismounted, to slowly saunter back.

I have no clear recollection of what we said, for it is all now as a fading dream, remembered in the hour past rising from fitful unrestful sleep. No clear recollection of the two weeks that passed until I, unable to resist, ventured there again.

Mostly - as on that day of my first returning - we together just sat close to each other in the inner dimness of that well-worn dwelling. Sometimes a fire was lit; almost always there was tea. Sometimes we would walk together upon the land around. And we spoke, when needed not desired.

For it was a certain sensitivity that we seemed to share - a certain strangeness, a mostly wordless strangeness that I had previously not encountered; except, perhaps, in moments swiftly gone, as when one day the young, gorgeous, blonde, English teacher I still remember so well was reading to our class a poem and our eyes met, and it was if she somehow in some strange way then imparted in me not only her understanding of those words but also the feelings they engendered in her so that I, also, understood and felt the meaning behind such words. As if in that one short strange moment she had brought alive that work of Art so that it connected us, bridged us. So much so that for days afterwards I carried a copy of that poem around with me, and read it when I could to push open again that door that led to some distant different land. But, then, of course, the feeling faded, and some new interest, some new source of inspiration, came along; as - for me - that poem became surpassed, by others.

There was a walk, next time. Some talk about land, sky, Sun, Moon, rain, trees, insects, birds, and soil, and although I did not realize it then, I was

learning; a learning, a species of learning, I once, many years later, strived to contain, constrain, reveal, with my own poor collocation of words:

Being the water: the Dragonfly above the water
I grieve of the road and the bridge of the road
Weeping in the wind
Because I am the Sun.

Being the river: all the river things
I feel the wounds
Inflicted deeply in my flesh
Because I am the dust.

Being the river-banks: the land around the banks
I am no-Time
Burning to cauterize my wounds
Because I am the world and all things of the world;

Being the wind: the words of the wind
I sorrow in my-Time
Knowing people who pass
Because they are my wounds.

Being my sorrow: the sorrow of wounded land
I sense the knowing turning beyond the pain
Because I am the water
Flowing with no end

There were other shared times, some when we simply listened to music. And then came that night when we two finally became lovers. Other such nights came; went, as the Moon, as the lady herself, cycled through several monthly phases.

It could have lasted; perhaps it should have lasted, for that is what she possibly, probably, wanted: for me to stay with her in that cottage of hers. But I was young, restless, impetuous, and in truth perhaps too selfish; too enwrapped in my own inner visions, dreams, desires; certainly, I was often impetuously youthful but not in love. Enchanted certainly, but no, not in love.

Thus arrived that day when I felt I had to leave, to never wilfully return - she stood there, by her dwelling, as I bicycled away, and although I did not know it then, she was only the first spinning of that muliebral thread that was to bind my diverse lives together.

Toward First Love

A rather generous allowance from my father enabled books to be purchased, and travel, by means of train, to anywhere that interested me, and so one day I travelled to London to visit bookshops, and the British Museum.

But that journey was fruitful in other ways. Arrogant and self-assured as I was - somewhat helped by my Martial Arts training - I spent some evening time in less salubrious parts of London, desirous of finding some suitable young lady to entertain me, remembering as I did such Singaporean trysts and wistfully recalling as I did that Fenland enchantress.

I did find such a lady, and, after a short taxi ride (which I of course paid for) we arrived at the entrance to a large town house in Chalk Farm. We had reached the top of that first tier of inside stairs (which led to her room) when some loud commotion broke out below. A man, shouting; a woman's loud voice. From the stairs I saw a man push open the front door that a woman was, vainly, trying to close. He turned, shouted a few obscenities, and drew back his clenched fist, as if to strike the woman. He did not succeed. I cannot remember what I said, only that I said something to him after vaulting down that flight of stairs toward him. He replied with a vulgar epithet or two, and lunged at me. I simply turned, stepped sideways and used his own momentum to throw him to the ground by which time a huge man had arrived from some inside room to lift him, with remarkable ease, to his feet and almost bodily carry him out where he pushed him down the steps that led up from the pavement to that front door. The man lay motionless, briefly, there, then rose, slowly, to betake himself shabbily away, uttering curses as he did so.

I was thanked, by the lady he had intended to attack, and invited to join her for a glass of Sherry in her ground-floor rooms.

Thus began our friendship. Or, more correctly, relationship. Somewhat more than a decade older than me, with an enchanting if rather mischievous smile, she never once in the hours we spent together talking, that evening, mentioned the nature of her business, as I had no need to ask. It was all rather genteel, as she herself was, even though a trace of her local accent remained, and I found her quite enchanting, as, of course, she knew, drawing forth from me in those hours the then so brief story of my still so youthful life, and, our provided supper over, it seemed natural, an unspoken assumption between us, for me to stay the night with her. My stay became

the following day, and then the day after that. There was a restaurant, of sorts, nearby, where she was known by name, and we spent a few hours there, eating a meal, and drinking wine, that neither of us paid for. I was introduced to her ladies, and to that huge man of the shaven head, who though rather grim looking had a gentle sense of humour. People - men and mostly well-dressed - came and went throughout most of the day and evening, and when my own self-appointed time came to leave, I did so with much reluctance and with a promise to return at the ending of that week.

I kept my promise, and it was to become the first of many such visits during those my early learning years. We had a simple, an uncomplicated, relationship, which was always honest, and I am not ashamed to say that in a way I loved her, in my then still rather boyish way, and - looking back, now - she almost certainly understood me far better than I then understood myself.

It is difficult, this understanding
Of my love:

I have to rise every morning
With the intention of our future
Moulded as some sculptors mould
Their souls around a form
That Will soon powers to a shape
In Time.

It is difficult, this sharing
Of each dream that makes her to journey
To the joining of our selves
And spills desire the way some music
Spills some notes to form the suggestion
Of some god:

There is no journey bribed by dread
No sea that sets the horizon
As the yearning of the dead sets
The seal to future Time;
There is no calling and no called:
No passing and no one passed
Since there is no you or I to understand
The laked reflexion of each moon.

But I forget, and need to remember
At each new beginning of each new
Dream which is the beginning of our
Love.

There are no words needed
As there are no excuses

For the failures of some Art:

It is difficult, this speaking
Of my love.

One weekend I particularly remember. Some hours were spent lazily strolling through what she insisted on calling *The Regent's Park*; some hours were spent listening to Jazz at some small club (she was a Jazz aficionado and very knowledgeable about that genre); and some hours spent at dinner in an excellent restaurant; and it was after midnight when we returned, by taxi, to her house. I remember then feeling pleased, and somewhat privileged, to be a part of her world - a young man who certainly felt, and behaved, much older than he was. Perhaps it was my childhood years in Africa and the Far East, perhaps my still then somewhat arrogant nature, perhaps my Martial Arts training, perhaps the manners my mother instilled into me and the liberal, rather laissez-faire, attitude of my father; whatever it was, I felt and acted quite differently from all the other young men of my age that I knew, some of whom, no doubt considered me elitist, arrogant, and somewhat condescending.

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Ecce Ego Contra...

Political Initiation

One day - a Saturday - I was idly walking around the centre of London, sort-of heading for the house of my lady friend. Sort-of, because in those days, I quite enjoyed such walks, in still unfamiliar cities and towns. A chance to stroll past places; watch people pass by; become immersed in my surroundings. I had a good sense of direction, and seldom needed to consult the London map that I carried in the pocket of my Corduroy jacket. Indeed, it was often interesting to get a little lost - to find new sights, places.

In those days I still dressed somewhat conventionally, conservatively: Corduroy or Tweed jacket, flannel or Tweed trousers; sturdy brown walking shoes; even linen shirts with detachable collars held in place by studs inlaid

with mother-of-pearl. Short hair, of course; and a rather heavy Tweed overcoat, for when the weather was cold.

Thus attired (*sans* overcoat) I chanced, on that day, upon some fracas in some street. Young men brawling. I had no idea at all what it was all about - but it seemed to me somewhat unfair, since one young lad was getting battered by several others. Without thinking, I waded in to help him. There was that exhilaration, again. That love of direct physical violence I had felt before. A few more young lads joined the melee, and then it was over, and so we went, quite naturally, to some nearby Public House to celebrate our victory. Their accepting camaraderie was wonderfully refreshing, and many hours were spent, drinking - and talking politics.

Not that I was then ignorant of their type of politics. Indeed, I had spent many of the previous months eagerly reading about nationalism, about National-Socialist Germany, and especially about Adolf Hitler, inspired by an account of the actions of Otto Ernst Remer, on that day in July 1944 during the Second World War. Such loyalty; such a sense of duty; such honour; such forthright warrior action.

To me, in the moment of my reading, then as after, Remer seemed the perfect embodiment of the warrior; of the type of person who might build the new society I had often theorized about - precursor as that society would be for our exploration and colonization of the stars. Now, it seemed to me, I had met a similar type of people. Or at least, those who could, given training, direction, guidance, purpose, be such people. Young; enthusiastic; who seemed to share something - if only instinctively - of my dream and who, like me, seemed to enjoy and welcome violence. They had a meeting, arranged for the following weekend, and I was invited and gladly accepted. I went to the meeting - and the "social" afterwards - and it was there I met someone who knew Colin Jordan, whom I had already heard of. Thus, it seemed logical, indeed necessary, that I contact CJ myself, which I did, by posted letter.

It was, perhaps, a propitious time. A new political movement had been formed, by CJ, and I began to seriously consider how the new society I had envisioned might be created. It also seemed to me then - and for a long while afterwards - that Hitler's National-Socialist Germany was, and should be, the archetype for such a new society: that NS Germany embodied most, though not all, the ideals I then saw as necessary to the creation of such a new, warrior, society imbued with a Galactic ethos.

For nearly a year I came to inhabit three quite separate worlds. My lady

friend, in London, the world of occasionally violent but always interesting political activism; and my academic studies. Thus, I was fully occupied; enthused; alive; replete with my various ways of living, so that when the date for my return to Africa drew ever nearer, there really was no need to make a decision, for my lives seemed then inextricably linked with England. It seemed, then, as if it really was me against: you; the world; against everyone, except my political comrades and my lady friend.

During these trips to London, 'O' levels at College came and went, and I drifted into the Sixth Form. It was tempting to leave, and move to live and work in London, based with my lady friend, but the promise of Physics still enthralled me, a little, particularly as at that time the Apollo program looked it would easily achieve the goal that had been set - soon, perchance, there would bases on the Moon, and then on Mars. So I plugged away at Physics, without much enthusiasm, feeling it might be different at University when I would be free to undertake my own study, experiments, research. A feeling which led me to consider applying to King's College, Cambridge; which, after consultation with my teachers, I did and, probably due to their recommendation, secured and attended an interview.

Increasingly, however, my lives became a distraction from schoolwork, but I seemed to have some innate talent for mathematics and Physics and so - studying very little (some weeks, not at all) - I plodded on, trusting in this talent to get me through [2].

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Facies Abyssi

University

Fast forward to a University in the north of England, and a still young student, who had grown well-trimmed moustaches and who, unlike the majority of other students, was always rather conservatively attired. My first term as an undergraduate had been a great disappointment following a Summer vacation of anticipation, and awaiting examination results.

No, wait - let us rewind, briefly, to that Summer vacation, after 'A' level exams were over. I had, perhaps rather foolishly, spent the weekends - and

often the free days - of these examination weeks embroiled elsewhere. Attending political rallies, meetings, staying with political associates; and - more enjoyable - staying with my lady friend in London.

Possibly not so foolishly, since - in retrospection - I was, as became something of a habit, letting the Fates, *wyrd*, decide my fate when, as often happened, I vacillated between two or more options, waiting until a particular course of life seemed obvious, even to me. I had studied very little in the six months preceding those examinations, trusting to my talent, and busy elsewhere doing what, at the time and for almost a year before, were far more exciting and interesting things. So interesting and so exciting - so redolent of promise - that I even took the radical step of writing to King's College and withdrawing my application, feeling at the time and for quite a while afterwards that my future lay in London with a certain lady. A feeling which led me to impetuously send a request, via postcard, to the BBC radio programme *Jazz Record Requests* (a programme I knew she listened to), mentioning her first name and requesting - "with love from David" - a recording of the MJQ "with Milt Jackson on vibes". My request was successful, and I enjoyed a most memorable weekend in London with her. But then, months later, laboratory experiments led me to dream again of University; until - weeks or even days later - I began to desire again to move to London to stay with her... Thus, if I failed my examinations, I could not possibly go on to University, and the decision regarding my direction would be clear, fated.

'A' level exams over, I spent a lot of that Summer working, in a mundane job, for my allowance from my father never did, in those days, seem to meet all my needs, for I loved to treat a certain lady to the occasional 'long weekend away'. On the last day of Term, and slightly inebriated after a lunch-time session down the nearby Pub with friends, I had met one of only two girls (EH and JJ) in my Sixth Form. EH and I had flirted before, and I liked her, as I felt she liked me, but I had kept a deliberate distance, given my assignments in London, for to have yet another intimate relationship would have been for me, at that time, just far too complicated. But on that day - a warm sunny one, I seem to recall - as we passed each other outside the refectory I embraced her. She eagerly returned the embrace, and we kissed for a long time, much to the amusement of some other students, passing by, who knew us both.

Thereafter I did not see her again for a while, reverting back to keeping my distance, until I heard from a mutual friend that she was having some trouble with her landlord (like me, she had rented rooms for the Summer in our local town). Perhaps I misheard, or misunderstood the situation - but I thought I was informed that she had been threatened. Without hesitation I went back

to my rooms to procure a weapon (one always keeps a selection handy). In this case, a pickaxe handle, and - suitably attired in the working type clothes I wore to work: jeans, brown leather jacket, heavy boots - I made my way through the streets to where he lived. My insistent knocking on his front door brought him out, and although I cannot remember what I said, I know he understood. I threatened him. I was just so angry; madly unthinkingly angry, full of rage, and prepared for a bloody fight. In that moment nothing existed except him and that, my rage. He was a tall and stocky man - bigger than me - but perhaps his own nature, or maybe something in my demeanour, my eyes, made him meekly agree to my demands. And so I left, still full of rage, and it was only as I was nearing my own rooms, somewhat calmer, that it occurred to me I was carrying what the Police would call an "offensive weapon".

Some days later, I was to learn that her landlord problems had been solved, and that she desired to see me, but I never did meet with her again.

So, fast forward again to University - that revealing of a part of my youthful character over - and back to that first Term, there. As I mentioned, I was so disappointed. I had gone somewhat naively believing I could study at my own pace, focus on topics that interested me, and do some practical experiments of my own devising. As it was, it was in many ways worse than school.

The lectures were tedious, rote-learning, affairs where one had to make copious notes and after which one was presented with a list of boring problems to be solved, each problem being of the type one might find in 'A' level examinations. Laboratory work as just as routine, even though one did have some choice as to what, of the listed experiments, one might undertake. Serious intellectual discussion, among the students, was at a premium - when it arose, which was rarely - and even the lecturers did not seem that scientifically curious. They had students to teach; or rather, certain parts of certain subjects to get through, every week.

One incident in particular made me seriously consider leaving, and involved a laboratory experiment. Toward the end of the first Term we were given the opportunity to devise and carry out our own experiments. I chose to replicate the Michelson-Morley experiment, having a particular interest in the theories that gave rise to this attempt to detect "the aether".

I was informed that such an experiment was really more suited to a Graduate, or Third-Year, student, but, of course, I ignored all the excuses and the advice that I was given as to why I should not try. Finally, I got my way,

and was allotted a large part of one of the laboratory darkrooms. Suffice to say that it took me a while to set the experiment up, and even longer to tweak the equipment to get it ready: many weeks, in fact, despite spending many afternoons in the laboratory. I festooned my area with signs telling everyone not to touch the equipment. Then, I began to get some results. A few days later I returned, eager and excited, only to find that some lecturer had pushed all my equipment into one corner in order to set up some experiment for his students, thus destroying my weeks of delicate work. Not only that, I had "run out of time"; the darkroom really was needed by other students.

Strangely, I was not angry, just filled with an abyssal disappointment. It was as if some far distant apparently quixotic landscape which I had been eagerly travelling toward, for a long and arduous while, had at last been reached only to be revealed as ordinary, dull, devoid of any real interest at all.

Thus, gradually, my interest in studying physics waned, until - by the end of the next term - it has almost completely disappeared, replaced by increasing political activities, and a renewed desire to live and work in London. However, even though I never did any studious work, from that, my abyssal laboratory-moment, onwards, I still somehow managed to come second in mathematics at the end of year exams. There were various travels, and some trysts:

Here I have stopped
Because only Time goes on within my dream:

Yesterday I was awoken, again,
And she held me down
With her body warmth
Until, satisfied, I went alone
Walking
And trying to remember:

A sun in a white clouded sky
Morning dawn yellow
Sways the breath that, hot, I exhale tasting of her lips.
The water has cut, deep, into
The estuary bank
And the mallard swims against the flow -
No movement, only effort.

Nearby - the foreign ship which brought me
Is held by rusty chains
Which, one day and soon
And peeling them like its paint,
Must leave.

Here I shall begin again
Because Time, at last, has stopped
Since I have remembered the dark ecstasy
Which brought that war-seeking Dream

Meanwhile, my political involvements had intensified. I regularly attended political meetings, demonstrations, and activities, by various organizations, including BM and the NF, and at one such political foray I met Eddy Morrison and his friends. I immediately liked Morrison. He was enthusiastic, committed, optimistic, down-to-earth and quite *au fait* with National-Socialism. He also, at that time, possessed a certain personal charisma, and thus always had a few youthful followers who considered him their leader. One incident I remember well. He had invited me to join him and some of his friends on a day trip to Bridlington, an invitation which I accepted, and we ended up on the beach singing NS, and old BUF, songs.

A marvellous day, and I was genuinely sad when they dropped me off at my then place of University residence and went back to their city of Leeds, and it was not long before I joined them, again, for some political event or other. Morrison introduced me to his family, with whom I had a meal, and then off we went into the centre of his home city to raucously harangue some Communist paper-sellers and generally make a nuisance of ourselves. Morrison was far more experienced in practical street politics than I, and the more time I spent with him, the more it dawned on me that perhaps the two of us could not only make a name for ourselves but might, just might, be able to if not create the foundations of some new political force, then at least use an existing nationalist organization as means of gaining influence and power and thus begin to implement NS ideals.

It should be remembered that, at this time, the very early seventies, the NF regularly held large marches and rallies, all over England, with many of these marches involving violence, before, during, and after, and with many of these marches involving thousands of people. For instance, there was one march which I attended where those at the front had to physically fight their way through packs of Reds, with similar skirmishes occurring toward the rear. These were exciting times, and there really was a feeling, among the rank-and-file, that the NF was growing in such a way that, in a decade or more, it might be able to win or seize power.

Even CJ's British Movement was thriving, though in a much smaller way, and it was during this time that I came to act, on a few occasions, as CJ's bodyguard. Usually because the person who should have done that duty for

some reason was not there. One of these occasions was at an outdoor demonstration - in Wolverhampton I seem to recall - when CJ stood haranguing the sparse crowd from the back of a Land Rover, while I stood in front, trying to look as thuggish as possible. Another of these occasions was an indoor meeting, where I stood at the front of the hall when CJ spoke, again to a small crowd, from the raised stage behind me and on which occasion I brandished a Shillelagh, which weapon the two or three, somewhat bored, Police Officers in attendance were completely unconcerned about. The Good 'Ole Days. On a few other occasions I simply accompanied CJ (walking slightly behind) when he walked toward and from some meeting place or assembly point.

Compared to all this, my life at University seemed, and indeed was, boring; dull. Thus it seemed natural, inevitable - especially given my friendship with Morrison - that I move to Leeds, and become involved with street-politics full-time. Which I dutifully did. As often in my life, it seemed as if the Fates revealed to me the direction in which I should go. Thus, and yet again, there was a certain period of drifting, by me, until a particular course of life seemed obvious, even to me.

My next year was a learning process. Learning about people; learning more about political propaganda; speaking in public; organizing and participating in street fights and demonstrations. That is, it was a learning of the Art of the revolutionary political agitator. I loved the life; I adored the life, and while domiciled in Leeds, in a garret (on Meanwood Road) appropriate to a revolutionary, fanatical, political activist, I still found time to visit my lady friend, in London.

One incident during my University stay may be worth recording. I happened to get to know someone there (who incidentally introduced me to the writings of Mishima) who was a personal friend of Martin Webster, and I met Webster on several occasions, one following some fracas at the University after he had been invited to address some meeting or other. On one of these occasions we had a discussion about political propaganda - a discussion which continued by several letters we exchanged over subsequent weeks. The essence of this discussion was to do with truth. I was of the opinion that if "our Cause" was indeed correct, and noble, as I believed, then we had no need to write or produce propaganda which distorted the truth in order to gain recruits, or make us and our Cause appear in some positive way. So far as I recall, Webster was of the opinion that I was being rather naive, and that, in practical politics, and to a certain extent, "the end justifies the means", something I then did not agree with.

Furthermore, it was during my time at University that I acquired personal

experience of just how prejudiced some people could be - how they judged someone, for instance, according to their political views, or what they believed were their political views.

During my first few terms at University I had acquired something of a minor reputation as a fascist, helped no doubt by me handing out leaflets from the Racial Preservation Society outside meetings arranged by various Left-Wing and Communist groups. This led to several people actively disliking me - even hating me - although they did not know me, as a person, and made no effort to do so. Thus, they judged me a fascist, they did not like fascists, so they did not like me; or, even worse, they believed that fascists were "evil" and/or dangerous and therefore should and must "be dealt with". What I found curious was that these people, who so irrationally prejudged people on the basis of their alleged or assumed political views, were often the ones who also loudly proclaimed that prejudice (including racial prejudice) was immoral. Thus, they were doing exactly what they were condemning in others.

I did, however, find one political person - who belonged to some minor Marxist-Leninist group - who understood this, and who thus took the opportunity to get to know me and with whom I had many friendly discussions about politics, and life in general. And it was he who - along with a few cultured non-political individuals - somewhat helped restore my belief that humans were, or could be, rational, cultured, beings. Perhaps I should add these few cultured non-political individuals - three young men and a young lady - were all (as we now say) 'gay'. Indeed, with only one exception, all my friends at University were gay, in those intolerant days (only a few years after the Wolfenden report) when such a preference, such a nature, was often kept secret because still regarded by the majority of people as reprehensible and somehow 'perverse'. As for me, I simply enjoyed their company; their culture; their sensitivity; and which culture and sensitivity was, or seemed to me at the time, rather lacking in most if not all the other students I met, studied with, or had occasion to interact with.

Excursus - Galactic Imperium

Since my discovery of National-Socialism, aged fifteen, I believed that NS Germany embodied the essence of - and could be archetype for - the type of warrior orientated and noble society that might make my vision of a Galactic Imperium real. I read everything I could about Hitler, NS Germany, and National-Socialism, and concluded - some time before what has been termed holocaust revisionism began - that the alleged extermination of the Jews

during the Second World War was propaganda.

To me, then, National-Socialism seemed to embody everything that I felt was noble and excellent: a new, modern, expression of the Hellenic ethos which I had greatly admired since first reading, in Greek, Homer's *Odyssey* and *The Iliad* years previously. Thus my overriding aim came to be supporting and propagating National-Socialism, and aiding organizations which might prepare the way for a new type of fascist or NS State.

Furthermore, I really had come to feel a deep love for my ancestral land of England as I felt then an idealistic, and honourable, desire to help, to aid, those whom I regarded as my own people: as if all their problems could and should be solved by the emergence of a National-Socialist State; as if all that was required for Paradise to be created on Earth was the triumph of an NS movement and the practical implementation of NS ideals. Youthful exuberance and naiveté - perhaps.

In my understanding of NS I was greatly helped by Colin Jordan, who suggested I read certain books, including the works of Savitri Devi, who gave me many books, and loaned me others, who patiently answered my many enthusiastic questions, and who introduced me to many life-long National-Socialists, including some who had fought for, and given their loyalty to, Adolf Hitler, and one of my most treasured possessions came to be a signed photograph given to me by Major-General Otto Ernst Remer.

Even before I discovered NS and studied NS Germany, I had a vision of a human Galactic Empire, founded and maintained by a new breed of warrior-explorers, as I believed that we human beings possessed great potential and can and should change and evolve ourselves, consciously, by acts of will, and by overcoming, by accepting, great and noble challenges. Such challenges would reveal ἀρετή - reveal a person's true nature, and be the breeding ground of ἀρετή.

Thus, for me, discovering and learning about NS seemed fortunate, wyrdful - presenting to me the means to make my vision real.

As I was to write during my time living in Leeds:

"It is the vision of a Galactic Empire which runs through my political life just as it is the quest to find and understand our human identity, and my own identity, and our relation to Nature, which runs through my personal and spiritual life, giving me the two aims which I consistently pursued since I was about thirteen years of age, regardless of where I was, what I was doing and how

I was described by others or even by myself..."

I further came to understand that in order to create the new warrior society, it was necessary to disrupt, undermine, destroy, overthrow – or replace by any practical means – all existing societies, and all governments, and that while electoral politics might be one way for National-Socialists to take power, direct revolution or insurrection was a viable alternative.

Therefore, with the dedication of a fanatic, I set about doing just that, ready, willing and prepared to use violence in order to aid and achieve political goals. For I then considered that sacrifices were necessary in order for these goals to be achieved, and that, once achieved, the violent struggle would have been worthwhile, even if it cost me my own life, or that of others. Thus, I placed some idealized vision of the future before my own personal happiness - indeed, my own happiness became the struggle for, and the practical realization of, that vision of the future.

Years of Ultra-Violence

Fade back to the English city of Leeds, in the first few years of that decade - reckoned according to a calender still in common use - called the nineteen seventies.

I was released from my first term of imprisonment, having been convicted of leading a gang of skinheads in a Paki-bashing incident, following some racial skirmishes in Wakefield, and I soon settled back into my life as a violent street-agitator. I had found prison a useful and interesting experience, made some good contacts, learned some new skills, and left with more money than I had entered, having run a racket inside, selling certain liberated goods.

In the weeks following this, I put some of my new skills to practical use, and began to put together the nucleus of a small gang whose aim was to liberate goods, fence them, and make some money with the initial intent of aiding our political struggle.

Suffice to say that this gang - more petty criminals than racketeers - was based in or around Leeds and consisted of some useful people. For example, someone who worked in a large Department store, and someone employed by British Railways who had access to large parcels and rail freight. Thus, these types of people had easy access to useful, saleable, goods. The railway employees would simply change the labels and documentation, so that goods were mis-delivered to a contact, and then sold on to a fence, while the store

employees would arrange delivery of goods in a similar way, or one of our people would simply collect them in-store and boldly walk out with them.

For some reason I cannot quite now recall, Eddy Morrison became involved on the periphery of this group - perhaps he may have wanted a certain item, or two, which I, being his friend, said I could supply, etcetera.

For quite a while things ran smoothly - even when I happened to get arrested, convicted, and sent to prison (again) for a short while, for violence - until, one day in 1974, four or five Police officers from the then Yorkshire Regional Crime Squad (later to become part of the National Crime Squad), raided my garret in Leeds, and arrested me. Three other people in this small gang - including Morrison - were also arrested, and we were questioned for around six hours at the British Transport Police HQ in Leeds. Morrison and I were thrown into prison, "on remand", since it was feared that I would "intimidate witnesses" and that he was "my second in command" (which, unlike the first accusation, was not correct).

Having previously spent some time in Armley jail, being on-remand there did not bother me at all, and I soon settled back into prison life. Morrison, however, did not cope very well, and seemed genuinely surprised that I was rather enjoying myself. But, as I said somewhat humorously to one of the arresting Police officers, during one of my interrogations, "You get three meals a day, free accommodation, and there are lot's of friends around, so what's the big deal?"

It turned out that the Police had been "tipped-off" by one of those involved in this gang, because he had developed a personal grudge against me. The simple truth is that he had a violent argument with his girlfriend, she came to see me, and stayed for around two weeks.

There is an ineffable sadness
For your eyes betray that warmth, that beauty,
That brings me down
To where even my street-hardened Will cannot go:
So I am sad, almost crying

Outside, there is no sun to warm
As yesterday when I touched the warmth of your breasts
And the wordless joy of ecstatic youth
Lived to suffuse if only briefly with world-defying life
This tired battle-bruised body

But now: clouds, rain-bleakness
To darken such dreams as break me.
For there are many places I cannot go.

So I let her go, suffused as I still was with a particular political vision and various political schemes. To add insult to the injury of the grass who betrayed us, when he finally managed to see his former girlfriend again to try and get her back, she compared him unfavourably, in one department, to someone else. Thus, his pride hurt, he began telling lies about me to anyone who would listen, claiming, for instance, that once he pushed me up against a wall and I pleaded for him to let me go.

Quite naturally, given my character at that time, I while in prison arranged for someone to sort this grass out, but this comrade of mine, on his way to do just that, was pulled-over and arrested on some other outstanding matter, held on remand and eventually convicted of a variety of offences, receiving a long prison sentence. Meanwhile, the grass had left Leeds and gone into hiding.

On learning of this, I considered the matter, wyrdfully, finally concluding that I should – then and on my release from prison and for the good of the Cause – put my political aims and goals before personal vengeance and certain 'criminal' activities and running a gang. Thus, I should strive to be idealistic, noble, and ignore – not seek to find – such an individual, and instead personally concentrate on politics, eschewing further 'criminal' activities to fund that Cause. Not that – to be honest – this decision to concentrate solely on politics was easy for me then, since it was very tempting to continue with such activities, which I did enjoy: the planning, the anticipation, the execution, the camaraderie, and the satisfaction of succeeding.

When this particular criminal case against me finally came to trial, all the more serious charges had been dropped due to "lack of evidence", and I was simply charged with "receiving and handling stolen goods", for which I was convicted and given a bender.

Fade, back to my political life in Leeds. While all the above was occurring, I was dutifully doing my duty as a street-agitator, and had been recruited (by JM) into Column 88, a clandestine paramilitary and neo-nazi group, led by a former Special Forces officer, which at that time held regular military training sessions with the Territorial Army, the volunteer reserve force of the British Army. According to gen received decades later, Column 88 was actually part of NATO's pan-European underground Gladio network, set up and trained to employ guerilla tactics against the Soviets had they

ever invaded (as was still expected, in those days). But I knew nothing of this, at the time, and simply enjoyed being part of and training with Column 88. For C88 seemed to me to be a genuine National-Socialist group, devoted to comradeship and to the slow process of socially and politically infiltrating British society, with perhaps some possibility that, if the need arose (such as a Soviet invasion) we might "do our bit", as National-Socialists, and fight them.

Right from the very beginning it was obvious that C88 was a well-organized group, quite different from any other NS or nationalist group I had come across in the previous six years. For I had been instructed to wait in some obscure lay-by in Wiltshire, and was patiently doing so when several speeding vehicles arrived and proceeded - in an impressive manoeuvre - to surround, and block, the car I had been waiting in, with several very obviously fit young men exiting quickly from these vehicles.

I was further impressed when, later that day and in the house of C88's organizer (Lutz), I met many young National-Socialists from several different European countries. Here, I felt, was the spirit, the comradeship, of The Third Reich, of the Waffen-SS, of genuine National-Socialism, come alive again, something which, I knew from direct personal experience, was often so sadly lacking in the other NS group I had previously encountered.

While there was some military training - with weapons loaded with live ammunition - such as a night exercise in Savernake Forest when "we" had to take and overrun an "enemy" position, the real highlight for me of my years with C88 were the yearly Fuhrerfests when National-Socialists from all over Europe would gather in comradeship to celebrate Adolf Hitler's birthday. It was inspiring to know, to feel, that Adolf Hitler and his sacred mission had not been forgotten; that there were others - many others - in other lands who felt the same way and who understood, rationally or instinctively, or both, the essential goodness and nobility of National-Socialism itself. In addition, it was good to know that so many educated, seemingly well-connected, individuals in Britain were covert National-Socialists, for another impressive thing about C88 was its English members: professional, family, people, for the most part, who did not have a shaved head or a pair of 'bovver boots between them.

Indeed, I - although in some ways quite well educated - was probably the odd-one out: a rough almost fanatical street-fighter of many years experience who had been in Prison for violence and who had many other criminal convictions. That I, a hardened Nazi street thug with a criminal record, had been accepted into the home of L's wife and family - and into the homes of some other C88 members - was pleasing because it seemed to me to express

the nobility, the folk equality, of National-Socialism itself.

In 1973 - just before I was recruited by Column 88 - Colin Jordan invited me to his then home in Coventry. Naturally, having great respect for CJ, I accepted and was to find, on my arrival, that a meeting of the inner Council of CJ's British Movement was taking place. After a short wait, I was invited to address them, which I did, answered a few questions about tactics and strategy, and then had to wait for a while in another room, which CJ used as his office. Invited back, I was informed that they had decided to co-opt me onto the Council, something I had not expected. Asking for time to consider the matter, I left to travel back to Leeds. For reasons I cannot now quite recall, a few days later I wrote to CJ declining the offer - probably because I was already then thinking of forming my own, more violent, political organization.

In December of 1973, I finally managed to convince Morrison that we two, with our good ally Joe Short, should form a new political, more active (that is, more violent) and openly pro-Nazi, movement.

Thus the National Democratic Freedom Movement (NDFM) was born, which was to have a brief, if exceedingly violent, existence, with Morrison as leader. Our intent was to build a revolutionary street movement, and so for seven or so months we held public meetings, organized demonstrations and protests, and generally had a jolly good time (or at least, I did) in pursuit of gaining members and propagating National-Socialism under cover of nationalism.

As John Tyndall later wrote in his *Spearhead* magazine (April, 1983):

" The National Democratic Freedom Movement...concentrated its activities mainly upon acts of violence against its opponents. Before very long the NDFM had degenerated into nothing more than a criminal gang."

Among the highlights of that NDFM year, for me, were the following.

I smashed up (with one other NDFM member) an anti-apartheid exhibition, in Leeds (twice). I gave vitriolic extempore speeches at public meetings (some of which ended in violence when our opponents attacked). I waded into some Trade Union march or other, thumped a few people then stole and set fire to one of their banners (arrested, again). I arranged a meeting at Chapeltown, in Leeds (the heart of the Black community then) at which only five of us turned up, including Andrew Brons but not including Morrison. We faced a

rather angry crowd of several hundred people, who threw bricks, stones, whatever, at us, and we few walked calmly right through them to our parked vehicles, and rather sedately drove away, our point made. No one said we could do it.

I spoke extempore at Speakers Corner in Hyde Park for around a half an hour to a crowd of over a thousand (it ended in a brawl) - the only person from the extreme Right to speak there since the days of Oswald Mosley. At the brawl, one of our stewards was arrested, and - the fighting over - we regrouped to march toward Downing Street, after which we all went our separate way (I quite naturally went to see and stay the weekend with my lady friend in London).

Finally, toward the end of that Summer, a meeting we had arranged on Leeds Town Hall steps resulted in a mass brawl when the crowd of around a thousand attacked us, after I had harangued them for around half an hour. Several Police officers were injured as they tried to break up the fights. I was arrested (again) but soon was granted bail. Morrison became somewhat disillusioned, as I was by the attitude of many of those involved with the NDFM, and so I spent the time before my trial occupying myself with various travels around England and the NDFM simply slid into obscurity, a political failure - although, at least for me, it had proved to be an exceptionally valuable learning experience.

When my case came to trial, at Leeds Crown Court [3], I was accused of having "incited the crowd" and generally held responsible for most of the violence. I was found guilty of various so-called Public Order offences, and given several fines. What rather disgusted me after the trial was that several so-called comrades - including if my memory is correct, Morrison - having appeared at witnesses at the trial, collected between them witness expenses sufficient to pay my fines. But not one of them offered to do this, and I was not going to ask.

So, since I had no intention of paying the fines, I left Leeds.

Facies Abyssi

For well over a year I evaded the consequences of not paying my fines, living as a vagrant, then in a caravan in the fenland. Writing poetry. Musing on life; reading the collected works of Jung and Toynbee; studying religions, including Buddhism. Listening to numinous music. And so on.

Crows calling while sheep cry
By the road that shall take them
To their death:

I sit, while sun lasts
And bleeds my body dry
In this last hour before dark
On a day when a warm wind
Carried the rain that washed
A little of this valley
Like the stream washes
My rock:

There are no trees to soften
This sun - only heather and fern
To break the sides of the hill;
I cannot keep this peace
I have found -
It seems unformed like water
Becomes unformed without a vessel
A channel or some stream:
It cannot be contained
As I contain my passion and my dreams.

There are no answers I can find
Only the vessel of walks in hills
Alone
Whereby I who seek
Am brought toward the magick peak
That keeps this hidden world
Alive

I even spent some time in a Buddhist monastery. But the Police eventually caught up with me, in my caravan, and I was arrested, and sent to prison (yet again). But this time for only six months.

My previous experiences of "being inside" were useful when I was sent back to prison. Luckily, I was assigned one of the best prison jobs, Library red-band (even though I was serving a short sentence), which job meant that I had a single "peter", that I took over a few rackets, and was left pretty much to my own devices in the library. One of the rackets revolved around goods smuggled in; another centred on porn magazines ordered by the nonces on Rule 43 and which magazines had a strange habit of disappearing or not being delivered or getting handed round other cons for a small fee; another racket involved goods being liberated from certain prison stores.

At that time, prison life was a delicate balance, so I occasionally helped out someone who also had some rackets (centred around gambling) by getting a few people to "carry" tins of tobacco for him. Overall, a reasonable time, which meant that my release date seemed to come around quite quickly.

On release from prison, I was undecided, for a while, about what I should do. I visited my lady friend in London, who by then had larger premises and a more select clientèle, and after travelling around for a while as an itinerant, I drifted back to live in Leeds. Morrison [4] had some minuscule and new political organization, was still talking the same rhetoric, and still unrealistically dreaming of obtaining political power in a decade or so. At least he was, outwardly, consistent.

As for me, for over five, often violent years, radical street politics had been an important part of my life - often, the most important part; and I had dedicated myself to the struggle, undeterred by prison. But my naivety, idealism, and optimism had all but faded away. For experience had revealed to me that the honour, loyalty and commitment to duty I expected from fellow political comrades was often absent, and that the leadership of all NS, all pro-NS groups and even all of our kind of nationalist organizations was woefully bad; un-charismatic and incapable of inspiring the loyalty required. Instead of idealism, loyalty and honour there were continual feuds, continued disloyalty, and little or no honour, manifest most often as this dishonour was in the spreading of malicious rumours behind people's backs.

My time away from Leeds - over a year, before my return to prison - had taken me back to those Fenland feelings of the late sixties. In particular, my solitary time as an itinerant had brought me close to Nature in very simple and unaffected way, so that there gradually arose in me a certain wordless feeling of dissatisfaction with modern life that had nothing whatsoever to do with my political beliefs, dreams or aspirations. In fact, nothing to do with any ideology, or, at that time, with any religion I had studied or personally experienced. Instead, it was interior, direct, personal - one individual, alone, who felt some relation with Nature, with the Cosmos, and it is true to say that this wordless feeling, and my memories of life close to Nature, rather haunted me when I returned to live in Leeds.

I just did not feel I belonged there, anymore. I yearned - for something; as one might yearn for a young lady seen briefly, spoken to briefly, whom one met on some travels, and whose presence, whose aura, whose scent, whose features, whose promise, lingered when she was gone; lingered so much, so numinously, that one regretted not running after her and blurting out some excuse to be with her, again. I yearned - for those intangible wistful moments

of a wandering life:

Wine

Stale
I once drank you
Knowing no difference because of herbs.
She held me, her cunning hands
That did not wish
Nor offer the warmth that snared my soul:

The wine was
Intoxicating our senses
But only I was drunk:
She laughed.

I needed rest
Dreaming marriage under sun -
Until bright morning came
When she, alas, changed
Her form in the reality of the room
And I was left to walk with my sack
Down the dusty track
Past a grove of sun-burnt trees
Toward those distant hills:

And yet the white-washed house was only
One step
Along my Way.

Perhaps it was that hot, dry, Summer of 1976 with its week after week of clear blue skies; perhaps it was some inner un-thought of satisfaction with my own subsuming political aims; some surfacing, some re-emergence, of that youthful desire to know, to understand, myself, Life, the Cosmos. Perhaps it was the feelings that gave rise to the many poems I had written in my wanderings; poems such as the compilation *Gentleman of the Roads*, and the poem *Clouds in the Sky*. Whatever the cause or causes, I found myself increasingly desiring to be alone; increasing desiring silence, both external and within; increasingly desiring to somehow in some way reconnect myself with that other older world that my political machinations and activities seemed to have almost totally obscured.

Two wyrdful things conspired together to seal my fate. The first was the

music of JS Bach, especially some Cantatas. The second was a strange encounter at an old Parish church on the edge of the fenland in King's Lynn.

The new female companion I had acquired on my return to Leeds shared my love of classical music, and I went to many concerts and performances with her. At one, during a performance of Bach's *Erbarne Dich*, I began to cry, silently: silent tears of unknowing, of sadness and of joy.

Not longer after, I ventured to return to visit a friend in Norfolk, and - somewhat early for the bus that would take me near his dwelling - I passed some time by perusing what seemed an interesting Church, having, at that time, a minor interest in architecture. Somewhat tired after a long journey, I sat for a while in some pew. Then this young man, in clerical garb, passed in front of the altar to briefly turn toward me, and smile. There was such gentleness, such purity, in his face, his demeanour. And then he was gone, out of my view, toward what I assumed, then, was some door. It was as if, in that moment, I knew he might have answers to some questions which I had been pondering for some days before, and so, instinctively, I rose to follow him only to find a solid wall where he had disappeared from my view, and it was only later, days later, that I discovered that once - centuries ago - there had indeed been a door there, and that the Church itself had been part of a medieval Priory.



He was so real; nothing in his appearance, his manner, to suggest a ghost, an apparition; and for weeks afterwards I tried convince myself that my tiredness, the unanswered questions in my head, had somehow in some way contrived to present me with some illusion, some delusion. But a vague feeling of unease remained - for there was that numinous face, that smile; that gentle presence radiating an inner contentment and a certain mystical peace.

My unanswered questions had to do with existence - with life - after our mortal death, and with the allegory of Jesus of Nazareth. An allegory I had

felt, touched, when a performance of Bach's Matthew Passion had surprised me, had impinged itself, not long before, upon my psyche, bringing once again from one momentous passage, those silent tears of my unknowing.

The truth I felt, the truth which thus became so revealed, was that I did not know; that I did not have all the answers; that I had begun to doubt everything that for years I had so passionately, even fanatically, believed in. The truth that maybe, just maybe, I might not be able to find all the answers by myself, unaided; that maybe, just maybe, there was someone out-there, or something, who and from which I might learn, who and which might guide me toward a deeper, a better, understanding of myself and this world. That maybe, just maybe, in that particular allegory I might find some answers.

Thus there arose slowly in me after these events some desire to know about a certain, a particular, a quiet and inner way of life which I felt might be able to provide me with some answers, which might in some way connect me - reconnect me - to a beautiful, purer, way of life.

For a long time I had, in pursuit of some ideology - what I would later describe as a causal abstraction - controlled an aspect of my character: my almost naive sensitivity, my empathy, my rather boyish enthusiasm. But now this aspect came again to live, on a daily basis, so that I, perhaps rather foolishly, took to walking the streets of Leeds barefoot, and smiling like some village idiot; so pleased, so very pleased, to be alive; so happy with the blueness of the sky, the warmth of the Sun, the ineffable beauty of life itself. As if I was detached from myself, not really some young man named Myatt but rather

A falling leaf turned Autumn brown
Following the wind of the moment:
Neither clinging to, nor striving against,
The force of existence ever a dream in the end

For several weeks my plan became to return to an itinerant life, and thus became a kind of wandering poet, some sort of modern Taoist: a Way of Life familiar to me from my study of Taoism and my practical involvement with a Taoist Martial Art. But it seemed as if the wyrdful Cosmos had a rather different plan, for one day I decided - for reasons I cannot now recall - to borrow a bicycle belonging to a friend and head out for a week's holiday in the English countryside. A train conveyed me part of the way, and - the weather still hot, dry, and sunny - it was a pleasure to be away from the city, and I became as a schoolboy again for whom nearly every mile pedalled was an adventure.

There were stops for food, water - and a few overnight stays, often in some field beside some hedge. It did not matter, for I was still young, healthy, and quite strong.

After several days I came to be cycling down some narrow lane. To my left, a wooded hill of conifers; on my right, fields flowing gently upward to where a collocation of buildings were gathered just below a swathe of deciduous trees. The largest building somewhat - and I thought incongruously - resembled a French château, and so, intrigued, I cycled on to take a turning which I hoped might lead me toward it.

It was a monastery, and, leaving my bicycle propped up against a nearby tree, I wandered around. The door to the Abbey church was unlocked and I went inside. The cool quietness was slightly perfumed with incense from some recently ended Mass and a feeling of immense relief came over me as if I had, finally, come home. Words, scenes, emotions, scents, memories from a Catholic childhood lived within me once again, and it was so peaceful, so blissfully peaceful, sitting there, in the nave, that Time ceased to have any meaning or cause me any feeling as it trundled on in that other world, outside. Such stillness I had not thought possible came to keep me still.

I have no idea for how long I sat there, unthinking, and it was only when some activity in the monks choir beyond, behind, the altar distracted me that I remembered who and where I was. Then - their noonday prayer, chanted.

Suffice to say that when I returned to Leeds, soon afterwards, I immediately wrote to the Guestmaster of the monastery enquiring about a weekend visit. Some weeks later, I was there, at home, again. A weekend became a week; a certain request; an excited and nervous return to Leeds; and then that day when, with my few belongings, I ventured forth to begin my new life as a monk.

Sun, broken by branch, seeps
Into mist
Where spreading roots have cracked
The stones, overgrown, perhaps,
For an hundred years

From a seed, flesh fed, the oak
Sheltering
Mary
Relict of William

And a breeze, stirring again
This year
The leaves of an Autumn's green gold

ooo

Part Two

Sensus Internus

Into The Light

Monastic life was, quite obviously, a complete contrast to the violence, the carnal indulgence, the political activity, the time spent in prison, of my previous years, and my first month in the monastery did not come as a surprise. I enjoyed it.

Like prison, there was a daily routine, and I soon adapted to it. Or, rather, I embraced it joyfully. Rising, in those years (I think they have gone a bit soft, now), at around half past four in the morning to - without breakfast - spend two hours and more in the monks' Choir stalls of the Abbey chanting Matins followed by Lauds and followed by Conventual Mass. The breakfast, in the refectory, was substantial. Then there was work, study, until past Noon, and Choir again for prayers before lunch, and at which meal one of the monks would read a religious text to us while we ate in silence, using a particular monastic sign language if for some reason we needed to communicate between ourselves, such as 'please pass me the butter'. An afternoon of manual labour followed, with a short break for cups of tea; more work or study until the hour of Vespers, sung in Latin, with the monks precessing from the cloisters, in cowled robes, into the Choir. Then the last meal of the day - supper - followed by an hour or so of "spiritual contemplation" and then onto the last prayers of the day, Compline. It was now not long after nine o'clock in the evening, and one was, quite understandably, somewhat tired, and so went to bed, in my case a cell (a small room with a small window) on the very top floor of the Abbey on what was called the Novices Gallery. Interestingly the only heating in these monastic cells - apart from the rooms of the Abbot and Prior, who had fireplaces - were hot water pipes running along the outside wall (no radiators). Of course, by the time the steam-generated hot water reached our pipes at the top, they were somewhat colder than in the rooms on the floors below.

Suffice to say, we were kept, busy, occupied, and I seemed to fit in quite well. It was also remarkably easy to forget about the outside world - and if something deemed really important happened in the outside world, one of the monks would pin a typed summary - a very small summary - of the event on the noticeboard in the cloister, which in practice meant once every month or so. Mostly though, the notices there were mainly about ecclesiastical matters - the Pope on a visit, somewhere; or a forthcoming visit to the monastery by some Bishop or other. A few of the monks were endearingly eccentric; for instance one had a fondness for eating - raw - the little mushrooms that occasionally sprouted, at certain times of year, on the lawn outside the calefactory window; another would - with the soles of his well-polished patent leather shoes - crunch a cockroach or two on the floor of the refectory before they could scamper away when we after hours of prayer went to eat our breakfast...

Weeks became months, and one of my jobs involved me working in the monastery library - a beautiful large place, of stone-mullioned windows (most of which did not open or had not been opened in decades), row upon row upon high row of dusty old books (many in Latin), large collections of manuscripts, and a quiet quietude that propelled one back into medieval times. It was as if the modern world - with its haste, its technology, its electricity - no longer existed, and, my allotted tasks accomplished, I could browse, and settle down to read. And if by some chance (and as occurred quite often) I came across something I could not understand - some passage in Latin, or Greek, for instance - there was always someone, some scholarly monk, who could not only explain it to me but also place it in context, and who more often than not was willing to discuss the matter in great detail.

The monastery provided me with many opportunities, to study, to learn, to discipline myself, to acquire a new perspective on life, and - for a while - I did believe I might have a vocation.

But after many months I became somewhat restless, and - obtaining permission to leave enclosure - I began running down the lane from the monastery toward the small wood-enclosed lakes about a mile and half distant. Not that I had "running shoes" or anything like that - only some old plimsolls obtained from The Dive. The Dive was in the basement of the monastery, run by one of the monks, and was where one might find some item one might need - a pair of sandals perhaps; or a shirt. Possibly even a tennis racket; an umbrella; or a hat if one was out in the Sun in the beautiful, secluded, wooded Monks Garden above the monastery, on the slope of a hill. Naturally, most if not all these Dive items were second, or third, or fourth hand, "donated" by monks, or their relatives, or someone else, and some items had been there - borrowed, and then returned, and sometimes repaired

- for perhaps a half a century or more. A veritable emporium, and if something one needed was not in The Dive - which was rare - it could be obtained, given some time.

This restlessness abated, a little, during those times I spent with four people there, three of them monks. The first was an older, jovial, monk, who possessed a great knowledge of Buddhism, especially Zen Buddhism, and who, in fact, had spent some years as Prior of a Zen monastery in Japan. We had many interesting discussions, about Buddhism, about Catholicism, about religion in general. The second person was a Greek scholar - a layman who lived in the monastery - and I seem to recall that he kept a card, filed among voluminous wooden card-indexes, for every single verse of The Odyssey, and which card contained, in his scholarly handwriting, the text in Greek, his translation, and some of his notes. The other two were younger monks - older than and senior, in monastic terms, to me - who had an interest in the more arcane aspects of religion, and especially of Catholicism, and we three would spend hours upon hours discussing mysticism, esotericism, and religion in general, even though, according to certain monastic rules, I should not have been associating with them as much as I did.

One rather humorous incident during my time in the monastery is worth recounting. I was asked, by the Abbot, to spend some weeks in Dublin where some University research project was underway, funded (I believe) by several monasteries, into vocations: what motivated young men to become monks; what might the monasteries do to attract more vocations, and so on. Why I - with my past - had been chosen to take part I found somewhat strange; or, perhaps, I had been chosen because of my past, a past known in full to both the Novice Master and the Prior. Whatever the reason, it meant flying from the nearest airport to Dublin, staying in a Presbytery near Phoenix Park and attending the University every day.

So, there I am, at the airport in England, travelling under my real name [5], waiting with other passengers in the departure lounge to board the aeroplane, when I am taken away, by two Special Branch Police officers, to be "interviewed" in a nearby room. Obviously they - or some other official - had recognized my name, or I was on some official Special Branch watch list. They asked why I was going to Dublin - and I explained where I was living, and why, and that the Abbot had selected me to take part in some research at the University. One of the Police officers then said that they would "check out my story" - and he duly returned, not long afterwards, and said I could go.

It was only on my return to the monastery, over two weeks later, that I learnt what had occurred. The Police officer had telephoned the monastery and enquired if there was a certain DM who lived there and what he was doing. One of the older monks happened to answer the telephone, and - in his schoolmasterish way, as though lecturing a schoolboy - confirmed my story, making some remark to the effect that he would be happy to ask the Abbott to telephone the Chief Constable, at which point, as he with great amusement later recounted to me, the Police officer said, somewhat sheepishly, that no, that would not be necessary.

Fundamentally, however, although I generally - most days - enjoyed the life immensely, three things surfaced to unsettle me, more and more, even though for quite some time I fought against them, strengthened as I was by certain numinous aspects of monastic life. For example, by the office of Compline and the singing of the beautiful Latin *Salve Regina* after which most of the monks, myself included, would go the kneel in silent reverential prayer on the bare stone floor in front of a centuries-old statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary. For example, the short contemplative time between Matins and Lauds when it was peaceful, so blissfully peaceful, to wander outside in the darksome quiet or just sit still in the Choir and sense the centuries of numinous longing, joy and hope, that had seeped forth in prayer from places such as this.

The first - and for me perhaps the most important - of these three unsettling things was that I missed women. I missed everything about them - carnal relations, naturally, but also their presence, their touch, their embrace, their scent, their sensitivity, their gentleness, that intimate often wordless sharing that arises from a passionate, lustful, sharing relationship. In brief, I missed - and desired - the essence of women. Or at least, the essence of a certain type of women that I had become familiar with: the empathic, cultured, refined, well-mannered, passionate lady with whom and through whom one could be part of and explore a numinous reality.

The second was my combative nature - I loved to dispute, to argue, and many of the noviciate lectures degenerated into discussions between me and the senior monk trying to instruct we few novices. I argued about and disputed what the other novices thought were the most trivial things - for instance the exact meaning of certain words, and one discussion, in our course on New Testament Greek, about the meaning of the word *λόγος*, went on for hours. Eventually, in a rather nice way, I was told I was being somewhat disruptive, but my good, my expected, monastic behaviour did not last for long.

The third was my lack of obedience and humility. For instance, I had been

informed, by the Novice Master and then the Prior that I should no longer spend time with the two more senior monks with whom I had developed a friendship and with whom I discussed all manner of arcane matters. Although I agreed to abide "by the rules" it was not long before I broke them, again.

My rather un-monastic attitude was not helped when I pinned the following on the cloister noticeboard:

And Jesus said unto his disciples - "And who do you say that I am?"

And they replied - " You are the eschatological manifestation of the ground of our being, the kerygma in which we find the ultimate meaning of our interpersonal relationships. "

And Jesus looked at them amazed, and said, "*You what?*"

I cannot now remember where I obtained this quote from - some newly published book, perhaps - but my attempt at humour was somewhat unappreciated. My excuse? It had been suggested that we novices read Barth's *Church Dogmatics*.

Another incident - revealing of my nature - is perhaps worth recalling. An elderly monk died, peacefully, in his room, and on hearing this I rushed along the cloister to ring "the big bell", for I remembered having read somewhere (perhaps in the Rule of Saint Benedict) that what is what one should do, thus enabling the monks to pray for the soul of our departed brother. Naturally, I got into trouble for doing this - the bell could be heard for miles - for apparently this was, in that monastery, no longer the custom, and I should, of course, have asked permission first. Also, naturally, I argued the point - for a while, at least.

It was not that I made some sudden decision to leave. Rather, it became - after nearly a year and a half - rather obvious to me that I really did not have a vocation, a sentiment subsequently shared by both the Abbot and the Novice Master. Thus, by mutual consent, I eventually left, to return to live, for a while, in a caravan in the Fens.

The most poignant, the most remembered, thing about my leaving was when I went to tell the monk who had been a Zen Master, who said that of all the novices he had known in the past few years, I was the most monastic of them all. "This place needs people like you..." he said. But he was, to be fair, something of a character, himself, and had a wicked sense of humour.

Wandering, Love, and Marriage

During my last few months in the monastery, one of my given tasks had been to care for, to nurse, an elderly monk with a terminal disease, and - to my great surprise - the Abbot had occasion to thank me, several times, in person, for my work. Even so, he surprised me yet again by suggesting, on the day before my departure, that I should consider a career as a Nurse. Which I duly did and - with his letter of recommendation - managed to secure a place as a student Nurse. The start of the training course, however, was many months away, and so, for a while, I wandered around, once again, as an itinerant.

This wandering gave me time to reflect upon many things - especially my monastic life - and one thing I began to appreciate in a more conscious way was the centuries-long still living culture to which I belonged, of which Catholicism, monasticism, and Christianity in general, had been a part. For me, this was, and had been, especially manifest in two things: in plainchant (which I loved to sing and to listen to), and in classical music from medieval times to JS Bach, Haydn, and beyond, and a lot of which music - especially JS Bach and Haydn - was imbued with or inspired by a religious feeling, an appreciation and a knowing of the numinous.

This reflexion placed many things into a supra-personal perspective so that, for instance, I began to consider certain philosophical and ethical questions, including the nature of human love and human suffering, and the ethics of politics. During my time in the monastery I rarely thought about politics - or even about the world outside - and certainly did not miss political activity or involvement. I was far too occupied with daily monastic life and with my own studies, which included ancient Greek literature, Buddhism, Taoism and Western philosophy. These reflexions in turn led me to consider the nature and form of religion, especially in relation to Christian history and theology.

Thus my life became, for around three years after I had left the monastery, personal - for there was no involvements with politics, or even with any organized form of religion, Catholic or otherwise. I had no rôle, no aim beyond pursuing my interests - such as running, cycling and classical music - and was even gainfully employed, for a year, at least.

For my nursing course had started. In those days, the training was mostly practical, on the hospital wards, with a three month assignment on a certain type of ward (medical, surgical, and so on) followed by a few weeks back in the classroom, followed by another duty on another ward.

Sitting quietly in high Summer
While the river flows
Is peaceful, for an hour;
But any longer, and we who wish
Cannot wait to abstain:
We must be gone or find a goal
To satisfy such haste.

There was a man, dying from his age
As his flesh and organs failed:
He did not seem to mind this
 I've had a good innings
Except, sometimes, the pain.
He would lay, slowing breathing
And sometimes smiling in his bed
While we who waited on the living
And the dying
Cared
As our time, tiredness and allocations
Allowed.

Every two hours, on the Ward, still living bodies
Would be turned
To remove just one more soiled sheet
While the heat of Summer through half-open
Windows
Mingled with the smells
And the oozing from freshly sutured
Flesh:

But each dark moment was almost always
(If you watched)
Relieved
By the sadness or the smile
In another person's eyes.

And there was a learning
In such simple glimpses,
Shared.

I was one of only two male nurses on the course, and while the work itself
was quite tiring and hard - and one went through periods of loving it, hating
it, loving it - it was rewarding, and there was a sense, in those days, of

belonging to a small community, especially since I lived, in a minuscule room, in the Nurses Home. One lived and worked in the same place, and generally spent time off-duty with one's fellow student nurses, in one's own year or from other years.

Naturally, there were liaisons with people with whom one worked and who also lived within the hospital grounds, and after a few of these I found myself in a serious relationship. There were plans for us to obtain our own accommodation, near the hospital; short holidays, away; and I felt I was in love. The young lady in question certainly was in love with me. But then, as my first year moved toward its ending, I - stupidly, selfishly, dishonourably - ruined it all, by falling in love with someone else.

The "other woman" was a friend of a friend, and then a Post Graduate studying at Cambridge, whom I met at some party or other in that city. Her nickname was Twinkle, and there was a quite adorable child-like quality to her, a need to be loved, an enthusiasm tempered occasionally by a touch of anxiety, all of which, combined with a keen intellect and a love of classical music, poetry and English literature, made her (at least to me) irresistible. I did try to resist - for a while. For several months, I managed to behave honourably, and even managed to behave in a friendly way toward her then lover. But the more I saw of her, the worse I felt.

For weeks, I resisted the temptation to see her, and was glad when she moved away, her course over, to live and work in what seemed far off Shropshire. But then her fateful short note arrived in the post - "Feeling wretched. Do come!" it read, giving a telephone number and an address. The very next day another, quite similar, note arrived, sounding even more urgent.

Making excuses to K - for I was genuinely concerned Twinkle might harm herself - I set off, without any expectations and rather naively believing I could be a good friend. A train to Shrewsbury; a bus to that overgrown village where she lived where once there was a medieval Priory; and there she was, waiting for me at the bus stop. Alighting from the bus, she ran to embrace me, and clung onto me for what seemed, what felt, a long time. "I wish I had a camera!" an elderly lady, waiting at the stop said, and smiled. And then we were walking, rather shyly together, along the road to her lodgings.

Hours later, the evening meal she had cooked eaten, we sat - she on a chair, I on the carpet before the gas fire - in her room in the candlelit dark while she, to a mute background of a symphony by Brahms - tearfully recalled the last few weeks of her life. Her lover had spurned her, harshly, for someone else;

she felt so alone; so betrayed; so ashamed of herself; so disgusted with herself for being so weak and needy, believing she was unworthy of being loved...

What could I say? Do? I should have played the rôle of unworldly, detached, Sage, and spake forth some words of fatherly wisdom and advice - but all I did in my weakness was move toward her, hold her hand and told her that I loved her. Thus did I that night and the next betray my lover. K met me at the railway station on my return, and she knew, just knew, immediately, of my betrayal, just as I felt her knowing. We did not speak of it then, and strived to carry on as normal, until some days later when a letter for me from Twinkle arrived. I was on duty, and K opened and read it. There were no tears from her on my return to my room in the Nurses Home; no words shouted; no words at all. She simply gave me the letter and waited. There was, in that letter, a declaration of love, a passage about having children - about how even now she might be bearing "our child".

There were tears from she whom I had betrayed, and I felt ashamed, and the most wretched I had ever, up until then, felt in my life. Wretched because of her sadness, her feelings; wretched because I had so deeply hurt her; and wretched because there was no anger in her, no words or shouts of recrimination; no accusations; no flailing fists of a lover betrayed. Only deep soul-wrenching almost utter despair. She left then to leave me alone with my dishonour, my shame.

A few days later, I suddenly withdrew from the nursing course to travel to Shropshire to live with my new lover. The day before I left I had met K, briefly - or rather, she had saught me out. We embraced, then she pulled away to affect a smile while I just stood there, not knowing, in my shame, what to say or do. But she was far stronger than I and suggested, gently, affectionately, that - if I did indeed love Twinkle - then I could obtain a transfer to a hospital in Shropshire. She had it all worked out, having even spoken to a senior member of the teaching staff about such transfers. She left then, leaving me as if I had just awoken from some dream. A walk. Another walk. A telephone call some hours later; a question impetuously asked; an affirmative answer received. Yes, she would marry me...

I went to tell K. She had just returned from a late shift and, then as now, I am not quite sure how or why we parted in the gentle way we did. We spoke for a while, softly, of our own future separate plans; we shared a bottle of wine; then we were in each others arms; and in the morning we kissed and I, with no words exchanged between us, left to begin my new life in the rural county of Shropshire. Less than six months later I was married, to Twinkle, and never saw or heard from K again.

Now, recalling those events, I feel that K perhaps loved me far more than I deserved, as I know I behaved dishonourably and assuredly hurt her deeply. There are no excuses for my behaviour, then; I was quite simply - and for all my idealistic talk of honour in my political years - just weak, dishonourable. I gave in to my dreams and my desires, placing my needs, my dreams, my hopes, my lust, before the feelings of someone who loved me and whom I should have treated in an honourable way. In brief, I was selfish, and really did not know what love was - what it meant and implied - despite all my philosophical reflexion on the matter and despite all my previous trysts and involvements.

A few weeks before my marriage, I went to visit my lady friend in London for the last time to inform her of my change of circumstances, and spent an exquisitely poignant weekend with her; feelings recalled some months later in bleak mid-Winter:

Like memories, snow falls
With no sound
While I stand as Winter frosts
My feet
And a cold hand holds itself ready
Near a pen:

The birds, though starving, still sing
Here where trees and snow seat themselves
On hill
And the slight breeze beings to break
My piece of silence
Down.

Her love seemed only real
With its loss.

Above the trees, crows cawing
As they swirl
Within the cold

A Shropshire Tale

The seven years of my first marriage were all spent in South Shropshire, that rural part of that border English county that I came to love. For a few months, after our marriage, we lived in lodgings and then in a caravan on the

edge of a field on a farm, and enjoyed a reasonably happy time, until the snows of Winter came. I liked living in the quiet solitude of the caravan with its wood-burning stove, while she did not.



High Acre in Shropshire (from a painting by Richard Moulton)

One morning we awoke to find ourselves snowed in, and I had to crawl out of a caravan window to shovel snow away from the door so that she could decamp to the nearby shack, whose rotting wooden roof and walls provided some shelter and which enclosed our portable chemical toilet. She had, quite naturally, endured enough, and threatened that day to stay with friends whose central heating, indoor bathroom, and kitchen she somehow found enchanting, suggesting then that we immediately find somewhere else suitable for us to live.

After a while we did, a brief interlude of living in Shrewsbury town not really worth recalling. We found a glorious house on the edge of the Long Mynd overlooking the Stretton valley, and it was there - with Coalbrookdale fireplaces in almost every room - that we would spend most of our remaining married years together.

The years passed - or seemed to pass, for me - quite quickly. I, occupied with cycling, with daily runs on the Long Mynd, writing poetry, with researching and writing a book I called, somewhat pretentiously, *The Logic of History* [6], and sometimes with work; she occupied with her full-time employment, miles distant (she possessed a moped) and her small circle of friends.

Work, for me, like money, was incidental, while for her, her career was the main enthusiasm of her life, and something she did with excellence and élan, and a consummate and professional ease. Thus, we existed quite often in our separate worlds, our married life more a convenience than a sharing passion, a fault for which I alone was to blame.

For instance, for me, weekends were a time for long fifteen or twenty mile runs - or fifty to eighty mile cycle rides, or competing in bicycle Time Trials at club level [7] - with the remainder of the day spent relaxing, perhaps idly walking up the Burway, or listening to music. In contrast, she desired a rather more active social life, and on the few occasions I accepted some social invitation - an evening meal with some of her colleagues, for instance - I either, in my then still somewhat arrogant way, monopolized the conversation, or was disdainful and disinterested.

Thus, as might be gathered from this précis, I was rather selfish if not downright uncaring, although I did agree, much against my own desire, to her wish to delay having children, given her commitment to her career. It is perhaps not surprising that she, therefore, with her passionate needful nature sought to find a type of love elsewhere. Thus it was that she fell in love with another woman. Or rather, we both were attracted to the same married woman, except, for my wife, while a physical desire existed, she honourably did not act upon it, while I - yet again - allowed my desire to overwhelm me, and thus betrayed her.

Had I learned nothing from the torment, the grief, the sorrow, of only a few years ago? From my other act of dishonour? Yes - but only for a while. Yet again, there are no excuses for my failure. But, aged a few years past thirty, it would be the last time I allowed lust to overwhelm my honour.

Our marriage survived, for a while at least. She, though deeply hurt, forgave me in that loving way that many women often can. But, unsurprisingly, and correctly, she began to find fault with me, our marriage, aided by a loving, tender, relationship she developed with a younger woman. A year later we separated, and then divorced - she to live in a University city with her young lover, and I to stay in Shropshire.

During the years of my first marriage, I remained inactive in practical street politics, although I did keep in touch with both CJ and John Tyndall, and wrote a few articles, which JT published in his *Spearhead* magazine, both under my own name, and under several pseudonyms. [8]

For a few years, after my marriage, I worked in a few different

occupations - or none, since by then I had a small private income - travelled [9], and enjoyed various liaisons with women, none of which lasted for very long and several of which placed me on the other side of betrayal, which in itself proved to be valuable, if painful, personal learning experience:

A bright quarter moon
As I ran alone in the cold hours
Along the sunken road that twists
Between hill-valley and stream:

There was a dream, in the night
That woke me - a sadness
To make me sit by the fire
Then take me out, moon-seeing
And running, to hear only my feet
My breath - to smell only the coldness
Of the still, silent air:

But no spell, no wish
Brought my distant lover to me
And I was left to run slowly
Back
And wait the long hours
To Dawn.

By the fire, I think of nothing
Except the warmth of my love
No longer needed.

Then, one day - and arranged through a mutual acquaintance - I had an assignation with another women. Reverting back to country type, I wore a tweed suit, my tweed overcoat, plus traditional English flat cap. We had arranged to meet outside a Wine Bar in Shrewsbury, and, as her close friend, A, was later to tell me in a letter, Sue immediately fell in love with me:

" When Sue first met you, I've never seen such instant love and attraction. I've never believed in love at first sight but I have to admit you and Sue seem to have been the exception that proved the rule..."

That evening we had a long leisurely meal in that Wine Bar, and had a quite marvellous time, for there was a lovely, and natural, affinity between us. We arranged to meet the following week, became lovers, and then began living together.

Quite simply, I adored her and fell deeply in love with her. She was practical

(she designed and made many of her own clothes), uncomplicated, and we just fitted together exceptionally well, never arguing, and never even - not once - exchanging angry words.

As her friend, A, wrote in the aforementioned letter:

" She had a very deep and simple love for you which never wavered. You and Sue were privileged to have that kind of love..."

We shared everything; went everywhere together, including holidays abroad. Indeed, twice every year we travelled to Egypt, once to spend two weeks leisurely cruising down the Nile from Aswan to Cairo, one of the last of those two week trips, then, since Middle Egypt, around troubled Assyut, became closed to Nile cruise boats, following some attacks on Western tourists. Indeed, I can remember, on that particular trip, that armed Policemen accompanied our boat for part of our journey, as we were often escorted, on some excursions, by other armed guards.

My life became settled, and I was immensely happy. I began translating ancient Greek literature: first, *Antigone* by Sophocles, followed by *Oedipus Tyrannus*.

Then, just over four years into our relationship, Sue became ill. She had developed cancer. Surgery, and radiotherapy followed, and she seemed to recover, so we went again to Egypt. We had just returned when she became quite ill, and required emergency admission into hospital.

There we were, in an isolation room - it was feared, because of her yellow-coloured eyes, that she might have hepatitis or have acquired some tropical disease - awaiting the results of various tests.

"I am so sorry," the quite young hospital Consultant informed us, "it is very serious..."

She had around six weeks to live. Her first words to me after he, a lovely sensitive man, had left: "I am glad we went to Egypt." Then she smiled: "At least I'll have time to sort everything out!"

Never once, during those few remaining weeks of her life did she complain, even though she was on quite a high dose of morphine for her pain. Never once was she sad, dejected. Instead, it was she who - unbelievably - gave me strength and support. She was, in a quite literal way, remarkable. We stayed, for a week, with her mother and brother who, having the means, spent every

Autumn and Winter in Spain in a house overlooking the Mediterranean sea [10]. Then, her health deteriorating, we left to return to England.

One incident, at Malaga airport, enraged me. She was by then in a wheelchair, and we had requested priority boarding which the airline had agreed to. As I pushed her in her wheelchair I heard one British woman, in the departure lounge, make a disgusting remark, doubting whether "that woman" really needed a wheelchair. Enraged, I was about to shout something vulgar in reply when Sue gently smiled, held my hand, and shook her head. She died just over a week later, one night in her sleep while I sat beside her.



Sue, On Wenlock Edge

For months afterwards I shut myself away, at first in a room at an hotel in Shropshire, and then in a chalet in the hotel grounds. I busied myself with completing my translation of *The Agamemnon* by Aeschylus and going for walks on the Long Mynd.

Translation, and those walks, became my life. I had no other aim and three months became many more. I do not now recall how many months I stayed there, reclusive in my world, but however long it was I endured until my translation was complete. I even took the radical step - on a few occasions when busy weekends were expected - of hiring the two chalets on either side of mine in order to be alone, at peace, as I had my own table in the hotel restaurant, set well away from the others.

The translation over, I found myself - or so I believed - almost recovered from the immediacy of her loss. Sue, organized, remarkable, to the end, had planned her leaving well, and one of the few things she insisted upon, in those final weeks, was that I should, must, have a life after her. So she had a friend find an exclusive agency that specialized in personal introductions, and their card was in that leather Filofax that Sue had given me as one of her departing gifts. For weeks, I ignored that card, making a whole variety of excuses. Then, remembering, and placing my pride aside for her sake, and using one of those new-fangled mobile telephones, I made a call. Suffice to say - some interviews over, one at the village home of one of the ladies who ran the agency - I was offered an introduction.

I arranged to meet J at the Feathers Hotel in Ludlow, and she, as I, was nervous. She was well-dressed, well-spoken, well-educated, and somewhat reminded me of the archetypal English Rose. We arranged another meeting, and then another, and so began a rather old-fashioned courtship, which pleased us both, and it was not long before I fell in love with her. Years later, she confided in me that she began to fall in love with me on what was our second assignation when, in Worcester, after an evening meal at a fine restaurant, I was, as a gentleman should, escorting her to where her car was parked when I, like some schoolboy, unthinkingly blurted out, having taken out my pocket watch: "Gosh! It's half past nine already! I haven't been up this late for absolutely ages..."

Thus, there came a time when it seemed apposite for me to propose marriage. So I invited her to spend a long weekend with me at a rather lovely hotel beside a lake in Wales where, rather nervously, I revealed everything about my past. A few months later we were married, and honeymooned in the Maldives.

Combat 18 and the NSM

Life was never simple again, after that. For I had returned to writing about National-Socialism, publishing my fourteen volume *National-Socialist Series*, which included works with titles such as *National-Socialism: Principles and Ideals*, and *The Revolutionary Holy War of National-Socialism*.

Why this return? To be honest, I cannot really remember. But I have more than a vague suspicion that Sue's death had affected me more than I, at

the time, cared or even dared to admit. Something seemed to have departed from my life: a personal vision, a dream, perhaps, of us - of Sue and I - growing old together; of a life of contented sharing, where the world was only our life together. For we had a beautiful life and home - a detached house, in Shropshire, tastefully furnished by Sue (who had impeccable taste); I had a collection of five custom made bicycles (including two with frames hand-crafted by Mercian); we had relaxing enjoyable holidays several times a year; our relationship was everything I had ever dreamed about; we had no financial concerns; and we were totally loyal to each other. I was, quite simply, in love and content, as I knew she was.

So, perhaps I replaced my personal vision with another one, retreating back into the world I had known before. The world of NS politics; of striving to create a better world, for others, based on the values of honour, loyalty and duty. In some ways, these NS writings of mine were an attempt to not only express the essence of what I believed National-Socialism to be, but also to evolve it, and I began to circulate a small newsletter, *The National-Socialist*, in the hope of introducing these ideas of mine to others.

It was around this time that the London-based group Combat 18 was becoming well-known, and it seemed to me that many of those involved with this group were doing what I had again, and at that time, come to believe was necessary, which was revolutionary street-action in the name of National-Socialism, just as I believed then, as before, that I, by supporting NS, was doing something honourable and noble.

As I wrote in a previous autobiographical note, published in 1998:

I came to admire them and openly declared my support for them. I also gave a personal pledge of loyalty to Combat 18's leader, Charlie Sargent, and his brother, Steve.

In a short space of time Combat 18 had built up a fearsome reputation and done what no other group had done - gained street power from those opposed to National-Socialism. Not surprisingly, the Press, aided by MI5, began a campaign to discredit C18, as both MI5 and Special Branch sought to infiltrate and disrupt the organization.

In article after article, in letter after letter, in discussion after discussion, I warned of the danger and urged people to uphold the values of honour, loyalty and duty. I also urged them to consider that the best way forward was a proper National-Socialist organization and to forget plans and talk of an imminent armed insurrection, for - as I had discovered from practical experience -

the time was not yet right for such plans: we needed the people first, properly motivated, in their thousands, and we had but dozens. But the poison of the State took effect. People in nationalist organizations began to believe the clever MI5 dis-information about C18 being a MI5 run group, created to disrupt the so-called 'nationalist cause'. Some nationalists even went so far as to describe Charlie and Steve as 'informers'. Perhaps MI5 were also successful in disrupting C18 itself, or perhaps it was only the result of the ego and disloyalty of one individual.

Whatever the first cause, open feuding broke out between the two C18 factions, resulting in one death, and the arrest for murder of Charlie Sargent and his loyal comrade Martin Cross. I was honour-bound to stay loyal to Charlie Sargent, and decided to form and lead the National-Socialist Movement to continue the work he had begun. As a result, a smear campaign against me began. Rumours of Occult involvement - never entirely absent thanks to a few dishonourable and cowardly individuals - increased. But I believed I could ignore them as I hoped others around me would ignore them and hold fast to honour, loyalty and duty.

The decision for me to come back into public prominence by forming and leading the NSM was easy, even though I knew what would happen with regard to rumours about me, and even though I never intended to stay for long as the leader, lacking as I did the qualities of leadership. Yet, secretly, in my heart, I yearned for a quiet rural life, working on a farm and undertaking Greek translations in my spare time.

However, the decision to form and lead the NSM was easy because I felt it was my duty - I believed I was responsible for what had happened to Charlie as I believed that someone had to publicly support him. I was responsible because in truth I - the exponent of honour, loyalty and duty - should have done something to prevent the situation that arose. I should have tried to bring the factions together on the basis of duty to the Cause first and foremost. I even went to Charlie's committal proceedings, after he had been charged with murder, in the belief that matters could even at that late date be sorted out. For I had a somewhat naive belief that the opponents of Charlie would see reason, ignore MI5 dis-information, and agree to put loyalty and the Cause first.

But the more I found out about what had happened, and was happening, the more I knew there could be no compromise with those who had betrayed Charlie, particularly by giving evidence

against him in Court. This betrayal by giving evidence in a Court of Law was totally unacceptable behaviour - totally dishonourable. For we National-Socialists regarded the State and its Institutions such as the Police as our enemies, as we believed we should settle any disputes among ourselves in our traditional warrior way through a fair fight or a duel. Moreover these people continued parroting MI5 dis-information, and accused both Charlie and Steve of being informers when the truth was that the leader of their faction was the biggest informer of all, helping as he did to convict Charlie and Martin and supporting as he did the State and its dishonourable laws. Twice we who were loyal to Charlie waited for this informer and his supporters to turn up to sort matters out with a fair fight, once at Chelmsford and once in north London - and twice they did not turn up. [11]

My involvement with Combat 18, and later the new NSM, was to have a deleterious affect on my marriage, especially as my wife did not share my political opinions. *Searchlight* devoted several pages of one issue of their magazine to me, complete with photographs, including one of me on the front cover, under the headline *The Most Evil Nazi in Britain*. As usual, their story was a mix of some truth, some lies, and some unproven allegations. That is, it was political propaganda, designed for a specific purpose. In another issue, dealing with the trial of Charlie Sargent, there was a photograph of me (perhaps it was on the first page, if my ageing memory is correct) walking toward the Court in Chelmsford beside the wife of Martin Cross.

This photograph - together with my many trips to London - made my wife suspicious and so we argued, at first about "other women," and then, gradually, about other matters. On one occasion I had to go to Northern Ireland, and she insisted that I telephoned her from there, which I did, as she insisted on calling me back to check the number so that she knew I was there and not somewhere else. But, during the whole of our relationship I was never disloyal to her, having learnt that lesson, at least.

Meanwhile, I took to working on a farm, near to where we then lived in a detached house in a village not far from Malvern, and it was at that house that one local Policeman, accompanied by six Detectives from SO12, Scotland Yard, came to call, early one morning in 1998, to arrest me. For nearly seven hours they searched the house, seizing my computers, files, and letters, and arrested me. I was taken to Malvern Police Station, whose officers seemed somewhat bemused by this invasion of Detectives from an

elite unit based at Scotland Yard.

A few interrogations, a period locked in a cell, and many hours later, I was released, on condition that I reported on a regular basis to Charing Cross Police station in London. I made a point, during my first "interview", of thanking the Detectives for their professional behaviour during their search of my home - for they had indeed acted in a very professional and courteous manner toward us - and it was this, and my subsequent interviews with SO12 officers in London (and on one occasion, in Oxford) - and the professional attitude of the custody Sergeants and other Police officers I had occasion to then interact with - that made me revise my attitude toward the Police.

My wife seemed, somewhat strangely, to take this invasion of her home, and my arrest, quite calmly, and did not seem particularly perturbed when I would adhere to my bail conditions and travel to London. I, certainly, was unperturbed - although my trips to London, the reaction of many comrades to "the dawn raids", and the attitude of the Police officers involved, did lead me to begin to think seriously again about the tactics, and indeed the rather stark ideology, I had been pursuing.

For, for all my rhetoric, for all my revolutionary words, for all my personal effort and sacrifice, very little - if anything - of practical import had been achieved. Indeed, the situation within and exterior to the NSM, and what remained of Combat 18, was analogous to the NDFM; in truth, it was far far worse. There seemed to be little honour; even less genuine loyalty; and the usual spreading of malicious rumours and of gossip. Furthermore, few people - if any - were prepared to risk their lives or their liberty for the Cause they claimed they believed in.

Hard manual work, on the farm, was some recompense, and I seriously began to wonder why I bothered with practical politics at all. But, outwardly, I maintained my revolutionary persona - at least for some months. For a new strategy had occurred to me, and this was that a religion might be very useful, or at least some kind of religious approach. Previously, I had rather vaguely written about NS as some kind of religion - but no one was interested, and it was, I knew, impossible to intellectually conjure a new religion into existence.

Thus, and impressed as I was at the time by the actions of devout Muslims who were, or who seemed to be, prepared to sacrifice their lives for "their Cause", I began to seriously study Islam, initially more to see what I could learn from it and perhaps apply to that NS Cause I then still believed in.

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Pathei-Mathos

Copeland, The Way of Al-Islam, and A New Beginning

During my time with Combat 18, I had returned to Egypt, and it was during this visit that I began to appreciate the difference between Arab nationalism, and Islam, for I talked to several Egyptians, and several Muslims, about their land, about Islam, about life in general. I liked the manners of these Muslims, their devotion to their faith, which included praying five times a day.

I returned to England to find bad-manners, arrogance, materialism, decadence, and for the first time in my life I felt somewhat out of place among my own people. But gradually, over the coming months, the feeling faded.

As I wrote in Part Six of *Ethos of Extremism*:

" There was no sudden decision to convert to Islam [in 1998]. Rather, it was the culmination of a process that began a decade earlier with travels in the Sahara Desert. During the decade before my conversion I regularly travelled abroad, with this travel including well-over a dozen visits to Egypt and a few visits to other lands where the majority of the population were Muslim.

Egypt, especially, enchanted me; and not because of the profundity of ancient monuments. Rather because of the people, their culture, and the land itself. How life, outside of Cairo, seemed to mostly cling to the Nile - small settlements, patches and strips of verdancy, beside the flowing water and hemmed in by dry desert. I loved the silence, the solitude, the heat, of the desert; the feeling of

there being precariously balanced between life and death, dependant on carried water, food; the feeling of smallness, a minute and fragile speck of life; the vast panorama of sky. There was a purity there, human life in its essence, and it was so easy, so very easy, to feel in such a stark environment that there was, must be, a God, a Creator, who could decide if one lived or died.

Once, after a long trip into the Western Desert, I returned to Cairo to stay at some small quite run-down hotel: on one side, a Mosque, while not that far away on the other side was a night-club. A strange, quixotic, juxtaposition that seemed to capture something of the real modern Egypt. Of course, very early next morning the Adhaan from the mosque woke me. I did not mind. Indeed, I found it hauntingly beautiful and, strangely, not strange at all; as if it was some long-forgotten and happy memory, from childhood perhaps.

Once, I happened to be cycling from Cairo airport to the centre of the city as dawn broke, my route taking me past several Mosques. So timeless, so beautiful, the architecture, the minarets, framed by the rising sun...

Once, and many years before my conversion, I bought from a bookshop in Cairo a copy of the Quran containing the text in Arabic with a parallel English interpretation, and would occasionally read parts of it, and although I found several passages interesting, intriguing, I then had no desire, felt no need, to study Islam further. Similarly, the many friendly conversations I had with Egyptians during such travels - about their land, their culture, and occasionally about Islam - were for me just informative, only the interest of a curious outsider, and did not engender any desire to study such matters in detail.

However, all these experiences, of a decade and more, engendered in me a feeling which seemed to grow stronger year by year with every new trip. This was the feeling that somehow in some strange haunting way I belonged there, in such places, as part of such a culture. A feeling which caused me - some time after the tragic death of Sue (aged 39) from cancer in the early 1990's - to enrol on, and begin, an honours course in Arabic at a British university.

Thus, suffice to say that a decade of such travel brought a feeling of familiarity and resonance with Egypt, its people, its culture, that land, and with the Islam that suffused it, so that when in the Summer of 1998 I seriously began to study Islam, to read Ahadith,

Seerah, and the whole Quran, I had at least some context from practical experience. Furthermore, the more I studied Islam in England in those Summer months the more I felt, remembered, the sound of the beautiful Adhaan; remembered the desert - that ætherial purity, that sense of God, there; and remembered that haunting feeling of perhaps already belonging to such a culture, such a way of life. Hence my conversion to Islam, then, in September of that year, seemed somehow fated, wyrdful."

After some months of studying Islam, during that Summer of 1998 - my new strategy regarding some religion completely forgotten - it occurred to me that the Way of Al-Islam was indeed a good way to bring-into-being a new, a noble, society with a warrior ethos, and the more I read about the life of the Prophet, Muhammad, the more I came to admire him. There did, indeed, seem to be something remarkable, something numinous, something divine, here, in both the life of the Prophet, Muhammad, and in the Quran, and so - inspired and naively enthusiastic again - I trundled off to the nearest Mosque.

For nearly half an hour I hesitated - for these were the people I had spent thirty years trying to get out of Britain. How would they react to the former leader of the neo-nazi NSM walking into "their" Mosque?

At first when I, quite nervously, entered there seemed to be no one around. Out of respect, I removed my shoes and knocked on an inner door. The Imaam opened it - but he could not speak English, and I tried to say something in Arabic but the only thing that made sense was *Shahadah*. Soon, someone was fetched, who translated, and the Imaam embraced me. They were so pleased and so friendly that I admit that, then, tears came to my eyes, and I really felt I had, finally, arrived at the right place.

In retrospect, the years of my involvement with Islam were some of the most memorable of my life. Years when I learnt more about myself, and years which changed me fundamentally.

Not long after my conversion, I enrolled on a residential course in Arabic, and began to seriously study Ahadith, and, for several years, I was quite content as a Muslim - Namaz strengthened me, placed me into a humble relationship with my brothers and sisters; just as being part of the Ummah dissolved every last vestige of my former political beliefs. Ethnicity, one's territorial place of birth, the type of work one did, were all irrelevant. That is, I came to reject all forms of nationalism, including National-Socialism, and

racialism itself.

I was welcomed into the homes of brothers, met their families, and there was this world within a world where what mattered was love of the prophet, Muhammad, and a desire to selflessly obey the word of Allah, as manifest in the Quran, the Sunnah, and *Ijmah*.

Meanwhile, my relationship with my wife became more and more strained - certainly not helped by my many absences to meet with Muslim friends, and most certainly not helped by the Media interest in me that occurred following the trial, and the conviction, of Copeland for the London nail-bombings.

Following the arrest of Copeland, I - by then a Muslim - was interviewed at my home by Detectives from the Anti-Terrorism branch who were investigating if I had any connection with him, and they seemed satisfied that I did not, for I was not interviewed again about the matter. Some time after this - many months, as the date for Copeland's trial came near - I was, for several days, followed around by a large red van which covertly filmed and photographed me, my place of work (a farm), and my home, before being waylaid, early one morning while on my way to work (as usual by bicycle) by a film crew from the BBC's Panorama television programme who were making what they described as a "documentary" about the bombings. Among the statements put to me that morning was:

"You inspired Copeland indirectly to do what he did.." [12]



Waylaid by the BBC

Following Copeland's conviction and imprisonment, the BBC Panorama programme was broadcast, and I, not long after, was pursued for a while by

journalists from several newspapers, with several scurrilous articles about me appearing in print. One even included a photograph of our house, and named the village where my wife and I lived. One of these newspaper articles began (complete with photograph of me riding my bicycle on my way back from work):

" This is the man who shaped mind of a bomber; Cycling the lanes around Malvern, the mentor who drove David Copeland to kill...

Riding a bicycle around his Worcestershire home town sporting a wizard-like beard and quirky dress-sense, the former monk could easily pass as a country eccentric or off-beat intellectual.

But behind David Myatt's studious exterior lies a more sinister character that has been at the forefront of extreme right-wing ideology in Britain since the mid-1960s. Myatt... was the brains behind the country's most openly neo-nazi organization....."

Yes indeed - *quirky dress sense*. That would be the type of clothes worn by a farm labourer, then.

As might be expected, all this Media interest somewhat affected my relationship with my wife, and she became quite distant, emotionally, physically, from me. Less than a year later, she became ill, suffering what is often termed a nervous breakdown. For a few months we stayed together, by which time it was obvious that our relationship was over.

In fairness to my wife, I have to admit that I had, yet again - and after my return to practical politics, followed by my conversion to Islam - descended down to abject, unforgivable, selfishness, placing some abstract goal, the personal pursuit of some abstract ideology, and then involvement with Islam, before her; before her needs. In brief, I was not a very good husband to her - more concerned with exterior supra-personal matters than with her, than with our relationship, than with her happiness. That she endured for so long with so little from me is tribute surely to her, as a loving woman. Mea Culpa, Mea Culpa, Mea Maxima Culpa.

Thus, my marriage over, I travelled in the Muslim world, met some very interesting and committed Muslims, all the while continuing my Muslim education, and it was some Muslims I met who asked me to write about this particular Way of Life; writings which I was, for some years, to become associated with, under my Muslim name of Abdul-Aziz ibn Myatt.

But was I, as some people have wondered, a sincere Muslim? Did I, for example, really believe that Muhammad was the Messenger and Prophet of Allah? Yes, I was sincere, and yes I did believe that, just as decades before, and for a while, I believed that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God. Did I really believe that Shariah was the best way of living? Yes - because I accepted that I was fallible, and that to submit to the will of Allah was my duty, my honourable duty, as a Muslim. [13]

In a literal way, Islam taught me humility, something I aspired to during my time as a monk but which my then prideful nature rebelled against.

Why, then, did I begin to have doubts about that particular Way of Life, as manifest in some effusions and personal letters I wrote? As usual with my life, there was no *satori* - no one sudden moment of enlightenment with one's life thereafter and always changed. Rather, there were moments of empathy, of greater understanding, of insight, followed by a gradual return to almost, but not quite, where one had been before. Then, after some causal Time - of a duration sometimes short, sometimes long - there followed more such moments, until a slow, almost alchemical, change occurred within.

In retrospect, this change had its genesis in three things. First, because practical experience - my life as a Muslim - revealed to me, after a few years, how even the Ummah was woefully divided, how some Muslims seemed to be Muslim in name only, like some Catholics obeyed the precepts of their faith if and when it suited them, and how, it seemed to me, the various interpretations of certain texts often led to adherence to particular abstractions over and above a living numinously. [14] Second, after several years of interior struggle, of dwelling upon certain ethical and philosophical questions, I came to certain conclusions; and third, because - and most importantly, most significant of all - I became involved with, fell in love with, a certain lady.

Thus, this drift away from Islam resulted from a strange - perhaps a wyrdful - combination of circumstances, and from one singular, important, event.

A Personal Tragedy

While still involved with Islam - although I had begun to develop my philosophy of the Numinous Way - I met a most beautiful lady. She was a friend of one of my closest friends, and he and his partner had, since the end of my marriage, been trying to bring us together, believing that we might

find each other interesting.

By then, I had been living and working on a farm for several years (a life and a work which inspired that initial development of my 'numinous way'), and although I had had a few casual trysts during that time, I still nurtured a desire for a deeper, permanent, relationship, and - intrigued by what I had been informed was her love of the desert and her desire to undertake more such travels, especially in the Western Sahara, an area I had come to know reasonably well - I agreed to contact her, more with a vague kind of hope than any real expectation of such a relationship developing.

Thus, Frances and I arranged to meet, after speaking to each other, via the medium of the telephone, several times. I have always rather disliked the impersonal nature of that medium - for one cannot see the eyes, the face, of the person one is conversing with - but, rather strangely for me, I conversed with her in the days before our meeting for several hours, not once, but twice, for we did seem to have something of a rapport.

We met on the concourse of York railway station, and it would be something of an understatement to write that I was immediately attracted to her. In truth, I was rather astounded, for during our prior telephone conversations she had, several times, made it known to me that she was not "at her best", that she was still somewhat depressed, and that I was not "to expect too much".

Although I recognized her immediately, as she came through the crowd toward where I was sitting, I was so impressed by her beauty, her very presence, that, for several seconds, I quite literally could not move, and when I did, stumbling to my feet, she was there and, without hesitation, we embraced each other and kissed as though we had been lovers for months, years.



A day later, and I was already in love with her, and for almost a year I would -

every fortnight or so and when possible - travel by train to visit her in York. In those days, such journeys and stays away were not onerous, for I had sufficient funds to travel First Class and stay in excellent hotels. Once - over the Christmas period - Fran came to stay at the farm, for nearly two weeks, and to write that we had an enjoyable time would be something of an exaggeration. By then, I had proposed marriage, which she had accepted, and then seemed unsure about. We talked during that time, at some length, about travelling - especially into the Sahara Desert, as we considered moving to live in Egypt, but never arrived at any conclusion.

For years before our meeting - for most of her adult life in truth - she had a difficult time caused by regular periods of clinical depression. She also, for some unfathomable reason, often disliked herself intensely. Yet she was beautiful - astonishingly so at times when life flowed within her and animated her - and intelligent and talented. But little I could say or do made her feel better about herself in those periods when she descended down into bouts of self-deprecation - at least, these things did not seem to work for very long. That is, she always and so sadly returned to such self-deprecation. Thus our relationship went from glorious, ecstatic, highs to tremendous lows. But I loved her, and so persevered, hoping, trusting, that such love would and could aid and help her. For I had glimpsed - in moments, and sometimes for days on end - the woman she really was, she could be, beyond her self-loathing, her sometimes self-destructive habits.

My diverse and interesting past did not help our relationship, for several of her friends in York had, without ever having met me, "warned her about me" and so perhaps confused her, somewhat.

After eighteen or so often turbulent months (during which time she was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes), I went to visit her in her rather cramped flat in York, intending to stay only a few days. Our plan, then, was to find an apartment, possibly in York, or possibly even abroad, and so begin a new life together. A few days there together became a week, then two weeks, then three... for she did not want me to go and could not decide what she wanted to do. It became a difficult time, not helped by a full page article about me - complete with photograph - which appeared in *The Times* newspaper under the heading *Muslim Extremists in Britain*.

" A neo-nazi whose ideas were said to be the inspiration for the man who let off a nail bomb in Central London in 1999 has converted to an extremist form of Islam...

Myatt is reportedly the author of a fascist terrorist handbook and a former leader of the violent far-right group Combat 18..."

We or rather I talked, occasionally, about just impetuously leaving to begin new lives, together, in Egypt. For I felt such surroundings might gently entice her toward a new and better way of living which would enable her to find the personal happiness that so eluded her, except in moments.

But, after an intense six or so weeks in York, with still no decisions made, I felt that Fran and I needed a short break from each other. She did not feel this, and desired me to stay. But I - tired, physically, emotionally, and making excuses to myself - decided to go anyway, and so early one morning in late May I travelled back to the farm. Only hours after my leaving, she killed herself.

She left no note, had taken on overdose of insulin, placed a bag over her head and secured it with layers of tape, and it is true to say that I was never quite the same person after receiving that call from her mother, less than an hour after Fran had died and only hours after I had so selfishly returned to be again among, within, the rural peace of the farm.

For hours after that telephone call I could not speak, and wandered around the fields of the farm alone, dazed - as if all feeling, and most of my blood, had suddenly been drained away from me to leave me almost totally bereft of life. Then, alone again in my room, the tears came flooding forth - so many for so long I sank to the floor to rock slowly back and forth, as if all of Fran's suffering year after year was flooding through me, as if I was being tossed around by surging towering waves of grief and battered by storms of remorse. Then, thoughts of suicide. Thereupon a certain calmness as I began to ponder the best way to die - a shotgun, perhaps, barrels placed under chin...

So much emotion within me, so much grief, so much dark death-embracing despair at my own failure, my own selfishness, that I felt, I knew, I had to die, and I was on my way to collect the chosen instrument of my death when, perhaps fortuitously, my mobile telephone rang. I was about to turn it off but glanced at the screen to see who was calling. It was a call from her mother, and - then knowing this - for what seemed a long duration of causal Time (but was only a few seconds) I dithered between disconnecting the call and answering, intending to say a few brief words to express again my blame. Words of blame won, and so I answered her call.

But there was such sadness in her voice, such grief at the loss of her daughter, that I felt ashamed, utterly ashamed, of my own selfish self-absorption. Thus we talked, trying to understand the circumstances, and

sharing a little of our grief. And as I listened to her words, her voice, there came upon me the feeling that perhaps I had to live, that I should live, in order to bear the shame, to feel my grief, to live with the knowledge of my selfish nature, my abject failure, day after day. That, surely, might be a fitting punishment, or the beginning thereof. To die might be easy; to live with such self-knowledge would surely be - and should be - hard.

My feelings at the time were weakly captured in an effusion, dated 30 May 2006, which I sent to a friend:

I know what I should have done - been more patient; more supportive; more loving; placing her feelings, her life, before my own. But I made excuses for my failings here, not knowing the depth of her despair even though I who loved her should have known this, felt this. I made excuses for my selfishness, and listened to her Doctor; to others; to my sometimes selfish desires, when I should have listened to her far more.

Thus do I feel and now know my own stupidity for my arrogant, vain, belief that I could help, assist, change what was. No blame for me, her relatives say - but I know my blame, my shame, my failure, here. Thus am I fully humbled by my own lack of insight; by my lack of knowing; by an understanding of my selfishness and my failure - knowing myself now for the ignorant, arrogant person I was, and am.

How hypocritical to teach, to preach, through writings, feeling as I do now the suffering of words, for she whom I loved killed herself only hours after I had left. Killed herself - only hours after I had left, despite her pleading for me to stay. There are no words to describe my blame; no words - for I had gone for a selfish break, to walk in the fields of the Farm.

So I am lost, bereft; guilty, crying, mourning the loss of her beauty, her life, her love, Never again to hold her hand; to embrace her. Never again to share a smile; a peaceful moment; our dream of being together in our home. The fault is mine, and I have to carry this knowledge of unintentionally aiding the ending of a life, this burden, and the guilt, hoping, praying, that somehow, sometime, somewhere I can give some meaning to her life, and perhaps live without ever again causing any suffering to any living thing... I miss her so much, so deeply, my mind suffused with images of what I did and did not do and should have done. If only I had not gone - or gone back to sit with her in that small garden as she wished.....

I shall never be the same again, deeply knowing that I do not understand.

(In Memory of Frances, died Monday, May 29, 2006)

In the weeks, the months, following Fran's death, Islam became personally irrelevant to me, for as I wrote at the time, I felt it would have been just too easy for me to depend upon, to turn to, to rely on, Allah, on God - to have one's remorse removed by some belief in some possible redemption, to have one's mistakes, errors - "sins" - voided by some supra-personal means. To escape into prayer, Namaz. Can there be, I began to wonder, hope, redemption - some meaning in personal tragedy - without a Saviour's grace? Without God, Allah, prayer, Namaz, submission, sin, and faith?

Gradually, painfully slowly, I seemed to move toward some answers, often as a result of personal letters written to friends [15]. For the act of so writing - of trying to so express my feelings, my thoughts - seemed to aid the process of interior reflexion.

However, for a while at least, I maintained a public Muslim persona, stubbornly clinging as I did to some notion of duty; to the pledge of loyalty I had given on my conversion to Islam, a pledge I still then, and for some time afterwards, felt I was honour-bound to honour, and it would take me some eighteen months of an intense interior struggle, and further development of the ethics of my Numinous Way, before I resolved this very personal dilemma. [16]

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The Numinous Way/Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos

A Debt of Honour

As a result of my new and intense interior struggles - promoted by Fran's death - there grew within me one uncomfortable truth from which even I with all my sophistry could not contrive to hide from myself, even though I tried, for a while.

The truth that I am indebted. That I have a debt of personal honour to both

Fran and to Sue, who died - thirteen years apart - leaving me bereft of love, replete with sorrow, and somewhat perplexed. A debt to all those other women (such as K, and J, and Twinkle) who, over four decades, I have hurt in a personal way; a debt to the Cosmos itself for the suffering I have caused and inflicted through the unethical pursuit of abstractions.

A debt somehow and in some way - beyond a simple remembrance of them - to especially make the life and death of Sue and Fran worthwhile and full of meaning, as if their tragic early dying meant something to both me, and through my words, my deeds, to others. A debt of change, of learning - in me, so that from my pathei-mathos I might be, should be, a better person; presencing through words, living, thought, and deeds, that simple purity of life felt, touched, known, in those stark moments of the immediacy of their loss.

But this honour, I have so painfully discovered, is not the abstract honour of years, of decades, past that I in my arrogance and stupid adherence to and love of abstractions so foolishly believed in and upheld, being thus, becoming thus, as I was a cause of suffering. No; this instead is the essence of honour, founded in empathy; in an empathy with and thus a compassion for all life, sentient and otherwise. This is instead a being human; being in symbiosis with that-which is the essence of our humanity and which can, could and should, gently evolve us - far away from the primitive unempathic, uncompassionate, beings we have been, and unfortunately often still are; far away from the primitive unempathic, uncompassionate, often violent, person I had been, until recently.

A chance, an opportunity twice refused after Fran's death, when I - still then addicted to abstractions - continued to sally forth on their behalf, as if in some way such abstractions were alive, or could be brought to life or made to live if only I, and others, fought for them, sacrificed for them, suffered for them, and caused others to suffer.

But, as the third anniversary of Fran's suicide approached - amid the beauty and promise of one more English Spring - I became suffused again with tears, breaking forth from the sadness, the tragedy, the knowing, of my own unconscionable mistake. The mistake of forgetting; of distracting myself. Forgetting the sorrow, the grief, the pain born from the moments of their dying; distracting myself as I have been by immersing myself in such abstractions as gave me some rôle, some illusion of importance, to keep me occupied, arrogant, and vain: a debtor running away from his debt. A debtor making excuses for each new scheme and scam: an excuse for every hustle, delusion, and lie. For it was so easy - just so very easy - to continue to delude myself.

There are no excuses for this continued failure, this error, of mine, following Fran's death. No words which can hide the truth I tried to hide from myself for so long. The blame is mine, and mine alone. The blame for not immediately acting upon my own inner understanding.

For the reality of my past nine or so years is not that of some sudden life-changing revelation, but rather of a profound inner struggle whose genesis lay years before - in my experiences with and passion for women; in my time in a monastery; in my ever-growing love for Nature and my involvement with English rural life; in Sue's illness and her tragic death.

This intense struggle was akin to an addiction, and I an addict addicted to abstractions. A struggle between my empathy, my understanding, my pathemathos, and my life-long belief, itself an abstraction, that somehow in some way I could make a positive difference to the world and that such abstractions as I adhered to, or aided or advocated were or could be a beginning for a better world, and that to achieve this new world certain sacrifice were, unfortunately, necessary.

A struggle which gave rise to what became - refined, and extended, year after year - The Numinous Way, and which struggle was an interior war to change myself, to actually live, every year, every month, every week, every day, suffused with an empathic awareness and a desire not to cause suffering; the struggle to abandon abstractions.

For nine years or so this interior struggle wore me down, until it gradually faded away. It was akin to cycling up a long steep mountain climb in mist and drizzly rain, struggling on against one's aching body and against the desire to stop and rest; and not being able to see the end, the summit, of the climb. And then, slowly, the drizzle ceases, the mist begins to clear, the road becomes gradually less steep, and one is there - in warm bright sunshine nearing the summit of that climb, able to see the beautiful, the numinous, vista beyond, below, for the first time, and which vista after such an effort brings a restful interior peace, the silent tears of one person who feels their human insignificance compared to the mountains, the valleys below, the sky, the Sun, and the vast Cosmos beyond: the wyrdful nature of one fleeting delicate mortal microcosmic nexion which is one's own life.

The Silent Tears of My Unknowing

Thus, and at last, I ceased all involvement with Islam. In truth, I ceased involvement with everything; becoming only one still error-prone human being among billions. One human being who had no aim, no goals, who

adhered to no abstractions - either his own or manufactured by others - but who instead just lived day after fleeting or slow day, and who occasionally would record, by some written words, some experience, some personal feeling, or the result of some Thought, manifest as a poem, perhaps, or some missive to a friend, or perhaps an article to elucidate some matter concerned with that Numinous Way [17] which, over those nine years of struggle, represented both the silent tears of my unknowing and the results of my *πάθει μάθος* [18].

As I was to write, not that long ago now, and while on a holiday:

The moment of sublime knowing
As clouds part above the Bay
And the heat of Summer dries the spots of rain
Still falling:
I am, here, now, where dark clouds of thunder
Have given way to blue
Such that the tide, turning,
Begins to break my vow of distance
Down.

A women, there, whose dog, disobeying,
Splashes sea with sand until new interest
Takes him where
This bearded man of greying hair
No longer reeks
With sadness.
Instead:
The smile of joy when Sun of Summer
Presents again this Paradise of Earth
For I am only tears, falling

Thus, it is to Sue and Fran to whom I dedicate this work: they who profoundly changed me, and to whom I owe so much. They who by a remembrance of their love, their lives, their gifts, have finally, at last - after so much arrogance and stupidity and weakness on my part - revealed to me the most important truth concerning human life. Which is that a shared, a loyal, love between two people is the most beautiful, the most numinous, the most valuable thing of all.

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Footnotes:

[1] See also the section *Excursus - Galactic Imperium*, below.

[2] One thing about school Physics I continued to immensely enjoy was practical work in the laboratory, for which work I almost always received an A plus. Indeed, on the one occasion I recall receiving a miserly plain A, I complained about the marking.

[3] One humorous thing about this criminal trial - which lasted many days - was that I was "in the dock" along with some of our Red opponents. These so-called communists had all attired themselves in suits and ties and had short hair - in order to try and make a good impression - while I, *au contraire*, did not care to pander to expectations, and so had grown a beard, had long hair, sported jeans, a collarless shirt without a tie, and wore an ex-RAF Greatcoat. Thus, I somewhat resembled the archetypal communist agitator while they resembled archetypal fascists.

I was to keep this bearded appearance for the next thirty years, although I did, on occasion, shave off my beard if I needed to travel somewhere incognito, often using some alternative identity.

[4] Morrison was, in later years, to pen his own recollections of those violent times; recollections which were somewhat inaccurate. See the Appendix of *Ethos of Extremism* for my comments on Morrison's recollections of those times.

[5] In previous years, having an alternate identity or two proved useful, given my life-style and inclinations.

[6] An extract from this unpublished and incomplete work - whose manuscript I subsequently lost - was published, in 1984, under the title *Vindex - Destiny of The West*.

[7] I mostly rode a fixed gear bike, and never won any events, although I was second and third a few times. I just enjoyed the challenge, but did manage 50 miles in under two and half hours, and - a few years later - won my club's Best All-Rounder trophy, one year, for the most consistent rider during a season.

[8] One curious incident during these years - relating to politics - may be worth recording. Understandably, given my extremism, the anti-fascist group *Searchlight* had taken a dislike to me, and - following the murder, in

Shropshire, of the elderly CND activist Hilda Murrell, they gave my name to the Police as a possible suspect.

As a result, Detectives from Shrewsbury Police interviewed me both at my home, in Church Stretton, and my then place of work - a country house in South Shropshire. Satisfied with my alibi, they eliminated me from their enquiries.

I was subsequently contacted and interviewed by Jenny Rathbone, a rather attractive research assistant from ITV's *World In Action* television programme who were producing a documentary about the murder. She also seemed satisfied that I had nothing to do with the incident, and I do recall sending her, anonymously, a bunch of red roses with a card which read "Good luck with your investigations." It was signed, *A Little Devil*.

[9] These travels included various trips to Egypt, and two into the Sahara desert on a bicycle. Given that most of the desert area I explored was *hamada* - and thus did not have large, archetypal, sand-dunes - these bicycle trips were not as difficult as they might seem.

[10] We had to obtain a special and official permit to enable us to take several weeks supply of heroin medication out of the country, as we had to obtain special medical insurance, both of which were very kindly arranged by our local GP.

[11] In his book, *Homeland: Into a World of Hate*, the journalist Nick Ryan made several accusations about me as well as published some rumours about me without providing my side of the story. For instance, he states:

"When Myatt later falls out with Will Browning, he insists on a duel... I'm told he backed down when The Beast claims the right to use baseball bats as weapon."

The truth is that Browning - through a contact, and via e-mail - did suggest such a weapon, to which I replied that the only weapons which could be honourably used were deadly weapons, such as swords or pistols. I included with my reply a copy of the Rules of Duelling, and re-affirmed my challenge to fight a duel using such deadly weapons. I received no reply, and was not contacted in any way by either Browning or his supporters.

[12] As is a common practice with recorded television programmes, some of my comments were edited out by the producers.

[13] This obedience was why I, as a Muslim, supported the people, and the

policies, I did - because I believed those Muslims were correct, and acting in accord with the Will of Allah, and because I regarded those particular policies as correct, according to Quran and Sunnah.

[14] Rather naively, perhaps, I had somehow expected Islam to be different, and it began to occur to me, from direct personal experience, that all conventional religions, and Ways - however numinously they might presence part of The Numen - were in some or many ways unreasonable abstractions which human beings had to align themselves to and strive to be in accord with, and which quite often resulted in a particular attitude antithetical to empathy and *wu-wei*.

Some of these insights were expressed in works of mine such as *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos: Essays and Letters Regarding Spirituality, Humility, and A Learning From Grief*.

[15] Some of these letters have been published, by JRW, in the second part of the collection entitled *David Wulstan Myatt: Selected Letters, Part One (2002-2008)*

[16] As I wrote in a footnote to one of my many scribblings:

For almost four years - since Francine's suicide - I struggled with this dilemma of honour and duty, believing that it was my honourable duty to stubbornly adhere to the particular Way of Life I had embraced in the previous decade; and stubbornly adhere despite the conclusions of my own thinking regarding compassion and empathy, manifest as these conclusions were in the ethical, and non-racist, Numinous Way that I had continued to develop. Thus did I during this period, and several times, publicly and in private re-affirm my commitment to that particular Way of Life, striving hard to forget my own answers, born from my thinking, my experiences, and especially from that personal tragedy, for surely these things were only a test, a trial, of my belief, my honour? Was it not therefore my duty to just humbly submit to الله, to thus acknowledge that my own thinking, my own conclusions based on experience, were flawed, the product of error and pride?

But, to paraphrase TS Eliot, here I am now, in the middle way I have devised for myself, having had many years, often wasted, the years between two wars within myself -

“ Trying to use words, and every attempt
Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure.”

Thus, I have declared a still rather shaky new truce, a compromise: based on a treaty where I have (re)defined personal honour as a practical manifestation of empathy, of the desire to cease to cause suffering to living-beings, with such empathy and the compassion deriving from it a guide to living that awareness of ourselves as but one nexion to all Life and to the Cosmos, and which awareness, which Cosmic perspective, expresses both our true human nature and the potential we possess to change ourselves into higher, more evolved, beings.

I would like to believe that this new truce I have manufactured will hold, but I have believed that before, and been mistaken, and even now it occurs to me that my theory of ethics, my new definition of honour, is just that: *mine*, and that I may be wrong. Yet my experiences - my feeling for, my empathy with, the numinous (manifest for instance in sublime music or in a mutual personal love) - tell me I can only live what I feel, I know, I empathize with, and this now is presenced in my developed Numinous Way.

During these years of interior reflexion, I studied, for several years, what was regarded as the interior way of Islam - that is, Sufism - in the hope that such a study might provide some guidance in respect of the ethical and philosophical questions, in relation to the Way of Al-Islam, which still perplexed and troubled me. However, this study just led me back to my own Philosophy of The Numen, and to develop it further.

[17] In the late Spring of 2012, I completely revised my 'numinous way' following a year-long period of reflexion; a reflection that led me to re-express, in a more philosophical manner, the basic initial insights (2002-2006) and the personal pathei-mathos (2006-2011) that inspired that 'numinous way'; a re-expression contained in the two texts *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos* and *Recuyle of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*. Thus the philosophy of *πάθει μάθος* (pathei-mathos) - as outlined in those two texts - is not only my own now completed weltanschauung, but also represents both the essence and the substance of what I have retained of the 'numinous way' I haphazardly and sporadically developed between 2002-2006 and then, after 2006, I increasingly felt compelled to develop in expiation, in search of answers, and in an effort to understand myself, my extremist pasts, and the suffering I finally came to realize I had caused.

[18]

*Ζῆνα δέ τις προφρόνως ἐπινίκια κλάζων
τεύξεται φρενῶν τὸ πᾶν:*

τὸν φρονεῖν βροτοὺς ὁδώ-
σαντα, τὸν **πάθει μάθος**
θέντα κυρίως ἔχειν.
στάζει δ' ἔνθ' ὕπνῳ πρὸ καρδίας
μνησιπήμων πόνος· καὶ παρ' ἄ-
κοντας ἦλθε σωφρονεῖν.
δαιμόνων δέ που χάρις βίαιος
σέλμα σεμνὸν ἡμένων.

If anyone, from reasoning, exclaims loudly that victory of Zeus,
Then they have acquired an understanding of all these things;
Of he who guided mortals to reason,
Who laid down that this possesses authority:
'*Learning from adversity*'.

Even in sleep there trickles through the heart
The disabling recalling of the pain:
And wisdom arrives regardless of desire,
A favour from daimons
Who have taken the seats of honour, by force.

Aeschylus: Agamemnon (174-183) translated by DW Myatt

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Appendix 1

Pathei-Mathos - Genesis of My Unknowing

There are no excuses for my extremist past, for the suffering I caused to loved ones, to family, to friends, to those many more, those far more, 'unknown others' who were or who became the 'enemies' posited by some extremist ideology. No excuses because the extremism, the intolerance, the hatred, the violence, the inhumanity, the prejudice were mine; my responsibility, born from and expressive of my character; and because the discovery of, the learning of, the need to live, to regain, my humanity arose because of and from others and not because of me.

Thus what exposed my hubris - what for me broke down that certitude-of-knowing which extremism breeds and re-presents - was not something I did; not something I achieved; not something related to my character, my

nature, at all. Instead, it was a gift offered to me by two others - the legacy left by their tragic early dying. That it took not one but two personal tragedies - some thirteen years apart - for me to accept and appreciate the gift of their love, their living, most surely reveals my failure, the hubris that for so long suffused me, and the strength and depth of my so lamentable extremism.

But the stark and uneasy truth is that I have no real, no definitive, answers for anyone, including myself. All I have now is a definite uncertainty of knowing, and certain feelings, some intuitions, some reflexions, a few certainly fallible suggestions arising mostly from reflexions concerning that, my lamentable, past, and thus - perhaps - just a scent, just a scent, of some understanding concerning some-things, perfumed as this understanding is with ineffable sadness.

For what I painfully, slowly, came to understand, via *pathei-mathos*, was the importance - the human necessity, the virtue - of love, and how love expresses or can express the numinous in the most sublime, the most human, way. Of how extremism (of whatever political or religious or ideological kind) places some abstraction, some ideation, some notion of duty to some ideation, before a personal love, before a knowing and an appreciation of the numinous. Thus does extremism - usurping such humanizing personal love - replace human love with an extreme, an unbalanced, an intemperate, passion for something abstract: some ideation, some ideal, some dogma, some 'victory', some-thing always supra-personal and always destructive of personal happiness, personal dreams, personal hopes; and always manifesting an impersonal harshness: the harshness of hatred, intolerance, certainty-of-knowing, unfairness, violence, prejudice.

Thus, instead of a natural and a human concern with what is local, personal and personally known, extremism breeds a desire to harshly interfere in the lives of others - personally unknown and personally distant - on the basis of such a hubriatic certainty-of-knowing that strife and suffering are inevitable. For there is in all extremists that stark lack of personal humility, that unbalance, that occurs when - as in all extremisms - what is masculine is emphasized and idealized and glorified to the detriment (internal, and external) of what is muliebral, and thus when some ideology or some dogma or some faith or some cause is given precedence over love and when loyalty to some manufactured abstraction is given precedence over loyalty to family, loved ones, friends.

For I have sensed that there are only changeable individual ways and individual fallible answers, born again and again via *pathei-mathos* and whose subtle scent - the wisdom - words can neither capture nor describe,

even though we try and perhaps need to try, and try perhaps (as for me) as one hopeful needful act of a non-religious redemption.

Thus, and for instance, I sense - only sense - that peace (or the beginning thereof) might possibly just be not only the freedom from subsuming personal desires but also the freedom from striving for some supra-personal, abstract, impersonal, goal or goals. That is, a just-being, a flowing and a being-flowed. No subsuming concern with what-might-be or what-was. No lust for ideations; no quest for the violation of difference. Instead - a calmful waiting; just a listening, a seeing, a feeling, of what-is as those, as our, emanations of Life flow and change as they naturally flow and change, in, with, and beyond us: human, animal, of sea, soil, sky, Cosmos, and of Nature... But I am only dreaming, here in pathei-mathos-empathy-land where there is no past-present-future passing each of us with our future-past: only the numen presenced in each one of our so individual timeless human stories.

Yet, in that - this - other world, the scent of having understood remains, which is why I feel I now quite understand why, in the past, certain individuals disliked - even hated - me, given my decades of extremism: my advocacy of racism, fascism, holocaust denial, and National-Socialism, followed (after my conversion to Islam) by my support of bin Laden, the Taliban, and advocacy of 'suicide attacks'.

I also understand why - given my subversive agenda and my amoral willingness to use any tactic, from Occult honeytraps to terrorism, to undermine the society of the time as prelude to revolution - certain people have sought to discredit me by distributing and publishing certain allegations.

Furthermore, given my somewhat Promethean peregrinations - which included being a Catholic monk, a vagabond, a fanatical violent neo-nazi, a theoretician of terror, running a gang of thieves, studying Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism; being a nurse, a farm worker, and supporter of Jihad - I expect many or most of those interested in or curious about my 'numinous way' and my recent mystical writings to be naturally suspicious of or doubtful about my reformation and my rejection of extremism.

Thus I harbour no resentment against individuals, or organizations, or groups, who over the past forty or so years have publicly and/or privately made negative or derogatory comments about me or published items making claims about me. Indeed, I now find myself in the rather curious situation of not only agreeing with some of my former political opponents on many matters, but also (perhaps) of understanding (and empathizing with) their

motivation; a situation which led and which leads me to appreciate even more just how lamentable my extremism was and just how arrogant, selfish, wrong, and reprehensible, I as a person was, and how in many ways many of those former opponents were and are (*ex concessio*) better people than I ever was or am.

Which is one reason why I have written what I have recently written about extremism and my extremist past: so that perchance someone or some many may understand extremism, and its causes, better and thus be able to avoid the mistakes I made, avoid causing the suffering I caused; or be able to in some way more effectively counter or prevent such extremism in the future. And one reason - only one - why I henceforward must live in reclusion and *in silencio*.

May 2012

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Appendix 2

Concerning The Development Of The Numinous Way

Background

What I term The Numinous Way, as a philosophy and as a way of life, was not the result of a few or many moments of inspiration striking close together in causal Time as measured by a terran-calendar and thus separated from each other by days, weeks, or even a few years.

Rather, it resulted from some nine years of reflexions, intuitions, and experiences, beginning in 2002 when - for quite a few months - I wandered as a vagabond in the hills and fells of Westmorland and lived in a tent, and during which time I communicated some of my musings, by means of handwritten letters, to a lady living in Oxford whom I had first met well over a decade before.

These musing concerned Nature, our place - as humans - in Nature and the Cosmos; the purpose, if any, of our lives; whether or not the five Aristotelian essentials gave a true understanding of the external world; and whether or not God, or Allah, or some sort of divinity or divinities, existed, and thus - if they did not - whence came mystical insight, knowledge, and understanding,

and what value or validity, if any, did such mystical insight, knowledge, and understanding, possess.

During the previous thirty or more years I had occasional intuitions concerning, or feelings, regarding, Nature, divinity, the Cosmos, and 'the numinous'; insights and feelings which led me to study Taoism, Hellenic culture, Buddhism, the Catholic mystic tradition, and become a Catholic monk. Later on, such intuitions concerning the numinous - and travels in the Sahara Desert - led me to begin a serious study of Islam and were part of the process that led me to convert to that way of life.

But these intuitions, feelings - and the understanding and knowledge they engendered - were or always eventually became secondary to what, since around 1964, I had considered or felt was the purpose of my own life. This was to aid, to assist, in some way the exploration and the colonization of Outer Space, and it was enthusiasm for - the inspiration of - that ideal which led me to seriously study the science of Physics, and then to seek to find what type of society might be able to make that ideal a reality, a seeking initially aided by my study of and enthusiasm for Hellenic culture, a culture - manifest in Greek heroes such as Odysseus and in the warrior society home to the likes of the sons of Atreus - which I came to regard as the ideal prototype for this new society of new explorers and new heroes.

After considering, and then rejecting, the communist society of the Soviet Union [1], an intuition regarding National-Socialist Germany [2] led me to seriously study that society and National-Socialism, a study ended when I peremptorily concluded that I had indeed found the right type of modern society. Thus I became a National-Socialist, with my aim - the purpose of my life - being to aid the foundation of a new National-Socialist State as a prelude to the exploration and the colonization of Outer Space, and thus the creation of a Galactic Imperium, a new Galactic, or Cosmic, Reich.

As I wrote in part one of some autobiographical scribblings issued in 1998 and which were based on some writings of mine dating back to the 1970's:

"It is the vision of a Galactic Empire which runs through my political life just as it is the quest to find and understand our human identity, and my own identity, and our relation to Nature, which runs through my personal and spiritual life, giving me the two aims which I consistently pursued since I was about thirteen years of age, regardless of where I was, what I was doing and how I was described by others or even by myself..."

For it was this aim of the exploration and the colonization of Outer Space, and my rather schoolboyish enthusiasm for it, which - together with the enjoyment of the struggle - inspired my fanaticism, my extremism, and which re-inspired me when, as sometimes occurred during my NS decades, my enthusiasm for politics, for a political revolution, waned, or when my intuitions, my feelings, concerning the numinous and my love of women - the dual inspiration for most of my poetry - became stronger than my political beliefs and my revolutionary fervour.

The aim, the purpose, this idealization, regarding Outer Space even partly motivated my study of and thence my conversion to Islam in 1998. For example, not long before that conversion, in an essay entitled *Foreseeing The Future*, I wrote:

" I firmly believe that Islam has the potential to create not only a new civilization, governed according to reason, but also a new Empire which could take on and overthrow the established world-order dedicated as this world-order is to usury, decadence and a god-less materialism [...] I also believe that a new Islamic Empire could create the Galactic Empire, or at least lay the foundations of it. Perhaps the first human colonies on another world will have as their flag the Islamic crescent, a flag inscribed with the words, in Arabic, In the Name of Allah, The Compassionate, The Merciful."

Thus, as when a National-Socialist, I dedicated myself to my 'new cause', to an ideal I idealistically carried in the headpiece of my head: the cause of Jihad, of disrupting existing societies as a prelude to manufacturing a new one. In this instance, a resurgent Khilafah.

As with National-Socialism, it was the ideal, the goal, the struggle, which was paramount, important; and I - like the extremist I was - hubriatically placed that goal, that ideal, that struggle for victory, before love, fairness, compassion, reason, and truth, and thus engendered and incited violence, hatred, and killing.

In addition, I always felt myself bound by honour to be loyal to either a cause, an ideology, or to certain individuals and so do the duty I had sworn by oath to do and be loyal to those I had sworn to be loyal to. Hence when doubts about my beliefs arose during my decades as a nazi I always had recourse to honour and so considered myself - even during my time as a monk - as a National-Socialist, albeit, when a monk, as a non-active one for

whom there was ultimately no contradiction between the NS ethos and the ethos of a traditional Catholicism, for there was the Reichskonkordat and the agreement Pope Pius XII reached with Hitler.

During my Muslim years I felt bound by the oath of my Shahadah; an oath which negated my NS beliefs and led me to reject racism and nationalism, and embrace the multi-racialism of the Ummah; and which general oath, together (and importantly) with a personal oath sworn a few years after my conversion, would always - until 2009 - bring me back, or eventually cause me to drift back, to Islam and always remind me of the duty I felt I was, as a Muslim, honour-bound to do.

2002-2006

This drift back toward Islam is what occurred after my musings in 2002. I tried to forget them, a task made difficult when later that year I went to live on a farm and also work on another nearby farm. For that living and such work brought a deep personal contentment and further intuitions and feelings, and a burgeoning understanding, regarding the numinous, and especially concerning Nature; some of which intuitions and feelings I again communicated by means of handwritten letters, mostly to the aforementioned lady.

For a while I sought to find a synthesis, studied Sufism, but was unable to find any satisfactory answers, and thus began an interior struggle, a personal struggle I made some mention of in *Myngath*. A struggle, a conflict, between my own intuitions, insights, and burgeoning understanding - regarding the numinous and human beings - and the way of faith and belief; between what I felt was a more natural, a more numinous way, and the necessary belief in Allah, the Quran, the Sunnah that Islam, that being Muslim, required.

For a while, faith and belief and duty triumphed; then I wavered, and began to write in more detail about this still as yet unformed 'numinous way'. Then, yet again honour, duty, and loyalty triumphed - but only a while - for I chanced to meet and then fell in love with a most beautiful, non-Muslim, lady. And it was our relationship - but most of all her tragic death in May 2006 - that intensified my inner struggle and forced me to ask and then answer certain fundamental questions regarding my past and my own nature.

As I wrote at the time:

" Thus do I feel and now know my own stupidity for my arrogant,

vain, belief that I could help, assist, change what was [...] I know my blame, my shame, my failure, here. Thus am I fully humbled by my own lack of insight; by my lack of knowing; by an understanding of my selfishness and my failure - knowing myself now for the ignorant, arrogant person I was, and am. How hypocritical to teach, to preach, through writings, feeling as I do now the suffering of words."

I did not like the answers about myself that this tragedy forced me to find; indeed, I did not like myself and so, for a while, clung onto Islam, onto being Muslim; onto the way of faith, of God, of ignoring my own answers, my own feelings, my own intuitions. For there was - or so it then seemed - expiation, redemption, hope, and even some personal comfort, there. But this return to such surety just felt wrong, deeply wrong.

2006-2009

For there was, as I wrote in *Myngath*,

"...one uncomfortable truth from which even I with all my sophistry could not contrive to hide from myself, even though I tried, for a while. The truth that I am indebted. That I have a debt of personal honour to both Fran and to Sue, who died - thirteen years apart - leaving me bereft of love, replete with sorrow, and somewhat perplexed. A debt to all those other women who, over four decades, I have hurt in a personal way; a debt to the Cosmos itself for the suffering I have caused and inflicted through the unethical pursuit of abstractions.

A debt somehow and in some way - beyond a simple remembrance of them - to especially make the life and death of Sue and Fran worthwhile and full of meaning, as if their tragic early dying meant something to both me, and through my words, my deeds, to others. A debt of change, of learning - in me, so that from my pathemathos I might be, should be, a better person; presencing through words, living, thought, and deeds, that simple purity of life felt, touched, known, in those stark moments of the immediacy of their loss.

But this honour, I have so painfully discovered, is not the abstract honour of years, of decades, past that I in my arrogance and stupid adherence to and love of abstractions so foolishly believed in and

upheld, being thus, becoming thus, as I was a cause of suffering. No; this instead is the essence of honour, founded in empathy; in an empathy with and thus a compassion for all life, sentient and otherwise. This is instead a being human; being in symbiosis with that-which is the essence of our humanity and which can, could and should, gently evolve us - far away from the primitive unempathic, uncompassionate, beings we have been, and unfortunately often still are; far away from the primitive unempathic, uncompassionate, often violent, person I had been."

Thus I was prompted - forced - to continue to develop my understanding in what began to be and became my own 'numinous way' and which thus and finally and, in 2009 publicly, took me away from Islam and my life as a Muslim.

2009-2012

Given that the essence of The Numinous Way is individual empathy, an individual understanding, the development of an individual judgement, and the living of an ethical way of life where there is an appreciation of the numinous, the more I reflected upon this 'numinous way' between 2011 and Spring 2012, the more I not only realized my mistakes, but also that it was necessary to remove, to excise, the detritus that had accumulated around the basic insights and the personal pathei-mathos that inspired me to develop that 'numinous way'. Mistakes and detritus because for some time, during the development of that 'numinous way', I was still in thrall to some abstractions, still thinking in terms of categories and opposites, and still fond of pontificating and generalizing, especially about The State [3]. I therefore began to re-express, in a more philosophical manner, the personal, the individual, the ontological, the ethical and spiritual nature, of The Numinous Way, and thus emphasized the virtues of humility, love, and of wu-wei - of balance, of tolerance, of non-interference, of individual interior (spiritual) reformation, of non-striving, of admitting one's own uncertainty of understanding and of knowing.

The year-long [2011-2012] process of refinement, correction, and reflexion resulted in me re-naming what remained of my 'numinous way' the 'philosophy of pathei-mathos', and which philosophy I attempted to outline in the two texts *Recuyle of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos* and *Summary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*, the latter of which was also published under the title *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*.

As I mentioned in *Society, Politics, Social Reform, and Pathei-Mathos* [Part Four of *Reculye of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*] -

"Given that the concern of the philosophy of pathei-mathos is the individual and their interior, their spiritual, life, and given that (due to the nature of empathy and pathei-mathos) there is respect for individual judgement, the philosophy of pathei-mathos is apolitical, and thus not concerned with such matters as the theory and practice of governance, nor with changing or reforming society by political means [...]

This means that there is no desire and no need to use any confrontational means to directly challenge and confront the authority of existing States since numinous reform and change is personal, individual, non-political, and not organized beyond a limited local level of people personally known. That is, it is of and involves individuals who are personally known to each other working together based on the understanding that it is inner, personal, change - in individuals, of their nature, their character - that is is the ethical, the numinous, way to solve such personal and social problems as exist and arise. That such inner change of necessity comes before any striving for outer change by whatever means, whether such means be termed or classified as political, social, economic, religious. That the only effective, long-lasting, change and reform is understood as the one that evolves human beings and thus changes what, in them, predisposes them, or inclines them toward, doing or what urges them to do, what is dishonourable, undignified, unfair, and uncompassionate.

In practice, this evolution means, in the individual, the cultivation and use of the faculty of empathy, and acquiring the personal virtues of compassion, honour, and love. Which means the inner reformation of individuals, as individuals.

Hence the basis for numinous social change and reform is aiding, helping, assisting individuals in a direct and personal manner, and in practical ways, with such help, assistance, and aid arising because we personally know or are personally concerned about or involved with those individuals or the situations those individuals find themselves in. In brief, being compassionate, empathic, understanding, sensitive, kind, and showing by personal example."

The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos

It is the philosophy of pathei-mathos which represents my weltanschauung. For I now consider that most of my writings, my pontifications, concerning 'the numinous way' - written haphazardly between 2002 and Spring 2012 - are unhelpful; or of little account; or irrelevant; or hubriatic; or detract from or obscure the basic simplicity of my weltanschauung, a simplicity I have endeavoured to express in *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*.

24th April 2012
(Revised November 2012)

Notes

[1] During this study of communism, in the 1960's, I began to learn Russian and would regularly listen to communist radio broadcasts such as those from Rundfunk der DDR, something I continued to do for a while even after becoming a National-Socialist. Indeed, on one occasion I wrote a letter to Radio Berlin which, to my surprise, was read out with my questions answered.

[2] As I have mentioned elsewhere this intuition regarding the Third Reich arose as a result of me reading an account of the actions of Otto Ernst Remer in July of 1944. For I admired his honour and his loyalty and his commitment to the duty he had sworn an oath to do. Here, I felt, was a modern-day Greek hero.

[3] These un-numinous, errorful, hubriatic, pontifications about 'the state' included essays such as the January 2011 text *The Failure and Immoral Nature of The State* and the February 2011, text *A Brief Numinous View of Religion, Politics, and The State*.

Among the abstractions (categories) which needed to be excised from a supposedly abstraction-less and empathic numinous way were 'the clan' and 'homo hubris', a divisive category I hubriatically pontificated about in several essays.

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Appendix 3

(Extracts from)

The Ethos of Extremism Some Reflexions on Politics and A Fanatical Life

Part One: 1968-1973

Becoming Nazi

My practical involvement in right-wing extremist politics really began in 1968 when I, still at school and not long returned from a childhood in the Far East and colonial Africa, became an active supporter of the newly formed National Front and of Colin Jordan's newly formed British Movement. My initial motivation for joining these organizations and becoming politically active was simple: to further the cause of National-Socialism and to enjoy the comradeship, the struggle for power, and the violence.

Some time before becoming so involved, I had chanced upon a copy of Shirer's book *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* and was inspired by the described actions of Otto Ernst Remer during the July 1944 plot against Hitler. Familiar as I was with *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* - with Hellenistic culture and history in general - I youthfully, rashly, made a connexion between the heroes of ancient Greece and Remer, impressed as I was by Remer's loyalty and sense of duty. This led me to, over subsequent months, read everything I could find about Hitler and the Third Reich; a reading which took me to local libraries and bookshops, then to bookshops and libraries in London. I even managed to find and buy copies (not originals) of old 8mm film of nazi rallies and some German propaganda films made during WW2, viewed using an old home projector; for I had discovered there was, even then in the 60's, something of an 'underground' market in nazi memorabilia.

Suffice to say that my reading and my viewing enthused me so that after a few months I considered myself a National-Socialist, an admirer of Adolf Hitler, believing that National-Socialism could create a new heroic age. To mark my 'conversion', I bought a small gold swastika tie-pin from a seller of nazi memorabilia and did not mind when, out wearing it, some people stared - for I was prepared either to launch into a rant about NS and Hitler or for a fight.

Thus while my initial motivation was naively idealistic and somewhat schoolboyish, I soon came to embrace NS racial doctrines, aided by acquiring and reading a copy of the English edition of HS Chamberlain's two volume work *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*. This meant I accepted that some races were superior, and others inferior; and that 'the Aryan race' - being the most superior, the most evolved - had a special 'destiny'. As for the extermination of the Jews, to be honest for some months I vacillated between two extremes - between believing 'it was unfortunate but perhaps necessary, an act of war' and between believing it 'was Allied propaganda'.

Horrid as acceptance of such genocide is, I had already become, without knowing it, an extremist; for I was prepared to accept or to dismiss horrid

facts, certain truths, in the belief that what mattered was the goal, the ideal, and that to achieve this one had to be harsh, even fanatical and brutal. In addition, I had come to regard war - modern war - as necessary, as the breeding ground of *arête*, and in war people are killed or slaughtered, just as the victors, the Greek heroes, in the Trojan war slaughtered many of the people of Troy after its fall and just as Alexander decimated the people of Massaga.

Later on, I was to discover that I was far from being alone, in neo-nazi circles, in this detestable acceptance of brutality and genocide. For instance, I can recall several discussions about the extermination of the Jews with support being voiced for such measures, and several occasions when a certain song, well-known in neo-nazi circles in the 60's and 70's, was sung by 'comrades', with the song beginning "Gas 'em all, gas 'em all, the long, and the short and the tall..."

However, in the months following my 'conversion' to the cause of National-Socialism I could not quite shake-off - for all my new enthusiasm and fanaticism - certain uncomfortable moral feelings regarding the holocaust, and so began reading voraciously about the subject, a reading which included trawling through multi-volume accounts such as *The Trial of German Major War Criminals: Proceedings of the International Military Tribunal Sitting at Nuremberg, Germany*. But in the end, after months of such reading and study, there came a point when I simply accepted, out of a desire to believe, that the genocide 'was Allied propaganda' so that, to me then and subsequently, further research regarding, or rational debate about, the matter became unnecessary. In effect, I came to fanatically believe it was war propaganda, and this fanatical belief was immune to criticism as I became intolerant of, dismissive of, others who tried to convince me that the horrors of the camps were real.

In retrospect, I needed to believe it was propaganda, a myth, because to do otherwise would destroy the imaginary, the idealistic, the perfect, the romanticized, National-Socialism I then believed in and accepted. To do otherwise would mean that Hitler was not as I imagined him to be, as I hoped he was: a noble and good man who had triumphed against all the odds purely out of a love for his people and his land. Thus it might be correct to conclude that my research into the matter then was biased, born not out of a desire to find 'the truth' but from a need to prove that my own conclusions, assumptions, and beliefs, were correct. There might therefore have been an element of faith involved here, and subsequently, such that inconvenient, or awkward, facts and truths are ignored, dismissed, or regarded as the 'propaganda' of those opposed to one's beliefs.

Hatred, Love, and Violence

Although - on joining the NF and BM - I was very naive about politics, something of a tabula rasa, I soon developed the same prejudices and the same hatreds as the people I came to associate with; prejudices and hatreds aided by pamphlets and books read, loaned and given, and by discussions with party members, especially those belonging to BM. Thus I came to regard 'immigrants' as somewhat uncivilized, certainly inferior to White people, and considered their removal from 'our land', our country, as a necessity. Before this, I had no opinions, no views, about such matters, and my understanding of National-Socialism was greatly aided and developed by personal discussions with, and by written correspondence I had with, Colin Jordan.

During this formative period, I subscribed to items such as *The Thunderbolt* newspaper published by Edward R. Fields and so regularly received anti-Jewish and anti-Black reports; reports that seemed to confirm the necessity of racial separation and the need for a final solution to 'the Jewish problem'. For I had, in common with nearly all BM members and many NF members, come to believe that the Jews, in England, as in many other Western lands, had too much power and too much influence, were somehow by nature badly disposed toward White people, and thus were our mortal enemies.

In practice these beliefs and prejudices, this racism, meant three obvious things, and one interesting and curious thing, as least it is curious and interesting to me, now, on reflexion. The three things are:

(1) That I developed a very idealized, a very romanticized, view of and naive love for those I regarded as my own people, my own race - especially in respect of English people; regarding them as probably the most civilized people on Earth who had built the best, the most noble, Empire the world had ever seen, and who had 'civilized' or brought civilization to large parts of the world.

(2) That I developed a prejudice and antagonism toward other races in general, and in particular against 'Blacks' and Jews, and thus, as a group, and politically, hated them and did not wish to associate with them.

(3) That I regarded violence in pursuit of my beliefs as natural and necessary, and came to regard political enemies - such as 'Reds' - as legitimate targets of political violence.

The one interesting and curious thing is:

That despite my racism, my nazi beliefs and ideals, my political

activism, I was not personally offensive to or prejudiced or violent toward or hated individuals of other races that I met, including Jews.

Thus, and apropos all four things, I somehow and in some way managed to compartmentalize my personal life and my political life, for although I enjoyed political brawls, and was not averse to using violence, it was not in my nature to be personally rude or offensive to or violent toward people as individuals, whatever their perceived ethnicity; unless, of course, they threatened me personally, one individual to another, or had personally threatened someone I cared about. In fact, my hatred and violence was more directed toward political enemies - especially during political confrontations - than it was to other races; so directed that for many years, from 1968 to 1974, I would actively seek out such potentially and hopefully violent political confrontations and enjoy them. This enjoyment, this seeking after violent confrontation, perhaps explains why Martin Webster, in 1971 after meeting with me a few times, described me to a friend of his (who was studying at the same University as me) as "having a death wish", a description which rather irked me then.

That said, about compartmentalization, I did for a long time - directly and indirectly - incite hatred and violence against other races, both by speeches, often vitriolic, impassioned, and always extempore, I gave at political events; in discussions with comrades and others; by means of articles I wrote, and by posters, leaflets, stickers, I designed. But this was, to me at the time, impersonal, just propaganda, somewhat calculated, and regarded as a necessity in order to achieve certain political goals - and was probably more reprehensible for so being impersonal and propagandistic.

Only on a few occasions was I directly, personally, involved in violence against ethnic minorities, and these were unplanned, spontaneous, incidents involving several 'ethnics', one of which incidents led to me being arrested and given a prison sentence, but in all of which incidents - to be honest - I was or became motivated by dislike of and anger at 'these foreigners' because I felt they did not belong in 'my country' and should 'go back to where they belonged'.

The particular racial incident that led to my arrest and my first term of imprisonment occurred in the early 1970's, following some racial clashes in Wakefield between skinheads and 'ethnics', in this instance people of or descended from those of Pakistani origin. On the day in question I, then domiciled in Leeds, was out with Eddy Morrison and a few other comrades handing out anti-immigration leaflets in Wakefield hoping to capitalize on the violence and so possibly gain some new recruits for the cause. The leafleting over, we came across a group of skinheads, some of whom I vaguely knew.

Sensibly, Morrison left while I, sensing there might be - and hopeful there would be - some violence, went with the skinheads looking for trouble. Thus it would be fair to say that I was responsible for what followed, as the Judge at my subsequent criminal trial judged I was. Our group - these young lads and I - wandered around for a while until we found some young Pakistani men whom we racially abused and then began to throw stones and bricks at. They ran away, and we gave chase... Suffice to say, when this first skirmish was over, we - buoyed by our success and I seem to recall at my instigation - went off in search of more targets. Eventually, after perhaps an hour or so - maybe more, maybe less - we found ourselves the subject of a large Police operation with officers chasing us. We split up and I, not knowing the area, ended up on some industrial lot with several Police officers blocking the only escape route. Soon, the Police had caught and arrested all of us [...]

Part Two: 1973-1975

Ultra-Violence, Covert Action, and Terror

Two significant events during this period (1973-1975) helped shape and develop my extremism. One was that I was released from my first term of imprisonment for violence, and the second was that I was recruited by the underground paramilitary and neo-nazi organization Column 88.

Simply put, prison hardened me even more, while involvement with Column 88 confirmed my faith in the ultimate victory of National-Socialism.

My imprisonment had perhaps the opposite effect to what the Judge at my trial may have intended, for far from 'teaching me a lesson' it only served to make me more fanatical and more violent. It also enabled me to learn new skills and acquire new contacts of a decidedly criminal kind, skills and contacts which - as I have mentioned elsewhere - I put to use following my release when I formed a small gang of thieves to liberate certain goods and fence them in order, initially at least, to fund various political schemes and projects of mine.

In addition, prison life seemed to me to confirm two of the fundamental axioms of National-Socialism, that of the necessity and value of *kampf* and that of the *führerprinzip*. That is, of hardening one's self, being prepared to use force, to be ruthless, unsentimental, in order to survive and prosper; and either earning respect or being obedient and submissive. For prison seemed to be like some ancient uncultured, uncivilized, macho tribal society where force or the threat of force (by both cons and screws), and/or one's personal cunning, were the basis of life, and where those of a violent or of a cunning nature tended to prosper. Perhaps fortunately I was or could be both violent

and cunning so it was not really surprising that I ran a racket inside, selling goods liberated from a variety of sources including prison stores.

This increased political fanaticism and more violent nature would lead me, months later and with the help of Eddy Morrison, to found, in December of 1973, a new political neo-nazi organization based in Leeds; the rather grandly named National Democratic Freedom Movement, and which organization would be rather aptly described, some years later, by John Tyndall in the following terms:

" The National Democratic Freedom Movement made little attempt to engage in serious politics but concentrated its activities mainly upon acts of violence against its opponents. [...] Before very long the NDFM had degenerated into nothing more than a criminal gang."

Thus 1973 and especially 1974 became, for me, a time of ultra-violence, criminality, and of a fanaticism even more extreme than that of previous years. A period during which I was regularly involved in fights and brawls, regularly arrested and appeared 'in the dock' - including for running that gang of thieves - and which period would end, perhaps inevitably, with me being sent to prison for a third time.

" Among the highlights of that NDFM year, for me, were the following. I smashed up (with one other NDFM member) an anti-apartheid exhibition, in Leeds (twice). I gave vitriolic extempore speeches at public meetings (some of which ended in violence when our opponents attacked). I waded into some Trade Union march or other, thumped a few people then stole and set fire to one of their banners (arrested, again). I arranged a meeting at Chapeltown, in Leeds (the heart of the Black community then) at which only five of us turned up, including Andrew Brons but not including Morrison. We faced a rather angry crowd of several hundred people, who threw bricks, stones, whatever, at us, and we few walked calmly right through them to our parked vehicles, and rather sedately drove away, our point made. No one said we could do it.

I spoke extempore at Speakers Corner in Hyde Park for around a half an hour to a crowd of over a thousand; it ended in a brawl...Finally, toward the end of that Summer, a meeting we had arranged on Leeds Town Hall steps resulted in a mass brawl when the crowd of around a thousand attacked us, after I had harangued them for around half an hour. Several Police officers were injured as they tried to break up the fights. I was arrested (again) but soon

was granted bail...

When my case came to trial, at Leeds Crown Court, I was accused of having "incited the crowd" and generally held responsible for most of the violence."

Everything I did in these years I justified to myself, and often to others, by invoking principles such as 'the survival of the fittest' and by the belief that in order to secure victory for the political cause I believed in, any and all means were justified, from violence to hatred to using rhetoric and propaganda in order to motivate people and gain recruits.

As for Column 88, involvement with that well-organised, now long-defunct, paramilitary group gave strength to my conviction that a National-Socialist victory was possible, for C88 had many overseas contacts, held regular meetings attended by young neo-nazis from all over Europe, and had among its British members not only many older professional people but also some members of the military. In addition, given its paramilitary nature and the paramilitary training undertaken, there was the knowledge that there were many others like me who were, under certain circumstances, prepared to use both physical and armed force in the service of our NS cause.

Thus I became aware that I and the few dedicated National-Socialists I had met in previous years in groups such as British Movement and the National Front were far from alone; that there were many other committed National-Socialists 'out there'. Which awareness, which practically acquired knowledge, not only strengthened my commitment to National-Socialism but which also strengthened my resolve to fight for 'the cause'.

There also developed in me during this time, and because of my involvement with C88, a realization that both covert action and terrorism were or might be useful tactics to employ in the struggle for victory, a struggle which I - extremist and fanatic that I was - accepted would be brutal, violent, and bloody, and thus possibly cost the lives of some of us, some of our opponents, and even some non-combatants. For I was during these years enthused and somewhat motivated by the rise to power of Hitler's NSDAP; a bloody, violent, struggle which had cost the lives of many comrades, from 'the fallen' of November 9th 1923 to Horst Wessel. I thus considered myself, and my comrades, as continuing that struggle - that struggle for the supremacy of the Aryan race, and the struggle against 'decadence' and our Communist, liberal, and Jewish enemies. In this struggle I personally - inspired by Savitri Devi's book *Lightning and The Sun* - considered the military defeat of The Third Reich, and the death of Adolf Hitler, as but temporary setbacks to be

avenged.

In respect of covert action, I came to the conclusion, following some discussions with some C88 members, that two different types of covert groups, with different strategy and tactics, might be very useful in our struggle and thus aid us directly or aid whatever right-wing political party might serve as a cover for introducing NS policies or which could be used to advance our cause. These covert groups would not be paramilitary and thus would not resort to using armed force since that option was already covered, so far as I was then concerned, by C88.

The first type of covert group would essentially be a honeytrap [1], to attract non-political people who might be or who had the potential to be useful to the cause even if, or especially if, they had to be 'blackmailed' or persuaded into doing so at some future time. The second type of covert group would be devoted to establishing a small cadre of NS fanatics, of 'sleepers', to - when the time was right - be disruptive or generally subversive.

Nothing came of this second idea, and the few people I recruited during 1974 for the second group, migrated to help the first group, established the previous year. However, from the outset this first group was beset with problems for - in retrospect - two quite simple reasons, both down to me. First, my lack of leadership skills, and, second, the outer nature chosen for the group which was of a secret Occult group with the 'offer', the temptation, of sexual favours from female members in a ritualized Occult setting, with some of these female members being 'on the game' and associated with someone who was associated with my small gang of thieves.

While I enjoyed and then lived for political action - especially confrontation and brawls - and was motivated, fanatical, enough to speak extempore in public and take charge in a violent situations on the streets, and loved to plan such violence and motivate people to undertake it, I disliked the day-to-day organization and the (to me) petty manipulation that was, or seemed to me to be, the lot of an organizer and leader. I also lacked the charm, the charisma, the flexibility, a political organizer and leader needed.

In contrast to me, Eddy Morrison had a natural charisma, a certain charm, and was an experienced and adept organizer. He also, unlike me at the time, had a good sense of humour and was well-liked whereas I was probably more feared, or respected, because I was simply considered a nutter, a violent psycho. As a consequence, he was a natural leader; suited to leading the NDFM, and of all the people I knew at the time the most suited to organize and lead such a covert group especially given the fact that its ultimate purpose was to aid our NS cause. However, for all my attempts at persuasion he was uninterested in both C88 and in my ideas regarding covert action. He

also, beyond being a fan of horror stories and of the fiction of HP Lovecraft, had no interest whatsoever in the Occult. Thus I had to make do with someone else as organizer and 'leader' of this covert group, this person - then a comrade, a married businessman living near Manchester - being the one who had suggested the outer, the Occult, form of the group.

For some time, this underground group appeared to flourish, with some 'respectable' people recruited - initially a lecturer, a solicitor, a teacher, among others - with some of the recruits becoming converts to or in some way helping our political cause, and with such clandestine recruitment aided, later on, by some unexpected, non-factual, unwanted, publicity.

But what happened was that, over time and under the guidance of its mentor, the Occult and especially the hedonistic aspects came to dominate over the political and subversive intent, with the *raisons d'etat* of blackmail and persuasion, of recruiting useful, respectable, people thus lost. Hence, while I still considered, then and for quite some time afterwards, that the basic idea of such a subversive group, such a honeytrap, was sound, I gradually lost interest in this particular immoral honeytrap project until another spell in prison for an assortment of offences took me away from Leeds and my life as a violent neo-nazi activist [...]

Birth of A Theoretician of Terror

It is perhaps fair to say - so far as I recall - that I was the one who, in C88, first broached the subject of using certain tactics such as improvised explosive devices and assassinations in a direct campaign against both our enemies and what I often then referred to as 'The System'. Prior to this - so far as I knew - training and discussions had been concerned with and were about possible future events, in particular a Soviet invasion of Western Europe, an invasion scenario which at that time (the early to middle 1970's, the Cold War era) was taken seriously by Western governments and Western military forces.

My basic idea - the plan - was to use such tactics to cause disruption, fear, and discontent, in order to provoke a revolutionary situation that our NS, our racist, our fascist, or anti-immigrant groups in general, might be able to take advantage of politically and otherwise; with part of this plan being to encourage the government to introduce more and more 'martial law' type control and regulations, which type of control and regulations (and surveillance) those in the military inclined toward a more authoritarian, or even fascist type, government might use to their advantage. For from such authoritarian or fascist type beginnings, National-Socialism might be covertly, gradually, introduced.

It needs to be remembered this was when 'the troubles' - armed conflict in Northern Ireland - was possibly at its most bloody, and which conflict, together with IRA attacks in mainland Britain, caused consternation and concern both in British government and in certain military circles, with some ordinary ranks, a few junior officers and even a one or two of the higher ranks covertly talking about a scenario when a military coup in Britain might be justified. Not that, so far as I with my limited knowledge know, this minority discontent among certain military - and perhaps a few intelligence - personnel ever become widely known or has even been mentioned in books, memoirs, or articles written about those times. But this discontent did capture a certain mood among certain people during that period, a mood I had some personal knowledge of, partly as a result of C88 contacts, partly as a result of some trips I made to Northern Ireland, and partly as result of other contacts such as squaddies involved with or supportive of right-wing groups.

Thus my ideas, my proposals, were to some extent grounded in the realities of those times. Times when disruptive industrial strikes and disputes were common in Britain, when the National Front could hold rallies and marches of thousands of people and had a membership possibly in excess of 10,000 members, when many more ordinary British citizens were, or seemed to be, generally supportive of the 'stop immigration, start repatriation' campaign, and when there was some support, or seemed to be some support, in certain military and even government circles for a more authoritarian approach to government.

I justified my ideas - the plan - and thus the use of such tactics by immorally believing and suggesting to others that in 'such dire times' victory could not be achieved without sacrifice and blood, and that for our people, our land, to survive and prosper it was necessary for some of us to be hard, ruthless; that 'history' showed that such ruthlessness was effective. And so on and so on. I do remember, on several occasions, idealizing the Roman Empire and ranting about how Rome built and maintained its Empire, its glory; not by negotiations, not by elections, not through a policy of peace and non-violence, but because ruthless men, hardened by war, had conquered, subdued and dealt severely with discontent and threats to 'the Roman way of life', to Rome, and to the Empire. Quite often I would quote some words of Hitler, from *Mein Kampf*, such as that the broad masses respond to what is strong and uncompromising; that a struggle on behalf of a weltanschauung has to be conducted by men of heroic spirit who are ready to sacrifice everything, and that if a people does not fight they do not deserve to live.

Hence, to me now, on reflexion, it does not seem to be hatred - of whatever type - that motivated those ideas, such a terrorist plan, of mine but rather a glorification of war, of strife; a belief in struggle, in 'the survival of the

fittest'; a naive desire to personally act based on idealistic notions of sacrifice and glory, of being part of a desperate struggle, a war, that began with Hitler and the NSDAP. Most of all, perhaps, there was the misguided feeling that 'our people' were under attack, threatened with slavery and then extinction, so that desperate, ruthless, measures were necessary to save them. A feeling that most certainly derived from the absolute conviction I then had that 'race' - one's idealized race - was the most important thing, so that this idealized, mythical, 'race' came before everything, and therefore (so the perverted reasoning went) what was moral was what aided and ensured the survival and prosperity of this 'race'.

As for practical consequences, then, I do not believe there were any, of significance, known to me. For I discovered little support for these ideas, this plan, probably for a quite simple reason, which was that the people in C88 disposed toward and trained for action preferred to concentrate on C88's stated aims and objectives: of being a practical bulwark in the event of a Soviet invasion or an internal Communist, extreme left-wing, revolution, and of slowly infiltrating National-Socialists into positions of influence within British society.

However, perhaps it was these ideas of mine, my enthusiasm for and rants about such action - to selected C88 people of course [2] - that later on resulted in a sort-of 'bomb making package' being produced by some of them (a package complete with several pairs of disposable surgical gloves), one of which packages was delivered to me, in Leeds, on my release from prison in 1976 but which I personally did not use given that shortly thereafter - for reasons outlined in *Myngath* - I, suffering from a loss of idealism, had a change of heart, and decided to become a monk in a Catholic monastery. A loss of idealism, a moral change, that would, however and unfortunately, not last that long.

Extracts from
Part Six: 1998-2002

Conversion to Islam

[...]

There was no sudden decision to convert to Islam. Rather, it was the culmination of a process that began a decade earlier with travels in the

Sahara Desert. During the decade before my conversion I regularly travelled abroad, with this travel including well-over a dozen visits to Egypt and a few visits to other lands where the majority of the population were Muslim.

Egypt, especially, enchanted me; and not because of the profundity of ancient monuments. Rather because of the people, their culture, and the land itself. How life, outside of Cairo, seemed to mostly cling to the Nile - small settlements, patches and strips of verdancy, beside the flowing water and hemmed in by dry desert. I loved the silence, the solitude, the heat, of the desert; the feeling of there being precariously balanced between life and death, dependant on carried water, food; the feeling of smallness, a minute and fragile speck of life; the vast panorama of sky. There was a purity there, human life in its essence, and it was so easy, so very easy, to feel in such a stark environment that there was, must be, a God, a Creator, who could decide if one lived or died.

Once, after a long trip into the Western Desert, I returned to Cairo to stay at some small quite run-down hotel: on one side, a Mosque, while not that far away on the other side was a night-club. A strange, quixotic, juxtaposition that seemed to capture something of the real modern Egypt. Of course, very early next morning the Adhaan from the mosque woke me. I did not mind. Indeed, I found it hauntingly beautiful and, strangely, not strange at all; as if it was some long-forgotten and happy memory, from childhood perhaps.

Once, I happened to be cycling from Cairo airport to the centre of the city as dawn broke, my route taking me past several Mosques. So timeless, so beautiful, the architecture, the minarets, framed by the rising sun...

Once, and many years before my conversion, I bought from a bookshop in Cairo a copy of the Quran containing the text in Arabic with a parallel English interpretation, and would occasionally read parts of it, and although I found several passages interesting, intriguing, I then had no desire, felt no need, to study Islam further. Similarly, the many friendly conversations I had with Egyptians during such travels - about their land, their culture, and occasionally about Islam - were for me just informative, only the interest of a curious outsider, and did not engender any desire to study such matters in detail.

However, all these experiences, of a decade and more, engendered in me a feeling which seemed to grow stronger year by year with every new trip. This was the feeling that somehow in some strange haunting way I belonged there, in such places, as part of such a culture. A feeling which caused me - some time after the tragic death of Sue (aged 39) from cancer in the early 1990's - to enrol on, and begin, an honours course in Arabic at a British

university [3].

Thus, suffice to say that a decade of such travel brought a feeling of familiarity and resonance with Egypt, its people, its culture, that land, and with the Islam that suffused it, so that when in the Summer of 1998 I seriously began to study Islam, to read Ahadith, Seerah, and the whole Quran, I had at least some context from practical experience. Furthermore, the more I studied Islam in England in those Summer months the more I felt, remembered, the sound of the beautiful Adhaan; remembered the desert - that ætherial purity, that sense of God, there; and remembered that haunting feeling of perhaps already belonging to such a culture, such a way of life.

Hence my conversion to Islam, then, in September of that year, seemed somehow fated, wyrdful.

Notes

[1] Honeytrap meaning 'something that is tempting' - as in the modern usage of honeypot - and also something covert to attract/entrap a particular type of person. That is, a type of 'sting' operation. Thus, State-sponsored espionage is not implied.

This new life later on included entering the noviciate of a Catholic monastery, and which monastic experience led me to reform myself, at least in respect of immoral and criminal activities and thus in respect of involvement with such immoral honeytraps. However, this reformation then did not last, for as recounted here in Part Four, I had occasion, during the 1980's, to renew my association not only with some old C88 comrades but also with the mentor of that Occult honeytrap when, after of lapse of many years, I became involved again in neo-nazi politics and revived my project of using clandestine recruitment for 'the cause'. By this time, that Occult group had developed some useful contacts, especially in the academic world, so some friendly co-operation between us was agreed; a co-operation which continued, sporadically, until just before my conversion to Islam in 1998.

This clandestine recruitment of mine was for a small National-Socialist cadre which went by a variety of names, beginning with 'G7' (soon abandoned), then *The White Wolves* (c. 1993), and finally the *Aryan Resistance Movement* aka Aryan Liberation Army [qv. Part Five for details].

However, while some of these Occult contacts were, given their professions, occasionally useful 'to the cause' and to 'our people', by 1997 I had come to the conclusion that the problems such association with Occultism and occultists caused far outweighed the subversive advantages; a conclusion which led me to re-write and re-issue a much earlier article of mine entitled *Occultism and National-Socialism*, and which revised article was subsequently published in the compilation *Cosmic Reich* by Renaissance Press of New Zealand. As I wrote in that article - "National-Socialism and Occultism are fundamentally, and irretrievably, incompatible and opposed to each other."

By the Summer of 1998 I had abandoned not only such co-operation and contacts with such Occult groups but also such clandestine recruitment on behalf of National-Socialism,

concentrating instead on my Reichsfolk group and my 'revised' non-racist version of National-Socialism which I called 'ethical National-Socialism'. Later still, following my conversion to Islam, I was to reject even this version of National-Socialism.

[2] I recall one occasion, early on, trying to discuss my ideas - the plan - with C88's organizer in his home while, at my suggestion, very loud military music was played, from a Hi-Fi system, in the hope that it might drown out any covert listening or recording devices. Since the reality was that we could not hear what the other person said, that particular silly ploy of mine was very quickly discontinued.

[3] I soon left that university however, for personal and practical reasons to do with a romantic involvement with a lady who lived hundreds of miles away.

cc David Myatt 2010-2012



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Four Emanations

Rescriptions of Love, Sadness, Joy, and Hope, from David Myatt

1. This Only This

In the garden, heard through the large open window, the birds having sensed the onset of Spring sing as they sing at this most glorious time of year. And I, I overwhelmed again by the sadness emanating even here from my knowing of the suffering-causing personal deeds of my past. So many, so many I had not thought to count so many - until now. So many how could I while buoyed by hubris have hurt that many? So much deception, so many lies, while they - the friends, family, wives, lovers - trusted with that goodness born of heavenly-human hope.

No prayers, no supplication, to wash away, remove, the manifold stains. If only, if only I (as once, those several times) believed, so that penance, absolution - embraced - might bring the chance to dream, to-be, to see, to love again. But no apologies possible nor by they desired, for they are gone - deceased, or lost those many years ago; no words sufficient, of meaning, to redeem a memory of such a scarring pain.

No mechanism, manufactured, to return before the time of such hurtful hurting with such knowing as so bends me now, down, down and kneeling sans any means of prayer. Only emotion falling, fallen, keeping such memories as some music makes numinously plaintive the joy the pain, century folding folded to century while they the multitudinous I's made the good the trusting suffer. No past of expiations. No Spring of goodness to burgeon forth to herald they through pathei-mathos changed.

Which is why, perhaps, so many still need desire - to trust in - God. For there is

this only this: to write to rest to sleep to dream to cease to feel. And the world will still be there when I am gone.

March 2012

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2. This Flow of Feelings

The truth is that I am not able to contain, restrain, the sorrow, the sadness felt through this knowing of my multitudinous mistakes. Unable: and so I am become, am now, only a flowing of moments remembered with such a ferocity of engagement that I am there, reborn, again:

There... to smell, to feel, the sultry freshness of warm Spring morning when off I cycled to work some twelve miles distant and she, first wife, was left to cry in loneliness, alone: no ending to that argument the dark night before as I in selfish concentration enjoyed the greening grass of vergeful country lanes, the birdful treeful songs, passing as they passed while the clouds above that brought the heavy warming rain depart. So glad then to be alone again among and cycling such peaceful Shropshire lanes...

Only now - only now - knowing feeling how I should have returned to clasp her in my arms and be the love she then so needed. To late this seeing far beyond such selfish self as kept me then so blind.

The truth of there, again:

There... where the warmth of English Summer took to us seat ourselves in picnic beside the river Avon flowing as it flowed through rural counties. You - new wife, for our family living; while I - for ideations that I carried in the silly headpiece of my head, so that I with misplaced stupid passion could only talk of strife, somewhere. You, breathing hope as the very breeze breathed such warmth as kept us slim of clothes...

And only now - only now - knowing feeling how I should have embraced you there to return in sameness the gentle love so freely given for years until my selfish self so self-absorbed rightly broke your patience down. Far too late now my seeing far beyond such selfish self as kept me then so subsumed with

ideations.

The truth I am reborn there, again:

There... where Fran stood beside her whiteful door as morning broke that late Spring day when I with firm resolve turned to take myself away: no doubt, no love, to still such hurt as walked me then. No empathy from sadful eyes to turn me back to try to try to try in love again. Instead - only such selfish hope as moved me far to meadow fields of farm where warm Sun kept me still, and smiling, while she remained bereft abandoned to lay herself down until her breath of life left her: no hand, no love, of mine to save her there where she died silent, slow, in loneliness alone...

Only now - only now - knowing feeling so intensely how I should have stayed: love before all excuses.

Thus, such a flow of such demeaning memories as make my present no presentiment of so many pasts: so much unforgivable, unliveable now - that I become my tears of failing to hope to sleep to dream to still this flow of feelings.

But there is no present - only moments with which to mesmerise myself, as when the Blackbird beyond this window sings and I am there, there again on meadow-fields of farm where work and living kept me safe, secluded, for five full years and more. Such peace, such hope, until death of Fran came to claim me for the failure that made me who and what I was and am.

For the truth is of failure; my failure of so many years and decades past. To fail to simply love to dream to hope as they my loves so loved in dreamful hope as kept them made them far better beings than I in insolent pride ever was or even now could ever hope or dream to be. No faith, no deity, no sacrament of absolution now to charm away, explain, redeem such a feckless selfish failure. Only more remorseful days - and darkful nights - alone that bear some winsome hope of words as this in weaksome recompense for wreakful storm I was upon those lives when I, dark tempest, tore their fragile human hopes asunder.

To die, here now, is easy: one example from far too many, with nothing here for needful Pride to gorge myself upon, again. Only such a flow of such demeaning memories as make my present no excuse for the stupid arrogance of such a prideful past. Only a hope for this example to void for one - some others - such ideation as kept and made me slave; one unreligious allegory for perchance not so many. Since

If you came this way,
Taking any route, starting from anywhere,
At any time or at any season,
It would always be the same

I am no exception. So, perhaps, five thousand years remain before our species - whimpering after such bouleversements as still befits us now - fails, to fall, to perish, to be replaced: unless we change. But how?

The truth is, I have no answers. I only live other than I have lived, in empyrean hope of abatement of suffering, somewhere, somehow: and knowing a shared, loyal, love for the beautiful, the numinous, truth it is.

March 2011

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3. A Time To Reflect

A time to reflect as I – tired from long days of manual work – sit in the garden watching the clouds clear to bring some warm Sun on this windy day of a coldish wind. On the horizon to the South: Cumulus clouds billowing up to herald more showers, and I, for a moment as a child again, watch a few cloud-faces change to disperse; as if the clouds are for that moment, just that one moment, a memory of a person who lived, once, on this Earth: reaching out to be remembered as they the cloud move as they are moved in their so-brief and new existence.

The hedgerows are greening; the branches of trees coming into leaf, and life is renewed while I wait for the Swallows to return, here, to this Farm. This is Life: in its purest truth devoid of the empathy-destroying, suffering-causing, abstractions that we humans have manufactured to blight this planet and so grievously injure our fecund still beautiful but now suffering Mother Earth who gives us, and who gave us, life.

The brief warm Sun renews as it almost always does for me, and so – for this moment, this one moment – I am happy, again; feeling the measure of Meaning, of happiness, of joy itself; which is in a simple just-being, *sans* abstractions, *sans* thought, and beyond the dependency of, the addiction to, anger.....

Here – the child, again; free to watch the bee bumble from flower to flower; free to feel a certain playful awe. Here, the concern with only what is seen, touched, known, smelt, in the immediacy of dwelling.

There should be nothing more; nothing to wreck such simple being; nothing to bring the-suffering. But I, we, are stupid, weak, vain, addicted – and so in our failing repeat and repeat and repeat the same mistakes, and so cause and maintain the pain of our, of their, of other, suffering. Mea Culpa; Mea Culpa; Mea Maxima Culpa...

April 2007

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4. Bright Berries, One Winter



Winter, three days before that celebration that marks a certain birth.

Et hoc vobis signum: Inveniétis infántem pannis involútum, et pósitum in præsépio.

Et súbito facta est cum Angelo multitúdo milítiae cæléstis, laudántium Deum, et dicéntium:

Glória in altíssimis Deo, et in terra pax homíinibus bonæ voluntátis.

Outside, snow, and a cold wind below a clouded sky - and, there, that partly snow-covered bush of bright berries which hungry Thrushes eat to perhaps keep themselves alive. So many Thrushes, in one place: nine, eleven, gathering on the bare if snowy branches of a nearby taller tree, to descend down to feed, three, five, four, at a time.

Inside, musick - reproduced by some modern means. Musick over five centuries old, bringing such a strange melding of feeling, dreams, memory, and thought. Musick, by Dunstable - *Preco preheminencie*, perhaps one of the most beautiful pieces ever written, bringing thus deep personal feelings.

Now, I cannot seem to help the tears that seep slowly forth (again) from closing eyes, as - far beyond such bounds as causal Time keeps us moving - I am replete, overflowed by memories from such lifeful strange lives as have lived me, here:

... there, as she my Sue lay so softly breathing in her bed, my hand to her hand, to watch her sleep to seep hour-long-slowly there past the ending of her life...

There, as another love from another life that lived me ran, freshly seeping forth from train, along that crowded platform to leap to welcoming arms while people stared, some smiling, and the warmth of bodies touching announced the ending of our exile, of that month of her travelling...

There, one monk - with such profusion of faith as so infused me then - who knelt, kneels, after Compline in that lovely Chapel before carved centuries-old statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary, feeling such peace as led me back in such respectful reposeful silence to that my cell to sleep dreamless, content...

Before other lives came to so sadly betake that boyish man away, back to his addiction to such suffering-causing abstractions as would, decades, later, almost break him as she - my Frances of eighteen months together - so then suffused with such tragic fullsome sadness-regret-despair that her slim delicate fingers, no longer to tenderly warmly touch her lover's face, became transformed: a means to betake her, alone lonely, past the ending of her life after I had so selfishly left her that one MayMorn...

So many tears, each some memory seeping sadly joyfully poignantly forth even as so many wait, waiting, ready to heave forth; dormant, seeds needing to bring hence new life as each new Spring becomes some youthful ageing deedful wordful presencing of this one life which is my life until such Time as this emanation also passes beyond that fated Ending who lies in wait to take us all.

Thus am I humbled, once more, by such knowing feeling of the burden made from my so heavy past; so many errors, mistakes. So many to humble me here, now, by such profusion as becomes prehension of centuries past and passing, bringing as such a passing does such gifts of they now long beyond

life's ending who crafted from faith, feeling, experience, living, love, those so rich presents replete with meaning; presenting thus to us if only for a moment - fleeting as Thrush there feeding - that knowing of ourselves as beings who by empathy, life, gifts, and love, can cease to be some cause of suffering.

For no longer is there such a need - never was there such a need - to cause such suffering as we, especially I, have caused. For are not we thinking thoughtful beings - possessed of the numinous will to love?

But my words, my words - so unlike such musick - fail: such finite insubstantial things; such a weak conduit for that flowing of wordless feeling that, as such musick, betakes us far out beyond our causal selves to where we are, can be, should be, must be, the non-interfering beauty of a moment; a sublime life seeking only to so gently express that so gentle love that so much faith has sometimes so vainly so tried to capture, express, and manifest; as when that boyish man as monk past Compline knelt in gentleness to feel to become such peace, such a human happiness, as so many others have felt centuries past and present, one moment flowing so numinously to another.

No need, no Time - before this one weakful emanation ends, in ending - to berate, condemn, such love, need and faith as may betake so many in just three days to celebrate such birth as touched, touches, them, and others still. So much good, gentleness, there, and from; and so much suffering, caused, while the centuries past, leeching, meshed one suffering to another.

Does the numinous, presencing, there, now outweigh such suffering, caused - as I, my past, might must outweigh what wordful presents Fate begifts me, now?

I do not know: only see the emanations, nexing, melding: a bush of berries to keep life alive through Winter. Our choice, our need - here, now; as the Thrushes there have no choice, now, as mid-Winter came to bleaken with snowy cold that world that is their world.

For it is for us, surely, to treasure such gifts, given - to feel then be the gift, given.

22 December 2010

cc David Myatt 2007-2012

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NASA - Earth and Moon as seen from the departing Voyager interplanetary spacecraft

Botticelli - Madonna del Magnificat

Pathei-Mathos: Genesis of My Unknowing

There are no excuses for my extremist past, for the suffering I caused to loved ones, to family, to friends, to those many more, those far more, 'unknown others' who were or who became the 'enemies' posited by some extremist ideology. No excuses because the extremism, the intolerance, the hatred, the violence, the inhumanity, the prejudice were mine; my responsibility, born from and expressive of my character; and because the discovery of, the learning of, the need to live, to regain, my humanity arose because of and from others and not because of me.

Thus what exposed my hubris - what for me broke down that certitude-of-knowing which extremism breeds and represents - was not something I did; not something I achieved; not something related to my character, my nature, at all. Instead, it was a gift offered to me by two others - the legacy left by their tragic early dying. That it took not one but two personal tragedies - some thirteen years apart - for me to accept and appreciate the gift of their love, their living, most surely reveals my failure, the hubris that for so long suffused me, and the strength and depth of my so lamentable extremism.

But the stark and uneasy truth is that I have no real, no definitive, answers for anyone, including myself. All I have now is a definite uncertainty of knowing, and certain feelings, some intuitions, some reflexions, a few certainly fallible suggestions arising mostly from reflexions concerning that, my lamentable, past, and thus - perhaps - just a scent, just a scent, of some understanding concerning some-things, perfumed as this understanding is with ineffable sadness.

For what I painfully, slowly, came to understand, via pathei-mathos, was the importance - the human necessity, the virtue - of love, and how love expresses or can express the numinous in the most sublime, the most human, way. Of how extremism (of whatever political or religious or ideological kind) places some abstraction, some ideation, some notion of duty to some ideation, before a personal love, before a knowing and an appreciation of the numinous. Thus does extremism - usurping such humanizing personal love - replace human love with an extreme, an unbalanced, an intemperate, passion for something abstract: some ideation, some ideal, some dogma, some 'victory', some-thing always supra-personal and always destructive of personal happiness, personal dreams, personal hopes; and always manifesting an impersonal harshness: the harshness of hatred, intolerance, certitude-of-knowing, unfairness, violence, prejudice.

Thus, instead of a natural and a human concern with what is local, personal and personally known, extremism breeds a desire to harshly interfere in the lives of others - personally unknown and personally distant - on the basis of such a hubriatic certitude-of-knowing that strife and suffering are inevitable. For there is in all extremists that stark lack of personal humility, that unbalance, that occurs when - as in all extremisms - what is masculine is emphasized and idealized and glorified to the detriment (internal, and external) of what is muliebral, and thus when some ideology or some dogma or some faith or some cause is given precedence over love and when loyalty to some manufactured abstraction is given precedence over loyalty to family, loved ones, friends.

For I have sensed that there are only changeable individual ways and individual fallible answers, born again and again via pathei-mathos and whose subtle scent - the wisdom - words can neither capture nor describe, even though we try and perhaps need to try, and try perhaps (as for me) as one hopeful needful act of a non-religious redemption.

Thus, and for instance, I sense - only sense - that peace (or the beginning thereof) might possibly just be not only the freedom from subsuming personal desires but also the freedom from striving for some supra-personal, abstract, impersonal, goal or goals. That is, a just-being, a flowing and a being-flowed. No subsuming concern with what-might-be or what-was. No lust for ideations; no quest for the violation of difference. Instead - a calmful waiting; just a listening, a seeing, a feeling, of what-is as those, as our, emanations of Life flow and change as they naturally flow and change, in, with, and beyond us: human, animal, of sea, soil, sky, Cosmos, and of Nature... But I am only dreaming, here in pathei-mathos-empathy-land where there is no past-present-future passing each of us with our future-past: only the numen presenced in each one of our so individual timeless human stories.

Yet, in that - this - other world, the scent of having understood remains, which is why I feel I now quite understand why, in the past, certain individuals disliked - even hated - me, given my decades of extremism: my advocacy of racism, fascism, holocaust denial, and National-Socialism, followed (after my conversion to Islam) by my support of bin Laden, the Taliban, and advocacy of 'suicide attacks'.

I also understand why - given my subversive agenda and my amoral willingness to use any tactic, from Occult honeytraps to terrorism, to undermine the society of the time as prelude to revolution - certain people have sought to discredit me by distributing and publishing certain allegations.

Furthermore, given my somewhat Promethean peregrinations - which included being a Catholic monk, a vagabond, a fanatical violent neo-nazi, a theoretician of terror, running a gang of thieves, studying Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism; being a nurse, a farm worker, and supporter of Jihad - I expect many or most of those interested in or curious about my 'numinous way' and my recent mystical writings to be naturally suspicious of or doubtful about my reformation and my rejection of extremism.

Thus I harbour no resentment against individuals, or organizations, or groups, who over the past forty or so years have

publicly and/or privately made negative or derogatory comments about me or published items making claims about me. Indeed, I now find myself in the rather curious situation of not only agreeing with some of my former political opponents on many matters, but also (perhaps) of understanding (and empathizing with) their motivation; a situation which led and which leads me to appreciate even more just how lamentable my extremism was and just how arrogant, selfish, wrong, and reprehensible, I as a person was, and how in many ways many of those former opponents were and are (*ex concessio*) better people than I ever was or am.

Which is one reason why I have written what I have recently written about extremism and my extremist past: so that perchance someone or some many may understand extremism, and its causes, better and thus be able to avoid the mistakes I made, avoid causing the suffering I caused; or be able to in some way more effectively counter or prevent such extremism in the future. And one reason - only one - why I henceforward must live in reclusion and *in silencio*.

David Myatt
May 2012 ce

In Loving Memory of Frances, died 29th May 2006
In Loving Memory of Sue, died 4th April 1993

Article source:
[Myngath: Some Recollections of a Wyrdful and Extremist Life](#)
(pdf)

A Premature Grieving

A recent occurrence, although expected for some years, saddened me expressing as it seemed to do something about our human physis; about how for so many people our physis does not seem to have evolved that much, if at all, despite our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos.

The occurrence was the publication of a report – by a well-financed, now Establishment, advocacy group – in two parts of which report I was repeatedly mentioned, with the author of those parts making various allegations about me for which he provided no evidence; who misattributed certain quotations to me; who made fundamental and multiple factual errors; who committed various logical fallacies; who was generally biased and dishonourable and who thus rather than promoting hope and fairness promoted old-world hostility toward and a stereotyping of particular individuals.

My resigned sadness was because for that author it was as if propaganda on behalf of some cause came before, was more important than, truth and empathy; as if there was for that author no personal belief in redemption, in the possibility of individuals changing for the better, except insofar – perchance – as such change was toward the cause he believed in; and thus as if the author was selective, judgemental, about those given the benefit of the doubt using the ideology of some cause, or their own prejudice, rather than humanity, as the criteria of judgement.

As I wrote in 2012:

"could my career as an extremist have been brought to an earlier end had one or some of my opponents taken the trouble to get to know me personally and rationally revealed to me the error of my suffering-causing, unethical, extremist ways? Perhaps; perhaps not – I admit I do not know. I do know, however, how my personal interaction with, and the ethical behaviour of, the Police I interacted with from the time of my arrest by officers from SO12 in 1998, permanently changed (for the better) my attitude toward the Police."
[1]

Instead of an empathic, a human, an honourable approach the author preferred propaganda, repeating the stereotyping he used almost two decades ago. Thus my extensive writings in the past eight years about rejecting all forms of extremism, my extensive and intensely personal writings regarding my struggle to reform myself as a result of pathei-mathos, were ignored. [2]

"Thus am I humbled, once more, by such knowing feeling of the burden made from my so heavy past; so many errors, mistakes. So many to humble me here, now, by such profusion as becomes prehension of centuries past and passing, bringing as such a passing does such gifts of they now long beyond life's ending who crafted from faith, feeling, experience, living, love, those so rich presents replete with meaning; presenting thus to us if only for a moment – fleeting as Thrush there feeding – that knowing of ourselves as beings who by empathy, life, gifts, and love, can cease to be some cause of suffering.

For no longer is there such a need – never was there such a need – to cause such suffering as we, especially I, have caused. For are not we thinking thoughtful beings – possessed of the numinous will to love?

But my words, my words – so unlike such musick [Dunstable: Preco prehemincie] – fail: such finite insubstantial things; such a weak conduit for that flowing of wordless feeling that, as such musick, betakes us far out beyond our causal selves to where we are, can be, should be, must be, the non-interfering beauty of a moment; a sublime life seeking only to so gently express that so gentle love that so much faith has sometimes so vainly so tried to capture, express, and manifest; as when that boyish man as monk past Compline knelt in gentleness to feel to become such peace, such a human happiness, as so many others have felt centuries past and present, one moment flowing so numinously to another." [3]

Yet, as I wrote some years ago,

"I harbour no resentment against individuals, or organizations, or groups, who over the past forty or so years have publicly and/or privately made negative or derogatory comments about me or published items making claims about me.

Indeed, I now find myself in the rather curious situation of not only agreeing with some of my former political opponents on many matters, but also (perhaps) of understanding (and empathizing with) their motivation; a situation which led and which leads me to appreciate even more just how lamentable my extremism was and just how arrogant, selfish, wrong, and reprehensible, I as a person was, and how in many ways many of those former opponents were and are (ex concessio) better people than I ever was or am.

Which is one reason why I have written what I have recently written about extremism and my extremist past: so that perchance someone or some many may understand extremism, and its causes, better and thus be able to avoid the mistakes I made, avoid causing the suffering I caused; or be able to in some way more effectively counter or prevent such extremism in the future. And one reason – only one – why I henceforward must live in reclusion and *in silencio*." [4]

That I have now broken such self-imposed silence is the result of my resigned sadness regarding how far we mortals still have to travel to be able to live, en masse, empathic and compassionate lives, and of how so many individuals still – from whatever personal motive or because of some cause or ideology – promote old-world hostility toward and a stereotyping of particular individuals.

Perhaps the goddess Δίκη will touch some of those so many hostile individuals, for as Aeschylus wrote,

Δίκη δὲ τοῖς μὲν παθοῦσιν μαθεῖν ἐπιρρέπει:
τὸ μέλλον δ' , ἐπεὶ γένοιτ' , ἂν κλύοις: πρὸ χαιρέτω:
ἴσον δὲ τῷ προστένειν.

"Δίκη favours someone learning from adversity:
But I shall hear of what will be, after it comes into being:
Before then, I leave it,
Otherwise, it is the same as a premature grieving." [5]

Which is yet one more reason why I am still learning and still have far to travel, for that recent occurrence brought a premature grieving.

David Myatt
Ash Wednesday 2019

[1] [A Matter of Honour](#).

[2] These writings include (i) [Just My Fallible Views, Again](#), (ii) [Understanding and Rejecting Extremism](#) (pdf), (iii) [Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos](#) (pdf), and the letters and essays included in (iv) [Such Respectful Wordful Offerings](#) (pdf).

[3] [Bright Berries, One Winter](#), written 22 December 2010.

[4] [Pathei-Mathos - Genesis of My Unknowing](#), written in 2012.

[5] Agamemnon, 250-253.

The Joy Of Words

It was while living in the Far East, and around the cusp of fourteen, that I discovered the joy of learning and the joy of words. My formal education before then was patchy, at best. A private school, with a rather lovely quadrangle, in colonial Africa; a rather brief sojourn in a Catholic boarding school in England, where I received six strokes of the cane several times, once for leaving the dorm and talking after 'lights out'. Another brief spell at some other school; and even a spell of 'private tutoring' or months when I had, joy of joys, no school or lessons at home to attend. A patchy education not because of my parents, but rather because of my irascible and rebellious nature as a young boy. For I seemed to be trouble; a scallywag.

For example, I remember one incident at some school I attended for a while around the age of eleven: a teacher, annoyed with me at the end of a lesson after I had vaulted over a desk in my haste to get outside, shouting "Myatt, you think the sun rises and sets in you!" A haste, because I really did dislike being cooped up inside, forced to sit at some desk and expected to pay attention to what was being said or what was written on some blackboard. Which is probably why, around the age of ten, I deliberately, petulantly, failed a written examination and why at that same school I once turned up for lessons wearing a brown leather jacket and with a sheath knife attached to my belt, which naturally led to me being sent to the headmaster and having to wait around, in some sort of detention, until my father arrived to escort me home.

I was just so bored, so uninterested in what was being said or taught. So bored, uninterested, so irascible, I assuredly (and unintentionally and for many years) caused problems for my parents, although it is possible that one cause of my dislike of formal learning – and school – was due to a combination of myopia and astigmatism, which remained undiagnosed until the age of thirteen, and which diagnosis resulted in me having to wear spectacles for the first time.

My discovery of the joy of learning and the joy of words – around the cusp of fourteen – was, as recounted in my apologia *Myngath*, almost certainly due to the influence of the English teacher at what was then for me another colonial, and new, school. Not that I had some sort of schoolboy crush on the blonde and young Miss D. Rather, it was a combination of her enthusiasm for and indeed love of her subject, her gentle style of teaching, and the trouble she took to explain things if we – or, as often if I – did not understand or appreciate something. For she treated us as adults, not as children, and was just such a contrast, or seemed to me at the time to be such a contrast, to the other teachers there and encountered previously. For example, at that same school, our mathematics teacher would often shout at us if we made some error and had even been known to throw the blackboard rubber in the direction of someone if he was particularly annoyed for some reason.

My English lessons became for me a place of revelation, a pleasure; something anticipated with joy; and I well remember Miss D reading to us a story from *The Golden Apples of The Sun* by Ray Bradbury, for she – those words – conjured up for me another time and place and a strangeness that I found enticing and enchanting; as if I was there in that place listening to the sound of that foghorn... Once, we were given the task of reciting aloud before the class a poem and I choose and memorized *Kubla Khan* by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, for I had a short time previously and at her suggestion read it and was enthralled; the words, the rhythm, transporting me to another and very different world. In brief, and because of her, I had discovered and begun to use the gift that is our human imagination.

Books thus became for me not things I was told by some teacher to read (and which thus became ignored) but a means of discovering new worlds and a new sense of Time. Previously I had no real awareness of the past and no feeling or concern for the future, having lived in and for the moment and to be outside; swimming, running, climbing trees, walking, travelling to new places and observing new sights and hearing the sounds of life, feeling the warmth of the heat of the Sun and the sensation of tropical rain beating down; learning a Martial Art...

Now, there was an awareness of things, people, events, places, beyond that immediate world of mine, so that I became eager to learn to such an extent that many other subjects interested me, including mathematics, geography, history, astronomy, even the Latin and the Ancient Greek that some teacher at some school had previously tried to teach me. So much eagerness to learn that, within a few months, with my whole attitude to school and to books having changed, I came top in several subjects – and second in some others – at end of term exams, much to the delight of my parents and much to the surprise of my well-adjusted and studious sisters.

I loved to read, and to not only find new words and their meanings but also to use those words, not always correctly and often pretentiously, in some English essay or other, as I recall in one essay beginning a sentence with 'And' and being gently informed by Miss D that such usage was not correct, leading to an interesting discussion, after class and making me late for my next one, about grammar and about who decides what rules are correct and why. Several similar discussions followed over the next few weeks, several about spelling, after I had discovered, and used, not only the older form *connexion* instead of the 'correct' *connection* but also some older spellings found in the works of Chaucer and Shakespeare. After a while, when I added my exercise book to the pile she had to mark after class, Miss D ceased to correct my 'misspellings' perhaps intuitively understanding my schoolboyish and rather arrogant desire to be different, to still need to rebel and in however small a way.

A few years later, and then living in Blighty, one small goal, conceived during that Far Eastern year, was achieved. For I, by then quite the bookish young man, had acquired the complete, multi-volume, Oxford English Dictionary, and loved, almost every evening, to dip into it for an hour or so, discovering new words, their etymology, and a quotation or two to betake me, in the days following, to some library or some bookshop to find and to read the work or works in question. I enjoyed the richness, the diversity, the flexibility, of the English language; its assimilation of so many words from other languages, and that ambiguity of sound which sometimes led to or could lead to such variations in spelling as sometimes seemed to annoy those who desired to reform that language and which reform would see its versatility,

quirkiness, and heritage, lost in order to fit some boring manufactured schemata.

Interstition

All too soon, however, and – in hindsight – alas, this love made way for and then was for many decades rejected in favour of another. For I had discovered extremism, and became, most regretfully, an extremist. Someone who, because of his fanaticism and his political involvements, became an altogether different person; a pseudo-revolutionary street-agitator and violent neo-nazi thug; someone who associated with criminals and who indeed himself became a criminal and who thus developed a 'street-wise' persona rather at odds with his former 'prep-school days' and his somewhat 'well-educated' accent.

Books, and study, were replaced by private and public rhetoric, and by rallies, meetings, and brawls; and, in letters to 'comrades' and to friends who were sympathizers or to those who were during those times useful, my misspellings and my grammar became increasingly exaggerated, almost an affectation of someone who, having accepted and indeed enjoyed the rôle that he was expected to play in order to accomplish some shared and extremist goal, could sometimes be mischievous in a schoolboyish, idiosyncratic, kind of way. For instance, one of my favourite misspellings, in such communications with such people, as sometimes in the polemical tracts I wrote and sent to others, was 'appearence', in imitation of more Chaucerian times; another, 'existance', in similar imitation of those now long gone days when spelling was often individual or regional and before the move toward standardization.

An interstition of some three decades, marked in ending by the move toward Islam and thus by the cessation of such written communication with those aforementioned types of people. And it was my attempts to learn Arabic which irretrievably returned both my boyish love of words and my interest in questions of interpretation; a love and an interest that had – but only briefly – touched me twice during those extremist decades interspersed as those decades were with many itinerant years.

The first such period was while a Catholic monk, with the reading of LXX and Ἡ Καινὴ Διαθήκη. The second, over a decade later, when a settled domestic life of a shared love of alas only some four years duration renewed my interest in and enthusiasm for the classical literature of ancient Greece, leading me to translate a few such works in the confines of a study lined from ceiling to floor with bookcases replete with books, including of course another copy of the complete OED.

Now, through the past two bookish years and by recent translations and exegesis and philosophical musings, I seem to have found, and at last, a certain equilibrium; even that particular type of studious happiness I knew for a while as a boy in the Far East when I would sit on that sandy beach by the South China Sea – not far from my home – reading the latest book bought from a bookseller in Singapore city or loaned by she, my English teacher, whom I still remember so very well and who, quite without me knowing it then, taught me so much.

For it is if I am that boy again; or at least the type of person content with so little who, inwardly young in a world all their own, has no cause, no ideology, and who harms no one and nothing. The quiet person who, having become still, is as

A falling leaf turned Autumn brown
Following the wind of the moment:
Neither clinging to, nor striving against,
The force of existence ever a dream in the end

and who, if he is to be remembered at all, would hope it to be for his translations of Aeschylus, Sophocles, tractates from the Corpus Hermeticum, and/or for his philosophy of pathei-mathos.

David Myatt
March 2013

This is a slightly revised version of part of a letter written in November 2012 to a personal correspondent who enquired about my early education.

A Matter of Honour

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- ° Preface
- ° Journalists, Allegations, and Propaganda
- ° The Logical Fallacy of Incomplete Evidence - A Case Study
- ° Conclusion
- ° Appendix: An Apposite Quotation

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Preface

Given the persistence of unsubstantiated rumours and allegations regarding involvement with Occultism, I deemed it necessary to publicly comment, in some detail, about the matter and thus provide 'my side of the story', and which public comment is based in part on some remarks included in early draft versions (≤ 9) of my autobiography *Myngath*.

However, as I note here in the conclusion, even though the matter is one of honour I do not expect the plethora of rumours and allegations to suddenly cease as a result of such comments by me, although I perhaps naively nurture a vague hope that what I write here may cause a few individuals to reconsider the veracity of such rumours and allegations.

David Myatt
March 5th, 2012
(Revised December 2012)

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Journalists, Allegations, and Propaganda

For many years - in fact up to and including the present - rumours and allegations concerning my involvement with practical occultism and satanism have been in circulation, and regularly referred to and repeated by journalists, and others, in newspapers, magazines, articles and, latterly, on that new medium - greatly susceptible to the spreading of dishonourable allegations and rumours - that has been termed the Internet. One of these allegations is that I am a certain person known as Anton Long.

In the past thirty-seven years only four people, on hearing or learning about such rumours and allegations, have had the decency to ask me, in person, "for my side of the story". The first was Colin Jordan, the second was John Tyndall, the third was Steve Sargent, and the fourth was a Muslim whom I came to

greatly admire and to whom I gave a personal pledge of loyalty.

I have, when asked in person, or via impersonal means of communication such as letters, always denied such allegations of such involvement, as I have, on numerous occasions, challenged anyone to provide evidence to support such accusations. No such evidence has ever been forthcoming ^[1].

For instance, I was for several days, in early 2000, covertly filmed, photographed, and followed by an investigative team working for the BBC as part of their research for a Panorama programme about David Copeland and the London nail-bombings ^[2]. Prior to that surveillance, and for an ever longer period, I was also the subject of covert surveillance by a private investigator hired to undertake preliminary research for that BBC investigation. What did all this covert surveillance and investigation reveal? A satanist? No. Someone living an ordinary, rather boring, life with his wife and family in a small village near Malvern who went to work everyday on a bicycle to a nearby farm.



Covert surveillance photograph of me on my way back from work
Taken by the BBC, 2000

In addition, since at least 1997 I have no doubt been under regular covert surveillance by Special Branch and MI5 – and especially so since 9/11 given some statements I made while a Muslim – with all my communications (internet, telephonic) monitored via GCHQ. Indeed, following my conversion to Islam and during the time I seemed to be, for the security services and the Police, 'a significant person of interest', I recall many meetings and friendly conversations with one of the Special Branch officers on attachment to the city near where I was then living.

Given such surveillance and interest, no doubt there are records somewhere of my activities as a neo-nazi extremist; of my subsequent life as a radical Muslim supporting Jihad, and finally of my life as a reclusive philosopher, a friend of σοφόν who seeks, through λόγος, to uncover – to understand – Being and

beings, and who thus suggests or proposes an ontology of Being. What there will not be, will be any records of 'Myatt as Satanist'.

As I mentioned in my article *Polemos Our Genesis* in respect of such surveillance:

"I have [since at least 1997] worked on the assumption that my communications are monitored, so I have restricted my internet and telephonic communications to friends, family, and to people I personally know or who are personally known to someone I trust. This means two things. That all I communicate is personal, open, transparent, and honest; and that if someone not belonging to this small circle of contacts claims to have had some communication from me - either sent with my name or sent using some pseudonym - then it is bogus."

In respect of rumours and allegations, I have, on a few occasions, challenged some individuals to a duel with deadly weapons, according to the etiquette of duelling. Not one of the individuals so challenged to a duel had the honour to accept, or issue a public apology in lieu of fighting such a duel.

As I wrote some thirteen or more years ago:

" I have never bothered to have recourse to civil law, and established Courts, to sue those making libellous allegations about me quite simply because the only law I believe in and strive to uphold is the law of personal honour. Given that I have challenged two journalists, according to the law of personal honour, to a duel with deadly weapons for making such malicious allegations, and given that they did not have the honour to accept this challenge or issue an apology in lieu of fighting a duel, I consider my honour vindicated."

Such challenges, the lack of evidence to support the allegations and rumours, and the refusal of those so challenged to a duel of honour to either fight that duel of honour or issue an apology, reveals the truth of this particular matter - at least to those possessed of *arête*.

However, I quite understand why many people - journalists included - did in the past (and possibly still do) impersonally dislike or hate me, given my past and unethical support for, and my past propagation of neo-nazism, and my previous lamentable public incitement of hatred, intolerance, and violence. I was only reaping what I had sown. Thus I believe I also understand the motivation of those journalists and those authors who used rumours and allegations of involvement with Satanism to discredit me, for they were most probably only doing what they thought was necessary in the struggle against racism, extremism, and bigotry. But does that struggle - for what is ethical - justify their (in my view) unethical use of rumours and unproven allegations?

My own rather old-fashioned view is and was that a personal knowing of someone, extending over a period of many months if not a year or more, is the only honourable way to form a reasoned opinion about someone. For honour means the cultivation of traditional gentlemanly and ladylike virtues and one of which virtues is that we strive to treat other human beings in a fair way; ignoring what others have said or written about them; ignoring their past (real or alleged); and giving them the benefit of the doubt unless and until direct personal experience, direct knowledge of them, reveals them to be dishonourable.

Instead of penning material based on such a personal knowing, it occurs to me that some journalists who wrote and published stories about me might knowingly or unknowingly have or had a somewhat prejudiced view, having put some political or personal agenda before veracity, and thence use their position and/or their influence (use the power of the Media) to propagate their opinion, their version of events, and belittle or otherwise denigrate persons they disliked or did not approve of because they viewed that person not in an empathic, non-judgemental way - as an individual human being whom they had taken the trouble to get to know - but in an impersonal abstract way according to some label or category they had assigned to that individual because of the alleged political or religious views of that individual. Thus, in my own case, they prejudged me - categorized me - as a 'fascist' or a 'nazi' or a 'satanist' - and since they disliked or hated fascists and nazis and considered satanists were immoral and 'evil', they adjudged me a reprehensible person whom they did not like.

Furthermore, in place of a personal knowing - and/or a scholarly research into the life and times of the person they intend to write about and lasting many months if not a year or more - they rely on certain journalistic practices in order to gather information. Practices such as: (1) bribing or persuading corrupt Police officers and government officials and others in order to obtain confidential information about individuals; (2) hacking/intercepting people's private telephonic/internet communications; (3) hiring private investigators to follow individuals and gather information about them; (4) hypocritically attempting to excuse such unethical conduct by making the spurious claim that what they write or say is 'in the public interest' when not only is this so-called 'public interest' an unethical abstraction but also when they as individuals would be offended if someone used such hack journalistic practices against them and their own family. Thus, and for example, a well-known anti-fascist organization could unethically obtain confidential information about its opponents by getting someone sympathetic to their cause in the civil service to obtain national insurance numbers, dates of birth, places of residence, and employment history; as they could employ the services of an unethical private investigator to obtain that and other information via corrupt officials and by covert surveillance.

The result of such journalistic practices, of such a lack of personal knowing, of

such a lack of scholarly research, and of such prejudgement of a person, is a hasty piece of work that - to paraphrase what a friend of mine once wrote - possibly says more about the journalist, more about our society, and more about the modern Media, than it does about the person who is the subject of such a piece of work.

In addition, and importantly, are those who in the past have prejudged me - who have written about me as a violent extremist - accepting of individual change, of the virtues of reformation and pardonance? Are they aware of my voluminous recent writings regarding my philosophy of pathei-mathos and those regarding my extremist past and my rejection of extremism? ^[3] Are they open to the possibility of my change and reformation? Or will they continue with 'the party line' and thus continue to insist that I am some sinister person whose recent mystical writings are just some sort of diabolical ploy?

More interestingly (perhaps) could my career as an extremist have been brought to an earlier end had one or some of my opponents taken the trouble to get to know me personally and rationally revealed to me the error of my suffering-causing, unethical, extremist ways? Perhaps; perhaps not - I admit I do not know. I do know, however, how my personal interaction with, and the ethical behaviour of, the Police I interacted with from the time of my arrest by officers from SO12 in 1998, permanently changed (for the better) my attitude toward the Police.

The Logical Fallacy of Incomplete Evidence - A Case Study

In a Master of Arts thesis entitled *Political Esotericism & the convergence of Radical Islam, Satanism and National Socialism in the Order of the Nine Angles* a post-graduate student named Senholt made certain claims, and drew certain conclusions, in respect of myself and alleged involvement with the Occult group the 'order of nine angles'. One of his claims is that "the role of David Myatt is paramount to the whole creation and existence of the ONA."

Given that this thesis ^[4] is often cited as having 'proved' my involvement, I believe a brief overview of the claims, and proofs offered, seems to be in order, especially as - to my knowledge - it has not so far been subjected to a critical analysis.

A reading of the thesis reveals two interesting things. First, the use of and reliance upon secondary and tertiary sources, many of which are anonymous and many of which are derived from 'the world wide web', that most unreliable source of information. For example, he relies on the book *Black Sun* by Goodrick-Clarke even after admitting it contains errors and that the author offers no proof for the assumptions made in respect of me and the ONA ^[5].

Second, that Senholt, undoubtedly inadvertently, commits the logical fallacy of incomplete evidence ^[6]. That is, the multitude of facts and circumstances which

do not support his contention about me and the ONA are omitted.

Thus, and in my view, the Senholt thesis, while interesting, does not meet the requirement, the criteria, of scholarship.

This criteria is essentially two-fold: (i) of detailed, meticulous, unbiased research on and concerning a specific topic or topics or subject undertaken over a period of some considerable time, usually a year or more in duration, and of necessity involving primary source material; and (ii) a rational assessment of the knowledge acquired by such research, with such conclusions about the topic, topics, or subject therefore being not only the logical result of the cumulative scholarly learning so acquired but also possessing a certain gravitas, just like genuine scholars.

His lack of primary research is evident in several factual errors. A few examples:

- (1) He repeats Searchlight's claim that their 'expose' of me in the April 1998 issue of their magazine caused internal strife in the National Socialist groups I was then involved with, whereas it had no effect at all, other than to make people laugh, since few if anyone of the extremists in such groups ever took seriously anything stated in *Searchlight*. Instead, as their name for it indicated - *Searchlies* - they regarded it as "just more Jewish propaganda" and indeed as something of a badge of honour to be mentioned in it, with the general feeling being that 'if you get mentioned in *Searchlies* you must be doing something right!'
- (2) He asserts that in 1998 the Police raided my home and arrested me. Which is correct. He then asserts that I was arrested again two years later, after the London nailbomb attacks, together with some other Combat 18 members. Which is incorrect. The facts being that I was not arrested in 2000, and that the 1998 raids were the ones that also involved some C18 and NSM members.
- (3) He writes that: "His conversion did not escape the mainstream media, and most English newspapers and media-outlets wrote about the incident, including the BBC." In fact, as a search of media archives would have revealed, my conversion in 1998 was never mentioned until two years after the fact, and most of the media publicity in 2000 linking me with Copeland made no mention of it. But perhaps Senholt just meant to write something along the lines of 'the fact that Myatt was, at the time of Copeland's trial, a Muslim did not escape some of the mainstream media...'

Moving on to his claims that there are several things which link me with the ONA. All of these alleged links can be shown not only to be unsupported by the facts but also that they do not even amount, as Senholt states, to circumstantial evidence in support of the claim made that I am Anton Long. The claims are:

(1) The use of alternative dating systems, such as yf, by both me and the ONA.

The fact that group A and group B use the same or a similar alternative dating system is not proof that B is a subset of A, only of borrowing, imitation, adaptation, and possibly of plagiarism.

(2) Some occult texts with my name on them.

See the first part of 'omitted facts and circumstances', below - regarding using the occult as a neo-nazi honeytrap.

(3) That ONA insight roles included supporting neo-nazi groups and terrorism (neo-nazi and Islamic), things which I was openly involved with.

As with alternative dating systems and some ideas (such as acausality - see item (5) below) there is only a possible borrowing, imitation, adaptation, plagiarism.

Also, what is not mentioned are the other ONA insight roles which do not fit in with my life. Such as a police officer, assassin, and joining an anarchist group.

(4) That there is linguistic evidence linking my writings and those of 'Anton Long'.

No evidence from forensic linguistics is presented, so that this claim is just claim about two people using similar concepts and ideas and sometimes the same words.

That is, there is no direct evidence of a link, so that once again this is probably just others borrowing, imitating and adapting already existing ideas and concepts, something that, like plagiarism, happens all the time.

(5) That my departure from Islam (in 2009) coincided with 'Anton Long' writing a plethora of new ONA items.

Since Senholt does not give dates, and does not list the items, before and after this date, this is a rather vague assumption which also ignores two important facts. First, the vast quantity of literature I produced from 2006 onwards (following the suicide of my fiancée) in the form of essays about my Numinous Way/philosophy of patheismathos, letters, poetry, and so on. Second, Senholt does not discuss the fact that there were and are several self-confessed satanists (such as the pseudonymous Jason King) who are of opinion that most if not all of the newer, recent, items attributed to Anton Long were written

by someone quite different from the 'original Anton Long' associated with the original ONA (or ONA 1.0 as King described it).

(6) That some of my ideas and concepts - such as acausality and Aeons and Homo Galactica - are and have been used by the ONA.

These concepts date to the early to middle 1970's, evident in such non-occult writings as *Emanations of Urania*, and, later on, in my *Vindex - Destiny of the West*.

As an early advocate of copyleft, I have never been bothered by plagiarism or by others using and adapting my ideas and my 'inventions', such as The Star Game. Thus there is use and adaptation by others, and possibly plagiarism, but no proof of a direct link.

In most of the above cases there is also the established and the admitted fact up until 1998 I knew, as friends, some of the people involved with various occult groups, although - as mentioned to Professor Kaplan ^[7] and others - I did not share their views with us therefore agreeing to disagree on many things. Thus some allowed borrowing of ideas, concepts, and inventions, by such friends is hardly surprising.

Finally, the omitted facts and circumstances that do not support Senholt's claims and conclusions include:

(1) My publicly stated admission, made in the 1990's in correspondence with Professor Kaplan and others - and publicly repeated by me many times in the past ten and more years - that my occult involvement, such as it was in the 1970's and later, was for the singular purpose of subversion and infiltration in the cause of National-Socialism, with part of this being to spread racist ideas and denial of the holocaust. Thus one such occult group I associated with was a honeytrap, and the whole intent was political, revolutionary, not occult and not to with 'satanism'. It was a matter of using, or trying to use, such occult groups for a specific neo-nazi purpose without any interest in or personal involvement with the occult.

As I wrote in part two (1973-1975) of *Ethos of Extremism*:

" In respect of covert action, I came to the conclusion, following some discussions with some C88 members, that two different types of covert groups, with different strategy and tactics, might be very useful in our struggle and thus aid us directly or aid whatever right-wing political party might serve as a cover for introducing NS policies or which could be used to advance our cause. These covert groups would not be paramilitary and thus would not resort to using armed force since that option was already covered, so far as I was then concerned, by C88.

The first type of covert group would essentially be a honeytrap, to attract

non-political people who might be or who had the potential to be useful to the cause even if, or especially if, they had to be 'blackmailed' or persuaded into doing so at some future time. The second type of covert group would be devoted to establishing a small cadre of NS fanatics, of 'sleepers', to - when the time was right - be disruptive or generally subversive.

Nothing came of this second idea, and the few people I recruited during 1974 for the second group, migrated to help the first group, established the previous year. However, from the outset this first group was beset with problems for - in retrospect - two quite simple reasons, both down to me. First, my lack of leadership skills, and, second, the outer nature chosen for the group which was of a secret Occult group with the 'offer', the temptation, of sexual favours from female members in a ritualized Occult setting, with some of these female members being 'on the game' and associated with someone who was associated with my small gang of thieves [...]

But what happened was that, over time and under the guidance of its mentor, the Occult and especially the hedonistic aspects came to dominate over the political and subversive intent, with the *raisons d'etat* of blackmail and persuasion, of recruiting useful, respectable, people thus lost. Hence, while I still considered, then and for quite some time afterwards, that the basic idea of such a subversive group, such a honeytrap, was sound, I gradually lost interest in this particular immoral honeytrap project until another spell in prison for an assortment of offences took me away from Leeds and my life as a violent neo-nazi activist [...]

I had occasion, during the 1980's, to renew my association not only with some old C88 comrades but also with the mentor of that Occult honeytrap when, after of lapse of many years, I became involved again in neo-nazi politics and revived my project of using clandestine recruitment for 'the cause'. By this time, that Occult group had developed some useful contacts, especially in the academic world, so some friendly co-operation between us was agreed; a co-operation which continued, sporadically, until just before my conversion to Islam in 1998.

This clandestine recruitment of mine was for a small National-Socialist cadre which went by a variety of names, beginning with 'G7' (soon abandoned), then *The White Wolves* (c. 1993), and finally the *Aryan Resistance Movement* aka Aryan Liberation Army [qv. Part Five for details].

However, while some of these Occult contacts were, given their professions, occasionally useful 'to the cause' and to 'our people', by 1997 I had come to the conclusion that the problems such association with Occultism and occultists caused far outweighed the subversive advantages; a conclusion which led me to re-write and re-issue a much earlier article of mine entitled *Occultism and National-Socialism*, and which revised article was subsequently published in the compilation *Cosmic Reich* by Renaissance Press of New Zealand. As I wrote in that article - "National-Socialism and Occultism are fundamentally, and irretrievably, incompatible and opposed to each other."

By the Summer of 1998 I had abandoned not only such co-operation and contacts with such Occult groups but also such clandestine recruitment on behalf of National-Socialism, concentrating instead on my Reichsfolk group and my 'revised' non-racist version of National-Socialism which I called 'ethical National-Socialism'. Later still, following my conversion to Islam, I was to reject even this version of National-Socialism."

This explains many things, including early occult articles with my name - not the name 'Anton Long' - in zines such as *The Lamp of Thoth*, and the early version of *Copula cum Daemone* (which in fact was about the birth of Adolf Hitler). One question Senholt does not ask is why both my name and the name Anton Long occur on the same early texts, with the simple answer being that there were two different people, one of whom (me) ceased all involvement with such occult honeytraps in 1998.

(2) My time as a Christian monk and my writings praising Catholicism in particular and Christianity in general.

This does not fit in with the claim of me being a life-long 'devotee of extreme ideologies' or being a satanist, so it is ignored. No attempt was made to use primary sources - to talk to people who knew me as monk and who could recount my life then, and my autobiography *Myngath* where I recount my time as a monk.

No mention is made of my many articles in which I praise Catholicism or refer to it in a positive way. For example, my mention of the numinosity of the Latin Tridentine Mass [qv. *Concerning The Nature of Religion and The Nature of The Numinous Way*] and of the sacrament of confession. As I wrote in *Soli Deo Gloria*:

"It is my personal opinion that traditional Catholicism, with its Tridentine Mass and its particular conservative traditions, was a somewhat better, more harmonious, expression of the numinous (a necessary and relevant expression of the numinous), than both Protestantism and the reforms introduced by the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, and which reforms served only to undermine the numinous, to untwist the threads that held together its 'hidden soul of harmony'."

There is also the small matter of me being married in Church in accordance with the Christian ceremony of marriage. And the small matter of writings of mine such as *Pathei-Mathos - A Path To Humility*.

(3) My article *Occultism and National-Socialism* - written in the 1980's and republished in the 1990's and again around 2006 - and in which I denounced occultism, is ignored.

(4) My writings about National Socialism and Islam - spanning some three decades - are for the most part ignored, except when they are adduced to show I, as a nazi or as a Muslim, incited violence and possibly terrorism. Are they ignored because they in their quantity and content reveal they were written by someone who was at the time of their writing a dedicated neo-nazi and then a dedicated Muslim, and which dedication to such causes most certainly precludes being some sort of sinister person who was just using those causes for his own satanic ends?

In addition, and importantly, what are also overlooked are:

(a) The very real threat of being imprisoned for some of those writings - something surely only a genuine fanatic, a believer, would be prepared to do.

(b) My decades of political activism on behalf of National-Socialism, my two terms of imprisonment resulting from such activities, and my involvement with the paramilitary group Column 88. Which long-term activities over some thirty years, which imprisonment, and which paramilitary involvement surely indicate an inner - a rather fanatical - dedication to that cause.

(c) My travels, as a Muslim, to certain lands, the talks I gave to and the discussions I had with Muslims ^[8], and my regular attendance at Mosques to pray with other Muslims, which would indicate someone who was, during those years, committed to that Way of Life.

(5) My semi-autobiographical poetry ^[9], my published correspondence, and my ethical philosophy of The Numinous Way/philosophy of pathei-mathos, are completely ignored. Why are these voluminous writings and these ideas of mine ignored? Because they honestly reveal the thoughts and feelings and ideas and experiences and (importantly) the failings of someone so different from a satanist that they have to be ignored.

(6) My years of interior ethical and philosophical struggle to reform, to change, myself - documented in hundreds of letters, essays, poems, especially after the suicide of my fiancée in 2006 - are completely ignored. Why? Because they do not fit in with the idea, with the theory, of me being 'a deceitful, manipulative, sinister trickster', the archetypal satanist.^[10]

It seems, therefore, that *some* of the facts of my life have been interpreted in order to fit a theory regarding some posited and ideal ONA member, with this interpreted ONA life - with inconvenient facts and circumstances conveniently omitted or ignored - then being held up as proof that I am Anton Long, since this truncated, re-interpreted, life of mine allegedly seems to fit in with the person Anton Long is alleged to be or is said to be according to his satanist writings or according to what some anonymous person has written on the World Wide Web.

In essence, there are no proofs presented in the thesis, with many aspects of my life omitted and with no mention, let alone analysis, of those voluminous writings of mine which portray a person almost the exact opposite of a satanist.

As one person wrote in respect of the rumour, the allegation, and the claim, that I am the pseudonymous Anton Long,

"We basically have a choice between: (i) believing Myatt is an astonishingly diabolical, duplicitous, creative, polymathical genius who over four decades has been playing 'sinister games' and who has not deviated from his youthful sinister cunning plan, and which diabolical genius makes the likes of Crowley and LaVey (and everyone else associated with modern Satanism and the 'left hand path') seem pathetic and mundane; or (ii) assuming Myatt has spent most of his adult life as a covert servant of the British state; or (iii) accepting that Myatt has lived a quite adventurous (but not an exceptionally amazing) life, has made mistakes, has suffered a personal tragedy, and has learned from and been changed by his experiences and by that tragedy [...]

Which of [these] three scenarios is therefore the most plausible? Which offers the most simple, the most rational, explanation for Myatt's peregrinations? Which require the pomp of conspiracy theory, and which involve superfluous causes, and (sometimes bizarre, sometimes astonishing) ad hoc assumptions and claims?" [11]

Conclusion

In respect of allegations about involvement with satanism and 'being Anton Long' - and in respect of those who manufacture and propagate them - my own experience, my pathei-mathos, manifest in my philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, leads me to two conclusions. My first conclusion is that the research done by some modern authors and even some academics - whose works are published by reputable publishers or quoted by others engaged in academic research - is inadequate and does not meet the taxing criteria of scholarship. Thus these works are unreliable; they have no gravitas, no worth - in terms of learning - for the sagacious.

My second conclusion is that most if not all modern Media that concern themselves with the deeds and lives of individuals - from un-scholarly books and essays, to newspapers, to television news programs and political documentaries, to magazines, to the World Wide Web - are by their very impersonal and mass-media nature unethical. Why? Because they are un-numinous, and encourage and often embody hubris, being as they are the realm of personal opinions, hasty judgement, and misapprehension, and the abode of those for whom 'a story' or some personal/political agenda/prejudice or 'their career' or some unethical un-numinous abstraction (such as 'the public interest') come before honour, empathy, and the reasoned judgement of a personal knowing that has extended over a lengthy period of causal Time and/or been based on an extended period of scholarly research.

A corollary is that those who use such Media, and/or unscholarly books/essays, as sources of allegedly reliable information, as a guide, as *a* or as *the* basis for their judgement about and knowledge of someone or some many, are being

unfair and uncultured because lacking in the following necessary virtues: (1) a reasoned, balanced, and thus ethical, judgement; (2) the empathy of manifold direct personal contacts; and (3) a scholarly research and/or a personal knowing extending over many years. Virtues which are the genesis of a genuine understanding of, and thence an unbiased knowledge of, another human being; and virtues which rapid, impersonal, mass means of modern communication actively discourage and which virtues are seldom, it seems, cultivated and employed by those involved with and who use and who rely on such modern means for information.

Quite simply it is matter of honour. Of personal knowing. As I mentioned above, the traditional gentlemanly and ladylike virtues and their cultivation are no longer the standard which individuals are expected to aspire to and to uphold. Thus I do not expect the plethora of rumours and allegations about me to suddenly cease, although I admit I do and perhaps naively nurture a vague hope that what I have written here may cause a few individuals to reconsider the veracity of such rumours and allegations.

As for who and what I really am, I can only suggest the curious read such writings of mine as the following: (a) *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*; (b) *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*; and (c) *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*.

Notes:

[1] Many people seem to rely on four items in respect of accusations of occult involvement. These items are: (1) an article published in 1998 in the Searchlight magazine entitled *The Most Evil Nazi in Britain*; (2) a 2009 thesis by Senholt entitled *Political Esotericism & the convergence of Radical Islam, Satanism and National Socialism in the Order of the Nine Angles*; (3) a chapter in Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke's book *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism and the Politics of Identity* (published in 2001); and (4) a 1974 interview I allegedly gave to a reporter.

(a) In respect of the Senholt, see the section in this article subtitled *The Logical Fallacy of Incomplete Evidence - A Case Study*.

(b) In respect of Goodrick-Clarke, his identification of me, in his book, as 'Anton Long' is solely based on his claim that I was the author of a manuscript entitled *Diablerie, Revelations of a Satanist* the only known copy of which is in the British Library. No evidence, no sources, are provided for this claim - this

assumption. Neither are any evidences or sources given for his other claims about me, such as that "the ONA was founded by David Myatt" or that I was "a long time devotee of satanism."

In addition, Goodrick-Clarke never bothered to contact me regarding these claims of his, and the first thing I knew about them was when the book was published. Had he contacted me, then, I would have been in a position to supply him with the unpublished autobiographical MS that the plagiarist had purloined and used as the source for that fanciful work of fiction entitled *Diablerie*. An unpublished autobiographical MS that I circulated to a few friends, and a few 'interested parties', in the 1980's when I was engaged in writing *The Logic of History* from which the text *Vindex, The Destiny of the West* (published in 1984) derived. One of 'the interested parties' was the publisher of *Vindex, The Destiny of the West* who subsequently published some other pro-NS works of mine. An interesting overview of *Diablerie* is given in the 2012 e-text *A Sceptics Review of Diablerie*, by R. Parker.

It is interesting and - to me - relevant that among the many errors of Goodrick-Clarke are the following:

- i) I was not born in 1952, as he claimed.
- ii) I first met Colin Jordan in 1968, not 1969 as he claimed.
- iii) My two terms of imprisonment for political offences were not both for six months, as he claimed.
- iv) Morrison was never 'my follower' as Goodrick-Clarke claimed (Eddy was never anyone's follower).
- v) Morrison's first name is Eddy, not Eddie as Goodrick-Clarke claimed.
- vi) The Occult lady that 'Anton Long' met in the early 1970's did not 'lead the ONA' as Goodrick-Clark claimed, but rather the Camlad association, with the ONA being founded and then led by Anton Long himself following his meeting with that lady.
- vii) He mentions a certain Wulstram Tedder whom he claims was a former aide of Colin Jordan during the old NSM days, whereas 'W Tedder' was one of the noms-de-plume I used, for instance when writing for John Tyndall's *Spearhead* magazine in the 1980's.

It also interesting that Goodrick-Clarke was ignorant of - or did not bother to discover - many documented things about me during the late 1960's and the early 1970's, such as my arrest by the Yorkshire Regional Crime Squad for organizing a gang of thieves. Instead, the often fictitious account he gives of 'my life' during that time is almost entirely taken from the fictional *Diablerie* manuscript

Such errors, and the lack of evidence to support his assumptions about me, really say all that needs to be said about this particular 'source'.

Interestingly (perhaps) another fanciful work of fiction, similar to *Diablerie*, and purporting to be yet another autobiography by 'Anton Long' seems to have been

recently written by someone, possibly for financial gain resulting from selling it at some silly price to collectors of rare Occult memorabilia. The bulk of this new fictional 'autobiography' consists of an early (now out of date) edition of *Myngath* to which various fictional autobiographical stories and 'sinister' incidents and diatribes have been added in line with what might be expected from a mythical 'Anton Long'. Given that the majority of these autobiographical stories in this so-called *Bealuwes Gast* are quite risible and fanciful (and not fundamentally satanic at all), and given that the 'sinister diatribes' seem to have been cut-and-pasted from various internet articles attributed to those who over the years have used the nom-de-plume Anton Long, it seems unlikely that this forgery will ever be taken seriously by anyone. I mean - and to name just one risible example - who can take seriously a 'clockwork orange cult' and the wearing of white lab coats to boot...

Since this *Bealuwes Gast* also contains certain autobiographical information contained in private correspondence (e-mails) sent by me to a certain correspondent in 2009, I believe I know the identity of the author, or at least the identity of the person who supplied that private information to the author.

(c) In respect of the 1974 'interview', I reproduce a comment I made in part one of my *Autobiographical Notes*, first published in 2001:

" The journalist promised to let me read his final copy before it was published - a condition I had specified before giving the interview - and several photographs of me were taken, with him suggesting I hold something to do with the Occult, since he had noticed I had a collection of horror, and Occult, fiction (most of which in fact were given or loaned to me by Eddy Morrison). Perhaps foolishly, I agreed, holding up some Occult thingy which Joe Short had given to me a few days before. Our conversation lasted for about half an hour, during which the journalist took a few notes (it was not recorded).

I assumed that he would simply recount what I had said. Of course he neither showed me the article before publication, nor printed what I said, except for one short sentence about causing chaos. The journalist also made some rather silly allegations about animal sacrifice, which were investigated at the time by both the Police and the RSPCA whose conclusion was that they were fabrications concocted by the journalist, and perhaps, as I concluded, to get his name on the front page of the newspaper and sell more copies.

What surprised me (and to be honest, upset me, for a while), after this interview, was how so many people believed everything the journalist had written, without bothering to ask me for my side of the story. As if just because something was printed in some newspaper or other then "it must be true" or - as the cliché of mundanes goes: "there is no smoke without fire." And it was then that I learnt several valuable lessons: just how easily people can be manipulated, just how dishonest and conniving (and thus dishonourable) some journalists seemed to be, by nature; and just how powerful the established Media was, able make or break a person's reputation."

(d) In respect of the 1998 *Searchlight* item, I reproduce here a rather polemical

item written by me, the fanatic, in 1998 (during my extremist decades) just before my conversion to Islam and privately circulated to the few members of Reichsfolk. The item was subsequently re-issued - with some amendments and alterations made by Richard Stirling - in 2003 as a confidential supplement to the *Reichsfolk Situation Report* of that year.

" Not once, in the past thirty years, has anyone provided any evidence of my alleged involvement with the Order of Nine Angles or with Satanism in general [...]

All *Searchlight* has ever done is make unsubstantiated allegations [...]

One of the unsubstantiated allegations of the *Searchlight* crowd is that I was a friend of someone called Vik Norris - something they blandly stated in their alleged 'expose' of me, under the headline *The Most Evil Nazi in Britain*, in the April 1998 issue of *Searchlight* magazine. No evidence for this allegation was presented then, or subsequently.

Indeed, the article simply contains bland assertions by them about me and Satanism with no evidence presented to support such assertions. For example: (1) they stated that the ONA was "formed by Myatt himself in the early 1980's" but offer no proof for this claim of theirs; (2) they write about "Myatt and his satanic friends" yet never name these alleged 'satanic' friends or provide any proof of involvement by any of my friends with Satanism; (3) they claim that "within days of being investigated", the ONA withdrew its material from the Internet and that I had shaved off my beard in an attempt to disguise myself, with yet again no evidence being provided for these allegations, which were patently untrue, as anyone could have verified at the time by searching the Internet, calling on me at my home or place of work or asking those with whom I worked.

Unsurprisingly, many people over the years have - for personal or political reasons - referenced this *Searchlight* article as 'proof' of my alleged involvement, when anyone of any sagacity on reading that and similar articles about me can rationally deduce that it and other such articles are merely malicious propaganda designed to discredit, but worded in such a dishonourable way that even were one to sue the authors for libel in a British civil court (assuming one had the money to do so) there would be no guarantee of success - a legalistic tactic such dishonourable journalists often rely on when they peddle their lies and make their malicious accusations.

As for me, I have never bothered to have recourse to civil law, and established Courts, to sue those making libellous allegations about me quite simply because the only law I believe in and strive to uphold is the law of personal honour. Given that I have challenged two journalists, according to the law of personal honour, to a duel with deadly weapons for making such malicious allegations, and given that they did not have the honour to accept this challenge or issue an apology in lieu of fighting a duel, I consider my honour vindicated and their own dishonourable character proven."

[2] The completed BBC programme was broadcast, as a 'Panorama Special' entitled *The Nailbomber*, on the 30th June, 2000. Nick Lowles, who at the time was working for *Searchlight*, was listed as the associate producer.

[3] The recent writings of mine include the compilation *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*, as well as voluminous essays about The Numinous Way/The Way of Pathei-Mathos, and which mystical Way of Life is one of compassion, empathy, humility, gentleness, and love.

As I wrote in *Letter To My Undiscovered Self*,

" The honest, the obvious, truth was that I – and people like me or those who supported, followed, or were incited, inspired, by people like me – were and are the problem. That my, that our, alleged 'problems' (political/religious), were phantasmagorical; unreal; imagined; only projections based on, caused by, invented ideas that had no basis in reality, no basis in the simple reality of human beings. For the simple reality of most human beings is the need for simple, human, things: for personal love, for friendship, for a family, for a personal freedom, a security, a stability – a home, food, playfulness, a lack of danger – and for the dignity, the self-respect, that work provides.

But instead of love we, our selfish, our obsessed, our extremist kind, engendered hate. Instead of peace, we engendered struggle, conflict, killing. Instead of tolerance we engendered intolerance. Instead fairness and equality we engendered dishonour and discrimination. Instead of security we produced, we encouraged, revolution, violence, change.

The problem, the problems, lay inside us, in our kind, not in 'the world', not in others. We, our kind – we the pursuers of, the inventors of, abstractions, of ideals, of ideologies; we the selfish, the arrogant, the hubriatic, the fanatics, the obsessed – were and are the main causes of hate, of conflict, of suffering, of inhumanity, of violence. Century after century, millennia after millennia [...]

That it took me four decades, and the tragic death of two loved ones, to discover these simple truths surely reveals something about the person I was and about the extremisms I championed and fought for.

Now, I – with Sappho – not only say that,

I love delicate softness:
For me, love has brought the brightness
And the beauty of the Sun

but also that a personal, mutual, love between two human beings is the most beautiful, the most sacred, the most important, the most human, thing in the world; and that the peace that most of us hope for, desire in our hearts, only requires us to be, to become, loving, kind, fair, empathic, compassionate, human beings. For that we just have to renounce our extremism, both inner and outer."

As I wrote in *Pathei-Mathos, Genesis of My Unknowing*:

"There are no excuses for my extremist past, for the suffering I caused to loved ones, to family, to friends, to those many more, those far more, 'unknown others' who were or who became the 'enemies' posited by some extremist ideology. No excuses because the extremism, the intolerance, the hatred, the violence, the inhumanity, the prejudice were mine; my responsibility, born from and expressive of my character; and because the discovery of, the learning of, the need to live, to regain, my humanity arose because of and from others and not because of me.

Thus what exposed my hubris - what for me broke down that certitude-of-knowing which extremism breeds and re-presents - was not something I did; not something I achieved; not something related to my character, my nature, at all. Instead, it was a gift offered to me by two others - the legacy left by their tragic early dying. That it took not one but two personal tragedies - some thirteen years apart - for me to accept and appreciate the gift of their love, their living, most surely reveals my failure, the hubris that for so long suffused me, and the strength and depth of my so lamentable extremism.

But the stark and uneasy truth is that I have no real, no definitive, answers for anyone, including myself. All I have now is a definite uncertainty of knowing, and certain feelings, some intuitions, some reflexions, a few certainly fallible suggestions arising mostly from reflexions concerning that, my lamentable, past, and thus - perhaps - just a scent, just a scent, of some understanding concerning some-things, perfumed as this understanding is with ineffable sadness. "

[4] A revised and updated version of Senholt's thesis, under the title *Secret Identities in The Sinister Tradition*, is included in Per Faxneld & Jesper Petersen: *The Devil's Party - Satanism in Modernity*, Oxford University Press, 2012. ISBN 9780199779246

[5] For my view on Goodrick-Clarke, see footnote 1.

[6] The logical fallacy of incomplete evidence is when material concerning or assumptions about a particular matter are selected and presented to support a particular argument or conclusion, while other material or assumptions which do not support, which contradict, the chosen argument or conclusion are withheld or not discussed. In effect, selective evidence and/or selective argument are used in order to 'prove' a particular point, with such selectivity being deliberate, or the result of fallacious reasoning or unscholarly research.

[7] Refer to footnote #51 of Kaplan's book *Nation and Race*. Northeastern University Press. 1998.

[8] Refer to Mark Weitzmann, *Anti-Semitism and Terrorism*, in Dienel, Hans-Liudger (ed), *Terrorism and the Internet: Threats, Target Groups, Deradicalisation Strategies*. NATO Science for Peace and Security Series, vol. 67. IOS Press, 2010. pp.16-17.

[9] The compilation *Relict* contains my selection of most of those poems, written between 1971 and 2012, that I feel are worth reading.

[10] Mention perhaps should also be made of my many writings about extremism, my extremist past, and my rejection of extremism, which post-date Senholt's thesis, and in which writings I have endeavoured to explore and understand the roots of both my extremism and of extremism itself. These writings include *The Development of The Numinous Way* (2012) and *Recuyle of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos* (2012).

Other such writings are included in the more recent *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*.

Also of interest should be my seven-part retrospective and autobiographical text *The Ethos of Extremism, Some Reflexions on Politics and A Fanatical Life*, and which "personal reflexions on my forty years of extremism may be of interest to a few people, especially given that, as a result of experience, a pathei-mathos, I have come to reject racism, National-Socialism, hatred, and all forms of extremism, having developed a personal weltanschauung, a non-religious numinous way, centred around empathy, compassion, fairness, and love."

[11] Wright, Julie. *David Myatt, Satanism, and the Order of Nine Angles*. e-text, 2012. Revised 2016.

Appendix

An Apposite Quotation

There are no excuses for my extremist past, for the suffering I caused to loved ones, to family, to friends, to those many more, those far more, 'unknown others' who were or who became the 'enemies' posited by some extremist ideology. No excuses because the extremism, the intolerance, the hatred, the violence, the inhumanity, the prejudice were mine; my responsibility, born from and expressive of my character; and because the discovery of, the learning of, the need to live, to regain, my humanity arose because of and from others and not because of me [...]

I quite understand why, in the past, certain individuals disliked - even hated - me, given my decades of extremism: my advocacy of racism, fascism, holocaust denial, and National-Socialism, followed (after my conversion to Islam) by my support of bin Laden, the Taliban, and advocacy of 'suicide attacks'.

I also understand why - given my subversive agenda and my amoral willingness to use any tactic, from Occult honeytraps to terrorism, to undermine the society of the time as prelude to revolution - certain people have sought to discredit me by distributing and publishing items alleging I am or was a 'satanist'.

Furthermore, given my somewhat Promethean peregrinations - which included

being a Catholic monk, a vagabond, a fanatical violent neo-nazi, a theoretician of terror, running a gang of thieves, studying Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism; being a nurse, a farm worker, and supporter of Jihad - I expect many or most of those interested in or curious about my 'numinous way' and my recent mystical writings to be naturally suspicious of or doubtful about my reformation and my rejection of extremism.

Thus I harbour no resentment against individuals, or organizations, or groups, who over the past forty or so years have publicly and/or privately made negative or derogatory comments about me or published items making claims about me. Indeed, I now find myself in the rather curious situation of not only agreeing with some of my former political opponents on many matters, but also (perhaps) of understanding (and empathizing with) their motivation; a situation which led and which leads me to appreciate even more just how lamentable my extremism was and just how arrogant, selfish, wrong, and reprehensible, I as a person was, and how in many ways many of those former opponents were and are (*ex concessio*) better people than I ever was or am.

Which is one reason why I have written what I have recently written about extremism and my extremist past: so that perchance someone or some many may understand extremism, and its causes, better and thus be able to avoid the mistakes I made, avoid causing the suffering I caused; or be able to in some way more effectively counter or prevent such extremism in the future. And one reason - only one - why I henceforward must live in reclusion and *in silencio*.

Source: *Pathei-Mathos - Genesis of My Unknowing*

David Myatt

**Understanding and Rejecting Extremism
A Very Strange Peregrination**

Preface.

Part One. Towards Understanding Extremism - Some Notes From Personal Experience.

Part Two. A Learning From Grief.

Part Three. A Rejection of Extremism Perhaps Explained.

Appendix. Usage of Terms.

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Preface

The first, and by far the shortest, part of this work contains some of my reflexions on, and some of my conclusions concerning, my forty years as a practical extremist and my forty years of practical experience of extremism and of other extremists; a practical experience that began in 1968 and ranged from fascism, and the racism of National-Socialism, to radical Islam, and which practical experience included founding and leading a political organization; producing propaganda, organizing activities and demonstrations, some of which ended in violence; speaking in public and participating in marches, demonstrations, and brawls; formulating extremist ideology; imprisonment for racist and other violence; participating in and recruiting for paramilitary activities; inciting hatred, violence and prejudice; engaging in criminal activities to fund extremist causes; encouraging and supporting terrorism; and so on.

My conclusions regarding extremism resulted from some years of moral, personal, and philosophical questioning and reflexion; a questioning whose genesis was a personal tragedy in 2006, and which questioning led me a few years later to reject all forms of extremism and develop my own weltanschauung - the philosophy of pathei-mathos - based on the virtues of empathy, compassion, and humility.

I make no claim concerning the originality, or concerning the correctness or the value or the importance of my conclusions about extremism. They are just my personal, and fallible, conclusions which - given my extremist past - may interest, or be of some use to, some people; and, being such personal conclusions, they are neither presented in an academic way nor are comparisons made with the work and the conclusions (academic or otherwise) of others about extremism.

Part two consists of transcriptions of some handwritten letters sent to a long standing friend following that tragedy in 2006. Since such personal correspondence is usually far more revealing - of personal views, motivations, and feelings - than some essay or other in which one pontificates about this or that, some readers may find this part more interesting and insightful than either part one or part three.

The third part consists of personal replies sent to individuals I did not personally know but who contacted me, between 2011 and 2012 and usually by e-mail, with questions about my extremist past, my 'numinous way', and my philosophy of pathei-mathos. These replies may thus serve to place into perspective my rejection of all forms of extremism and as well as elucidate the development of my weltanschauung from that 'numinous way' to the philosophy of pathei-mathos.

For publication, I have occasionally added some footnotes to such personal correspondence and replies, usually to provide a reference and/or a translation of some quotation.

I have outlined in an Appendix how I understand and use certain terms, since (i) my particular usage of some common terms may differ from how they are ordinarily used or how they have been previously defined and used in some academic and other works relating to extremism and its causes, and (ii) I occasionally employ certain terms developed for or used by my philosophy of pathei-mathos (such as separation-of-otherness, abstractions, and masculous).

David Myatt
2013

Part One

Towards Understanding Extremism Some Notes From Personal Experience

Harshness, Hatred, and The Separation-of-Otherness

Some four years of reflexion concerning my forty years of experience have inclined me to consider that the genesis of extremism, and the making of extremists, may well be and may well involve three inter-related things: harshness, hatred, and what I term the-separation-of-otherness.

Thus, in my view, an extremist in active pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious nature, manifests a certain personal harshness, a certain propensity toward impersonal hatred, and makes not only a clear distinction between 'them' and 'us' but also between (i) some vision of or some belief in a particular past and (ii) the state of things now and how it is believed things will be, or should be, the immediate future. All of which predispose a person toward, or which can be used (by agitators, ideologues, fanatics, propagandists, leaders) to incite people toward, violence and - sometimes - toward terrorism.

The extremist therefore identifies with a particular category which is given certain characteristics or which is believed to be based on certain characteristics, and which category is invariably regarded - instinctively or otherwise - as either having a special (or even God-given) destiny or as being better than or superior to 'the others'. In case of racism, for example, the category is what is believed to be one's own particular ethnic group; in the case of radical nationalism, one's own particular country, land, or nation; in the case of radical Islam, of having the authentic interpretation and belonging with those who do adhere to that interpretation.

There thus exists, or develops, or there is cultivated, a distinct and a prideful sense of identity, dependant upon the belief - instinctive, or formulated in some manifesto, tract, doctrine, ideology, or dogma - that what exists now (society, or 'our way of life', for example) is under threat, and either (i) has deviated from a posited or some believed in ideal or idealized community/society/way of life that is said to have existed in the past or (ii) can and should move toward that new community/society/way of life demanded by the ideology, manifesto, tract, doctrine, dogma, ideologue, or interpretation.

This identity produces or can produce resentment, anger; caused by both (i) a perceived or a felt disparity between the now and the assumed ideal, past or future, and (ii) by the belief that someone or some many are responsible for the 'current state of affairs' and/or are preventing a return to, or the creation of, the ideal. For the problems or the conditions of the present are assumed, by extremists, to have certain identifiable and simple suprapersonal causes, just as the path to the goal is regarded as requiring that those causes be dealt with; with the causes of the problems often or mostly being the work of 'others'; not our fault, but instead the result of 'our enemies', and/or of some opposing ideology. That is, our enemies 'threaten' our way of life and/or are to blame.

Hence in order for extremists to return to this past perfection - or in order for them to create a new form of this past perfection, this past ideal, or in order for them to create a new perfection inspired by some past or newly posited ideal - the enemies, and/or opposing ideologies and those adhering to them, must be dealt with. There must therefore be struggle; the notion of future victory; and at the very least political/social/religious activity, and propaganda, directed toward political/social/religious goals; a moving toward regaining the authority, the power, the influence which supporters of, for example, an ideology

believe or assume they and their kind have lost and which they almost invariably believe are now 'in the hands of their enemies' and/or of traitors or 'heretics'.

All this combines to provide the extremist with a simplicity of purpose, for their life now has a meaning which - instinctive or otherwise - vivifies, removes doubt, with the result that the goal, the ideal, the ideology, is given or assumes a high priority in the life of the individual, often to the extent that they are prepared - even willing - to use violence, and actively hate their perceived enemies, 'the others', whom thus they, in their harshness and intolerance, have dehumanized.

Extremism, Ideation, and Abstractions

Such violence, such hatred, such a dehumanizing of those deemed enemies with the consequent immoral denial of innocence [1], are inevitable consequences of all ideologies founded on notions of a prideful identity which glorify a past (real or idealized), which posit some future ideal or goal, and which involve a struggle against stated enemies to achieve such a goal or such an ideal.

For all extremists accept - and all extremisms are founded on - the instinctive belief or the axiom that their cherished ideation(s) or abstraction(s) is or are more important, more valuable, than the individual and the feelings, desires, hopes, and happiness, of the individual. The extremist thus views and understands the world in terms of abstractions; in terms of

"...a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed.

Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future." [2]

The abstractions of extremism are manifest in the ideology, which posits or which attempts to explain (however irrationally and intolerantly) some ideated form, some assumed or believed in perfect (ideal) form or category of some-thing, and which ideated form is or can be or should be (according to the ideology) contrasted with what is considered or assumed to be its 'opposite'. For example, in nazism and neo-nazism, the basal ideation is the White (or the Aryan) race, so that for those who accept such a racial ideology a White or Aryan ideal (man and woman) exists, has existed, or should exist, with individuals judged or expected to judge themselves according to this standard and expected to strive to emulate or attain it; and with enemies (such as Jews - Zionists [3] - and Muslims) pejoratively contrasted with it, and thus viewed in a bigoted and a dehumanizing way. The individual, extremist or otherwise, is therefore required to accept - be subservient to - the judgement that the ideology asserts, or which some ideologue proclaims, is correct; for all ideologies denigrate or require (overtly or otherwise) the suspension of individual judgement either in favour of the collective, 'correct', ideological one, or in favour of the judgement of some leader, ideologue, or some 'higher authority'.

For there is the belief or the assumption, implicit in ideation, that what is observed by the senses, or revealed by observation, is either an 'imperfect copy' or an approximation of that posited ideal thing or form, with the additional assumption or belief that such an ideated form contains or in some way expresses (or can express) 'the essence' or 'the ethos' of that thing and of similar things, and ideologies of whatever kind assert or claim that (i) it is this essence or ethos that the ideology - or some leader or ideologue - has revealed or does reveal, and (ii) this essence or ethos can and should inspire and motivate individuals to strive and struggle to implement, to make real, their posited ideal or ideals even if, or especially if, such striving and struggle involves conflict and violence.

The Masculous Extremist

Given the foregoing, the extremist is a certain type of person; or at least, in my experience, the majority of extremists are: by nature, or become so through association with or because of the influence of others, or because of ideological indoctrination. This type of person has or develops not only a certainty-of-knowing about their cause, faith, or ideology, but also a need or an enthusiasm for territorial pride and personal aggression. In brief, they have or they develop an inflexible masculous character, often excessively so; and a character which expresses the masculous nature, the masculous ethos, of extremism. A character, a nature, unbalanced by muliebral virtues.

For it is in the nature of extremists that they disdain, and often despise, the muliebral virtues of empathy, sensitivity, humility, gentleness, forgiveness, compassion, and the desire to love and be loved over and above the desire for conflict, territorial identity, and for war. Thus we find in extremism a glorification of

the masculine at the expense of the muliebral; a definite personal certitude of knowing; a glorification of toughness and aggression and war; an aggressive territorial pride; a tendency to believe, or the forthright assertion, that 'might is right' and *kampf* is necessary; the desire to organize/control; a prominent desire for adventure and/or for conflict/war/violence/competition; and - especially in ideologues, fanatics, propagandists, agitators, and leaders - the love of manipulation through the charisma of words.

For extremism certainly manifests - and is an example, par excellence - of the love some people have or seem to need for the manipulation of others through words both spoken and written. As I have noted elsewhere: It is as if we terrans, en masse, have forgotten, keep forgetting, or have never discovered the wisdom that what involves too many words - and especially what involves or requires speeches, rhetoric, propaganda, dogma - is what obscures empathy and thus the numinosity that empathy reveals; the numinosity presented to us by the *pathei-mathos* of our human past; manifest to us - and living now - in the way of living of those whose personal *pathei-mathos* - whose personal experience of suffering, death, destruction, hate, violence, of too many killings - has forever changed them. The 6

numinous revelation of kindness, of humility, of gentleness, of love, of compassion; of being able to restrain, control, ourselves; of being able to comprehend our small, insignificant, place in the infinity of the Cosmos, bringing as this comprehension does an understanding of the importance, the numinosity, that is a shared and loyal love between two people: and revealing as this does the Cosmic unimportance of such wars and conflicts and such brutality as have blighted our terran history. [4]

A Cure For Extremism?

Understood thus, extremism could be considered to be akin to bad (or rotten) individual physis [5]; as a manifestation of an unbalanced, an intemperate, psyche [6]; and as something which is or which has the potential to be contagious. Or, expressed less dramatically, extremism is a modern manifestation of hubris; of a lack of respect for, and a lack of appreciation of, the numinous. And, as hubris, is a manifestation of the error that is the genesis of the tyrant [7] as well as the genesis (in my view) of what has been termed the patriarchal ethos and in particular of how that ethos continues to not only survive but also still dominates the world.

It really does appear to be the case, as I perhaps somewhat controversially noted in a recent missive, that we men en masse have learnt nothing from the past four or five thousand years,

For the uncomfortable truth is that we, we men, are and have been the ones causing, needing, participating in, wars and conflicts. We - not women - are the cause of most of the suffering, death, destruction, hate, violence, brutality, and killing, that has occurred and which is still occurring, thousand year upon thousand year; just as we are the ones who seek to be - or who often need to be - prideful and 'in control'; and the ones who through greed or alleged need or because of some ideation have sought to exploit not only other human beings but the Earth itself. We are also masters of deception; of the lie. Cunning with our excuses, cunning in persuasion, and skilled at inciting hatred and violence. And yet we men have also shown ourselves to be, over thousands of years, valourous; capable of noble, selfless, deeds. Capable of doing what is fair and restraining ourselves from doing what is unethical. Capable of a great and a gentle love.

This paradox continues to perplex me. And I have no answers as to how we might change, reform, this paradoxical φύσις of ours, and so - perhaps - balance the suffering-causing masculine with the empathic muliebral and yet somehow in some way retain that which is the genesis of the valourous. And if we cannot do this, if we cannot somehow reform ourselves, can we terrans as a species survive, and do we deserve to? [4]

My only fallible suggestions are the empathy, the primacy of love and of *pathei-mathos*, and the appreciation of the numinous and of humility, that form the basis of my philosophy of *pathei-mathos*, and which philosophy is only my attempt to express what I believe I have understood because of and from my own personal *pathei-mathos*.

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Notes

[1] My understanding of innocence is that it is an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us, are therefore unjudged by us and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence of others - until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise - is the fair, the reasoned, the numinous, the human, thing to do.

Empathy and πάθει μάθος incline us toward treating other human beings as we ourselves would wish to be treated; that is they incline us toward fairness, toward self-restraint, toward being well-mannered, and toward an appreciation and understanding of innocence.

[2] The definition is taken from the glossary in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. ISBN 978-1484096642

[3] The term Zionist is often employed by contemporary neo-nazis as a euphemism for Jews, partly in order to try and circumvent racial hatred legislation in countries where such legislation is in force, and partly to try and avoid accusations of being a 'conspiracy theorist'.

[4] I use the term φύσις (physis) here in reference to the nature or the character of a person. As Heraclitus noted:

σωφρονεῖν ἀρετὴ μέγιστη, καὶ σοφίη ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαίοντας

Most excellent is balanced reasoning, for that skill can tell inner character from outer.

Fragment 112

[5] *Blue Reflected Starlight*. 2013

[6] Psyche is here used in reference to its classical origins and my philosophy of pathei-mathos; as an emanation, embodied in a fallible mortal, of Life qua being.

[7]

ὕβρις φυτεύει τύραννον:
ὕβρις, εἰ πολλῶν ὑπερπλησθῇ μάταν,
ἃ μὴ 'πίκαιρα μηδὲ συμφέροντα,
ἀκρότατον εἰσαναβᾶσ'
αἶπος ἀπότομον ὥρουσεν εἰς ἀνάγκη
ἔνθ' οὐ ποδὶ χρησίμῳ
χρῆται

Insolence [hubris] plants the tyrant. There is insolence if by a great foolishness there is a useless over-filling which goes beyond the proper limits. It is an ascending to the steepest and utmost heights and then that hurtling toward that Destiny where the useful foot has no use

Sophocles, Oedipus Tyrannus. vv.872ff

Part Two

A Learning From Grief Transcriptions Of Some Personal Letters

The Scent of Meadow Grass

Four days on from Fran's death, and I am in one of the ancient meadows on the Farm - soon, the haymaking will begin, again, but for now I can smell that special smell - the scent - of meadow grass growing in hot June Sun.

The varied grasses are at least knee high; often higher - and I startle a Deer, hiding, as I walk through the grass: up it leaps to bound and leap away to escape through a hole in the far hedge where the Oak, now full in leaf, rises so tall above me, only a faint breeze to disturb its leaves. Over the field, a Buzzard circles, occasionally calling while small Cumulus clouds drift under the blue sky of another English Summer. Around, over, the pond where I sit, Damsel flies, and two dark blue large Dragonflies, skitting, dancing, mating, landing - for the flow of life goes on.

Why such warm almost cloudless weather? It is not as if I wish my sadness, my grief, my guilt to be lifted and taken from me - but, still, a certain beauty touches me, bringing a few moments of peace. Shall I strive to push these aside, and remember, again, as yesterday when I walked through nettles, letting them sting my bare hands and arms? Now, a stripped yellow Dragonfly ventures forth over the pond - to be attacked, driven away by the Blue as two Blackbirds, tree dwelling and five hedge-Oaks apart, sing their varied, long-lasting songs, for the flow of living goes on.

So many Damsel flies, now, I have lost count, and, then, a Ruddy Darter lands on a leaf, feet from my feet. For minutes, it is still, as, around me, Bumblebees and fastly-moving, loud, flies pass by in their seemingly random way. On a nearby fallen branch - some small, glossy, black, winged insect scoops out dead wood with its legs, having made a perfectly round, small, hole above the sunken leaf litter where black Beetles scutter, to dive down to what is their deep. Then, a Bumblebee drops, stumbly, briefly, down to the very edge, as if to drink, for the flow of life goes on.

Is there meaning, for me, here? It would seem so in these brief moments - and yet, and yet there is no Fran to return to, no Fran sitting here, sharing such moments. But is she, in some indefinable numinous way, here beyond the bounds of memory, Time, grief, and thought? I do not know, only knowing a certain vague, mysterious feeling, which might just be imagination. Now, I must arise and walk: no sleep, here, as in the years gone by when I would lie down among this warm grass to feel the peace that lives in such a place as this.

June 2006

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Bright Purple Orchids

It is just over one month since I sat on this hill - then, it was also in the Sun of an early Summer's morning, and only a few days after Francine had killed herself, tormented as she was by despair, anguish and a deep self-deprecation. For I called her Francine - and she liked it - since it seemed to capture something of her quixotic, individual, nature which the names Frances and Fran did not really express. Now, as in the past when she was alive, I find myself still saying to myself - and sometimes out loud - "I love you Francine," as if it were some mantra that might bring her back to life.

But, yet again, I am alone - here, where there are bright purple Orchids on the lower slopes just above the tree-line and where, below, a Deer stood on the narrow footpath, watching me approach until, apparently unafraid, it sauntered off into the bushes growing by and beyond the stream that runs down through that quite small wooded valley. Overhead - the resident Buzzard, calling. Around - flies, starting their day as the warmth of the Sun increases to slowly dispel the clinging mist that lingers cloud-like over the flat land between those not-too-distant hills.

The stark cry of a Woodpecker, as it flies, dipping, from tree to tree. The loud Bumblebee, feeding on the many small flowers - blue, yellow, violet, red. The many birds - whose personal names I do not and probably never shall know - singing, in the many trees and bushes below, up from where there is a small clearing, gently rising as the hill beyond, and in which clearing two chestnut horses graze, half a mile or more from the nearest cottage whose white walls and faded-red roof break the swathe of green which, furlong upon furlong, reaches up to the very top of the hill, making my horizon: fields of pasture; hedges bursting with English-summer green The ferns, since my last visit, are fully open, and almost all stretched fully out, and I sit on an old plastic bag, feeling the tragedy of Francine's death, and that I should be crying far more than I am now. For the tears, hours upon hour, day following day, hav lessened, until - yesterday - I wept only once. So I feel guilty, partly believing I should be mourning her far more. But Nature, here, is alive and I have begun to sense again the flow of Life, sensing somehow and strangely - and hoping it is not some delusion - that she, by her dying has given me this gift, this chance; these moments to reconnect myself with Life. A chance to redeem and be redeemed, to feel the beauty and the goodness inherent in life and to know, to deeply feel, the promise of human existence - as if she by her living and her dying has not only freed herself from her own inner pain, anguish and torment, but also finally, irretrievably, freed me from that lower part of myself that still kept me in thrall, even sometimes during our relationship, to abstractions, to a wayward questing after suffering-causing ideals.

So I am embodied, here, by my being, my thoughts, my feeling - as I sense she is, and somehow alive if I feel this, if I remember this, her, if I change; if I make her sacrifice worthwhile. For there is a depth not felt before; never quite experienced like this before; a depth of feeling; a depth of being; a deep connexion with Life, especially as it presences itself, here, around me, in me, on this hill, site of an ancient hill-fort - as if the sadness and the sorrow and the tragedy have been transformed, melded somehow with the quiet reverential joy of being in such a beautiful, still numinous aspect of Nature, to form something new,

strange, far beyond words, bringing a definite knowing of myself, of my failure, a knowing of humility never known before. Thus there is a letting-be; a simple dwelling through sitting in silence and in peace, exhaling wordless and wordfull words of love. Change, life, death - all around; all here, and one day I also shall change as my beautiful Francine has changed. No fear, now; only that knowing that knows the flow for the changing it is.

Yet do such feelings, such thoughts, demean her death? Or are they merely some escape or delusion? I do not really know - I never probably will know for certain - but I hope not, even as I know I might be mistaken, in this. But this is all I have: this, the result of my month of effort, the month of tears - these slight answers; these meagre answers; these so slight positive feelings, feelings which may fade, which could fade, bringing back such anguish as caused so many thoughts of bringing forward death. For over a month, a struggle to find answers to the questions, the despair, which perplexed and often almost overwhelmed me. Faith; prayer; redemption - seeking to believe; needing to believe; desiring to pray, trying to pray. Trying again to find the answers in God; in Christianity, in Buddhism, in Taoism, in Islam, and in and from many other Ways.

But there is now, for me it seems, only the quiet sitting in places such as this; only the answers of, the development of, The Numinous Way. Only the feeling of being one connexion; only the yearning to presence the good, to cease to cause suffering; to strive to keep that silence, that non-interference, which which may well be the beginning of my own redemption and a move toward, back, to being in balance with Nature, with the Cosmos, with myself - and with the Fran who has gone, leaving me behind.

There is, here, only sky, trees, hill, and history - and no one to share such beauty, such warmth of Summer Sun. No one to lie beside and feel the yearning for that short sleep which often overcomes us in a such heat as this.

Instead - a small brown spotted Butterfly passes; then, an even smaller one of brown-orange with black spots on its wings, and then a larger white of black-tipped wings. So many flowers to feed, upon - and the heat of the Sun has taken those almost-annoying flies off, away, perhaps bushward into shade, leaving me free to rest in my new strange sad-tragic-quiet-reverential-remorseful-joy while a small Cumulus cloud in an otherwise cloudless sky drifts above, to my right, making faces. A sad face; then of anger then of joy - until it, too, becomes almost formless here in this flicker of Life which passes quickly upon one planet in one Galaxy among a Cosmos, changing slowly, as it does.

So many flowers; and Grasshoppers, calling, in the longer grass, above where three Crows caw, as they caw. So much Life, bursting, burgeoning, forth, to mingle as I become mingled with a future and a past, one connexion among so many where, ten feet away, the wind-shaped sapling of Oak, no taller than a three Rabbits, hopping, curves gracefully out over lichen-covered rock.

June 29, 2006

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Existence Without End

This afternoon is hot, following the long hours of rain during the night, but there is a lovely breeze as the Sun dries the Clover-filled grass where I sit resisting the temptation to sleep, stretched out, warm.

For it is so beautifully warm, this Sun, taking away for a while the sadness of the sleepless night when dreams and memories of Fran kept me, often weeping and often silently hunched by the window, listening to the rain. No music of mine, then, as I yearned to capture, to express, the almost despairing sadness of it all. There were only words; only words such as these, and not for the first time I gently envied those gifted with the talent of musical composition. But no words can express what the sounds of numinous music can and sometimes have expressed, and I was left to sigh and close my eyes to try and dream such memories of happier days as have kept me alive as the days since her death turned first to a week and then to a month, no God to bring forth the comfort and the love so desired, so needed in the bleakness of that, of this, long night.

But this Sun brings something, while it lasts - something strange: a quite quiet remembrance of the joys and beauty of life when personal love lived to suffuse us with both happiness and dreams - no death to tear us apart. Yet how many times, how often and how stupidly, did I turn away from the sharing of such love - from its value, its humanity, its goodness known only, valued only, felt only, with its loss, with such a loss as this? Turned away from - for what? Some hard, unforgiving, inhuman ideal. Turned away from - too many times these past thirty years so that a storm now wells up inside me as the clouds of the night grew, waiting to break in a tempest of tears. So stupid, the man that I was, and maybe still am.

Swallows, sweeping low over the grass; a Honey-Bee, feeding, from the clover. A small Fly, by my hand. All emanations of that flow of Life which lives, presenced on this planet which is both a dwelling and a home.

Someday I - all this, here: the Fly, the Bee, the birds; the Clover - will be gone, as she is gone and as the Cumulus clouds that now drift past the hill will be gone. Gone - to where? Returned; continued; lost. changed... And what remains, of us? I do not know, and can only suggest or presume.

Yet there is something, here; some feeling, burgeoning in Sun - of Life in its essence; of consciousness, living, of compassion, love; droplets forming one whole, one river flowing from one source to one end in one sea in one moment of one Time. Thus, a brief smile, a knowing of moments where the I is at least lost as it become lost in the happiness of such sharing as love makes. No God - but a warmth of being flowing from one small beginning to one Cosmic existence without end.

Yes - she is there; as I, the Bee, the Fly, the Clover, the Swallow, the rain, the river, will be there, transformed, transmuted, one infinitesimal emanation of Thought among so many where the Cosmos evolves to be, there, where Time shall never end. Am I dreaming - or just listening to, feeling, the quiet soft emanations of a Cosmos dreaming, breathing, seeing, being, existing in both the sadness and the love?

Now, thinking ended, I can drift into that warm sleep that so often heals... And then, for a moment, such peace it is as if the joy of death reached out to touch me, claim me. Is this, then, what touches some in that their last moment of decision? For it feels as if it is the dying which is easy - and the living which is, which can be, which will be, hard, as the despair, the burdens remain to reclaim them, me, us. But have I strength enough, dreams enough, hope enough to help me here? Yes, perhaps I have again, for a while...

Afternoon of 6th July, 2006

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The Joy-bringing Sky-blue

A wonderfully warm and sunny day with no clouds to cover the joy-bringing sky-blue. The Sun was warm even as it ascended, early, while I cycled rural lanes almost totally devoid of traffic because of being Sunday, and early. So pleasing, this simple joy of an English morning in late late Summer when I - tired from hours of work yesterday - leant against a fence to just-be in each slowly passing moment. Such peace, as if the measure of life was at last not only known but felt, lived, loved, when no human-made noise intrudes and one feels the strength, the giving, of the Sun; feels the growing that is in the fields, trees, bush, hedge, as if they are all - as they are - connected, parts of one living, growing, presence; one living-being, breathing... So much, so much so simply known and felt as warmth and the natural silence brings a sleepy calm and there is the brief-sleep of lying in warming welcoming grass before one awakes to feel all living-life knowing thus human-caused suffering for the blight, the stupidity, that it is.

To be, to let-be, to leave-alone is it seems an answer - and so I am slowly, so slowly, returned to my dwelling where now, three hours later, I sit on the grass in the garden feeling knowing my weakness of months years decades past.

So I am haunted, here and again, where again the Swallows gather as they gather at this time of year: chirping to each other and preparing in some weeks to leave. Thus do they skim the fields, catching, eating, their food as the cycle of natural life upwardly repeats and a cooling breeze dims a little of the humid heat of the day, here in a greening part of a still-living England.

Haunted, here and again - amid such joyful growing warmth - with, by, because of, her death; with by, because of, the multiplicity of my multitudes of suffering-causing and so stupid mistakes...

3rd of August 2006

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The Sun of Mid-September

A small black winged insect lands on my knee as I sit on the grass waiting, to write - I do not know what this insect is, but it is slowly cleaning its long antennae and then its wings which briefly catch the Sun and iridess. Such complexity, in miniature - such life, living, as it lives.

It is just past mid-September and warm, very warm, with small Cumulus clouds beneath a joyful sky of blue and I am awake, it seems, at last, from the daily dream of the past six or more weeks when I sleep-walked through life to wake only briefly, so briefly, to cry unexpected as when I two days ago walked one narrow path where trees reared up, arching over as some cathedral isle, and bright morning sunlight filtered and fractured to touch me, the ground, the life that grew, seeping, around. I cried then such tears as saw me crouched, hunched up, then kneeling - feeling the sorrowful tragedy of her loss, her dying: of my mistakes. A sorrow which the wakeing-dreaming-sleep of those past weeks kept me distant from as I, again and foolishly, meddled, wrote, postured, to keep pain and experience away through a desire, a hope, to believe; through the gestures and words of prayer; through articles written. For I had felt again that I knew; that I had words to issue forth - some role again to help me live and keep such life as mine alive beyond that tragedy of self-inflicted death.

Such tears began to break such illusion, such wakeing-dreams, down. Now - so green this grass, so warm this Sun of mid-September that I cannot sleep or hold this role any longer. There is, can be, nothing but the flow of life which I as one living being cannot hope to contain, constrain, for I am, in being, no-one and nothing; only one fleeting flicker of life as that insect, living, flickers briefly to fly away lost to sight under Sun.

There are images, of Space, to remember: one nexion, here, sitting upon grass, among the billions presenced here on one planet orbiting one star in one Galaxy among billions. So many, so many - that I am become again what I am, was, one fallen leaf drifting, flowing down one stream in one field in one land on this one planet among so many. I have no power to really change what-is, what-was; no power of bringing-into-being; no power to even really know; only living, breathing, dying.

So there is a smile, fine words flowing of knowing not to cause suffering again - words written before this failure, born from weakness. For I know my failure, here, these past weeks - no excuse, not even that wordless, strong, desire to live beyond the grief, beyond the nothingness without her, beyond the faith that clung to life, hoping for redemption in a total loyal submission to the one God beyond all gods. Such loyalty is troubling, still... But it is the warmth of Sun, the green of grass, that brings me back, for there is only the brief touching of such beauty as we can find, discover, know; only the thin, faint, hope to somehow bear and carry this to others - to pass the numinous knowing on so that someone, somewhere, somewhen can transcend, themselves, feeling the living matrix, beyond, where in ending we merge, again, one being-become.

All else is insufficient, illusion, delusion, for there is what there is. Yet I am weak, worn out from experience, loss upon loss, mistake following mistake, so there is, shall be, can be, only a living from moment to moment; no plans to follow then deny; no aims to strive or hope for.

The Swallows of Summer have gone, and I smile as I run my hand through the warming, growing, grass in this field where the breeze does not move the acorn as it falls, tree to ground, here by the pond set and drying below leaf-shedding Willow. My tears can never fill this - and it might be good to die now, in this peaceful warmth as the Crane flies rise to stumble to briefly live before life leaves them without a knowing such as this.

So, there is now only the living of existence; only the quiet slow semi-joyful waiting for this life to slowly, quickly, painless or with pain, dimly end to be returned, perchance transformed. Only being, beyond desire: one cloud but briefly passing making many faces under Sun...

September 2006

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Crouched Up Over Muddied Earth

Who is there to hear the words of remorse, to see, feel, such tears of anguish as bring me down, crouched up over muddied earth? Who - if there is no God, no Saviour, no Heaven, Paradise, and no personal life beyond that ending which is death?

Who hears? Who can forgive? She who could, might, is gone, dead, lost to me and to life, and here - on this wooded hillside where the strong breeze creeks trees and fastly scuttles cloud - there is only a faint hope: dim, as the dimness on the far horizon where the Sun is still nearly one whole hour from rising. It would be good to believe - as I tend to believe, as I tend to hope - that the Life, the living-beings, here can and do hear, and can and could respond. But I am only one being, one human, for them - tree, bird, deer, rabbit, the very hill itself - to be wary of as they, each in their life in their own way, are wary, and even the two Ravens, prukking as they skim the trees above, are only Ravens. No omens, there. So there

seems only fantasy while I whisper, slowly, to the life that lives here. No answers; no answers: only the breeze bringing darker clouds, and rain.

Here, among brambles, I sit where the fallen leaves of Oak, Ash, have covered the grass, and the breeze no longer carries the sound of a distant traffic-filled road. For it is Sunday, and still, with only this human who stirs in the gibbony gloom of Dawn on a Winter's day warm for the time of year.

Soon, there will be weariness to take me back along the muddied path that seeps over hill - no one to meet, walking, while such earliness lasts. And it is good, this solitary silence - once, a few times, I have, being late, seen strangers approaching, and shyly, wary like an animal, have crept away into woods, or beyond some hedge, keeping thus my own strange company: no human words to break the bleakness or the slight joyfulness of mood.

So there is a kind of living, a kind of thinking, for me - seven months beyond her death, with no religious faith, belief, to bring me company. Thus, I am alone, again. And yet, there is this, this being-here, where the rain washes away the tears that some leaves briefly held after they fell as they fell from one man, anguished in one moment of one walk on one day one warmish Winter. No bright Sun, today, rising over hill: although somehow, for some reason, there comes that slow muted joy to bring a slight brief smile - for there is Life, around, beings living as they live; one future, one present, to connect one consciousness since I am a living in illusion.

So brief, the insight, and I am become again one man ambling toward old age, slowly climbing with my Ash walking-stick the steep slope of a hill.

Soon, there will be tea, toast, a seat by the window, as the rain of dull day beats down, again. So brief, that insight: but sufficient as often to keep me dreaming, replete, for many hours, today...

December 2006

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A Time To Reflect

A time to reflect as I - tired from long days of manual work - sit in the garden watching the clouds clear to bring some warm Sun on this windy day of a coldish wind. On the horizon to the South: Cumulus clouds billowing up to herald more showers, and I, for a moment as a child again, watch a few cloud-faces change to disperse; as if the clouds are for that moment, just that one moment, a memory of a person who lived, once, on this Earth: reaching out to be remembered as they the cloud move as they are moved in their so-brief and new existence.

The hedgerows are greening; the branches of trees coming into leaf, and life is renewed while I wait for the Swallows to return, here, to this Farm. This is Life: in its purest truth devoid of the empathy-destroying, suffering-causing, abstractions that we humans have manufactured to blight this planet and so grievously injure our fecund still beautiful but now suffering Mother Earth who gives us, and who gave us, life.

The brief warm Sun renews as it almost always does for me, and so - for this moment, this one moment - I am happy, again; feeling the measure of Meaning, of happiness, of joy itself; which is in a simple just-being, sans abstractions, sans thought, and beyond the dependency of, the addiction to, anger.....

Here - the child, again; free to watch the bee bumble from flower to flower; free to feel a certain playful awe. Here, the concern with only what is seen, touched, known, smelt, in the immediacy of dwelling.

There should be nothing more; nothing to wreck such simple being; nothing to bring the-suffering. But I, we, are stupid, weak, vain, addicted - and so in our failing repeat and repeat and repeat the same mistakes, and so cause and maintain the pain of our, of their, of other, suffering. Mea Culpa; Mea Culpa; Mea Maxima Culpa...

April 2007

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Almost Mid-Summer

Another beautifully warm and Sunny day, bright with the light remembered from childhood years in Africa and the Far East: so different from the normally dullish light of temperate England.

Thus, here in the warm Sun and as so often, there is a time of reflexion; a stasis as life becomes reviewed through memories. And it is occurring to me more and more that this is all that there is, beyond the immediacy of the moment: only memories of moments past.

So many memories which slowly fade as bright colour exposed to Sun: as the bright checks of my Tweed cap have slowly faded over the years, unrenewed as the greens of the grass, the bush, the tree, become renewed each year, through Spring. Only memories, as of Fran; to be savoured but perhaps now not too much to be dwelt upon in almost unbearable sadness, for thus is – for thus has the – a type of balance returned; that balance, that dwelling in immediacy, which I from learning feel and know is the essence of wu-wei.

This is a change within me, regarding the life and death of Fran, and the life and death of Sue; regarding my own diverse journeys and explorations. A change toward a being-settled that has partly arisen from at last forsaking abstractions and partly from accepting that it is immediacy and remembrance of memories which convey the only correct meaning we human beings have or can find and which is numinous. No projection, thus, of an abstractive life-beyond this mortal life; no need for a religious type of faith; no battle or desire to strive to be in accord with any abstraction; and even no need to believe in, or even un-numinously desire, some-thing. No depth of unfathomable wordless sadness to bring that ultimate life-ending despair such as I assume Fran felt in the last hours of her own mortal living.

For there is only the bright Sun; the slight breeze in bush and tree; the verdant, living, green of grass; the yellow Buttercups that are profusely sprinkled there in the old Orchard of old Apple trees whose lower branches have been windfallen, or become broken with age, or stripped of bark by the two Goats who roam there, where Chickens range, food-seeking. Only the passing billowing fair-weather white Cumulus clouds below the sky-blue of Earth's earthly mortal life.

Across from where I sit – at the back of the Farmhouse – that Barn whose Summer Swallows swoop in and out to feed their still nesting young who gape and chatter as their food is brought. And I am only this moment, only this moment, as the young Farm dog who comes to lay down in the grass beside me is only the young Farm dog. He looks up at me once – three times – tail wagging, before settling down to sleep.

There is no world beyond, for us here; for the life here. Only the weather; only the changing weather; only some natural need to move us, slowly by our limbs. A need for shelter, water, food. Only the Seasons changing as they change. Only the gentle companionship of a gentle acceptance that lives, grows, changes, slowly, as all natural life lives, grows – changes – slowly, as Sun through cloudless Summer sky.

My decades long mistake of unbalanced stupidity has been to be un-rooted; to be of unnatural unneeded haste. To cease to dwell within each immediacy of each moment. To be swayed by, persuaded by, in thrall to – to even love – un-numinous and thus un-ethical abstractions. To be thus that which we human beings have become: a stage between animal – talking – and compassionate, empathic being aware of and treasuring each small pulse of life that lives near, within, us because there is no separation unless we in hubris and by abstraction create such separation.

Thus are we now struggling, halting, wasting ourselves and all of Life around us; infected now with the virus of abstractions so that, upon this living Earth, we – in our new de-evolution – despoil, disrupt, destroy the Life that is our Life and the genesis of The Numinous, often in the name of that un-ethical abstraction called “progress”. And yet we have a cure for our millennia-long debilitating sickness; have always had a cure, although so many for so long, as I, have failed in our blind stupidity to see it.

So, this is all that there is: only the bright Sun; the slight breeze in bush and tree; the verdant, living, green of grass; the yellow Buttercups that are profusely sprinkled here where, now, The Numinous lives, on another beautifully warm and Sunny day, bright with light remembered...

June 2008

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This Flow of Feelings

The truth is that I am not able to contain, restrain, the sorrow, the sadness felt through this knowing of my multitudinous mistakes. Unable: and so I am become, am now, only a flowing of moments remembered with such a ferocity of engagement that I am there, reborn, again:

There... to smell, to feel, the sultry freshness of warm Spring morning when off I cycled to work some twelve miles distant and she, first wife, was left to cry in loneliness, alone: no ending to that argument the dark night before as I in selfish concentration enjoyed the greening grass of

vergeful country lanes, the birdful treeful songs, passing as they passed while the clouds above that brought the heavy warming rain depart. So glad then to be alone again among and cycling such peaceful Shropshire lanes...

Only now - only now - knowing feeling how I should have returned to clasp her in my arms and be the love she then so needed. To late this seeing far beyond such selfish self as kept me then so blind.

The truth of there, again:

There... where the warmth of English Summer took to us seat ourselves in picnic beside the river Avon flowing as it flowed through rural counties. You - new wife, for our family living; while I - for ideations that I carried in the silly headpiece of my head, so that I with misplaced stupid passion could only talk of strife, somewhere. You, breathing hope as the very breeze breathed such warmth as kept us slim of clothes...

And only now - only now - knowing feeling how I should have embraced you there to return in sameness the gentle love so freely given for years until my selfish self so self-absorbed rightly broke your patience down. Far too late now my seeing far beyond such selfish self as kept me then so subsumed with ideations.

The truth I am reborn there, again:

There... where Fran stood beside her whiteful door as morning broke that late Spring day when I with firm resolve turned to take myself away: no doubt, no love, to still such hurt as walked me then. No empathy from sadful eyes to turn me back to try to try to try in love again. Instead - only such selfish hope as moved me far to meadow fields of farm where warm Sun kept me still, and smiling, while she remained bereft abandoned to lay herself down until her breath of life left her: no hand, no love, of mine to save her there where she died silent, slow, in loneliness alone...

Only now - only now - knowing feeling so intensely how I should have stayed: love before all excuses.

Thus, such a flow of such demeaning memories as make my present no presentiment of so many pasts: so much unforgivable, unliveable now - that I become my tears of failing to hope to sleep to dream to still this flow of feelings.

But there is no present - only moments with which to mesmerise myself, as when the Blackbird beyond this window sings and I am there, there again on meadow-fields of farm where work and living kept me safe, secluded, for five full years and more. Such peace, such hope, until death of Fran came to claim me for the failure that made me who and what I was and am.

For the truth is of failure; my failure of so many years and decades past. To fail to simply love to dream to hope as they my loves so loved in dreamful hope as kept them made them far better beings than I in insolent pride ever was or even now could ever hope or dream to be. No faith, no deity, no sacrament of absolution now to charm away, explain, redeem such a feckless selfish failure. Only more remorseful days - and darkful nights - alone that bear some winsome hope of words as this in weaksome recompense for wreakful storm I was upon those lives when I, dark tempest, tore their fragile human hopes asunder.

To die, here now, is easy: one example from far too many, with nothing here for needful Pride to gorge myself upon, again. Only such a flow of such demeaning memories as make my present no excuse for the stupid arrogance of such a prideful past. Only a hope for this example to void for one - some others - such ideation as kept and made me slave; one unreligious allegory for perchance not so many. Since

If you came this way,
Taking any route, starting from anywhere,
At any time or at any season,
It would always be the same

I am no exception. So, perhaps, five thousand years remain before our species - whimpering after such bouleversements as still befits us now - fails, to fall, to perish, to be replaced: unless we change. But how?

The truth is, I have no answers. I only live other than I have lived, in empyrean hope of abatement of suffering, somewhere, somehow: and knowing a shared, loyal, love for the beautiful, the numinous, truth it is.

March 2011

And What You Thought You Came For

And what you thought you came for
Is only a shell, a husk of meaning
From which the purpose breaks only when it is fulfilled If at all.
Either you had no purpose
Or the purpose is beyond the end you figured
And is altered in fulfilment.

TS Eliot: Little Gidding

There is now for me a quite simple, solitary, almost reclusive life, almost ended; as if the Cosmos - Wyrd - has contrived to place me exactly where I need to be: in, with, such a situation and surroundings as makes me remember the unwise deeds of those my pasts, and which placement offers more opportunities for one fallible human being to learn, especially about how people are not as, for many decades, I with my arrogance and abstractive purpose assumed.

For now I of the aged poor have no purpose, no ideation, to guide; no assumptions founded on, extrapolated from, some causal lifeless abstraction. No politics; no religion; not even any faith. There is instead only the living of moments, one fluxing as it fluxes to, within, the next. No dreams of Destiny; no supra-personal goals; no desires of self to break the calm of day and night. Only walks, and a being, alone to mingle with weather, Life, Nature as one so mingles when happiness is there inside unsupported by some outer cause or expectation of or from another.

Few possessions, belongings, as if I am a Gentleman of The Road again, but briefly staying here in this some un-heated house; or perhaps some almost-monk of one half-remembered pain apprehension, with neither monastery nor home, who feels now the hidden meaning of life: that this is all that there is or should be, this peace brought because there is a freedom from desiring desires. Someone sad, burdened by a deep naked knowledge of himself, but who and now, too sensitive perhaps, smiles too often and tries to hide the burgeoning tears of joy that sometimes seem to so betake him unawares...

I, now, someone - who unlike so many millions world-wide - fortunate indeed to have shelter, food adequate to feed his gauntness for a day; clothes sufficient to keep-in warmth; and health - though ageily ageing, slowly fading - enough to keep him fending for, and fendful of, himself. There could be more; there was far more, but that seems long ago; unneeded now. For this is all that there is, this happiness in moments when - needs fulfilled - no lust for change, having laid in wait within, bursts forth bringing thus such breaking difference as so often causes two, more, far more, humans to break or drift apart.

Emotions governed, basic needs supplied, with memories - of lives - sufficientized for years of daily dreams, what more remains, becomes required? Little, so very little, except we being human, external still, do still so cause such suffering, so much - for what?

For there has come upon me these past few years, of this so simple living, a certain understanding. Of how I am never, was never, ever, totally alone, being only one briefly born connexion. Of just how easy it is to be content, breeding happiness in oneself and others, and how even easier it is to lapse, to fail, to fall; to let feelings, abstractions, guide, control, as when in the past I would breed discontent within myself, with loved ones and others, never satisfied with this or that. For happiness, I presumed, lay in better things - a better home some better place; better food clothes holidays finer wine; that other woman, there; and, perhaps far worse, lay with better way of life for those unknown, a way wrought by deeds done, by pursuit of lifeless ideation as if I, that temporary self, might have made some difference and that those causal shells had or might be given meaning or even by violence, blood, become somehow gifted with the breath of life.

So little self-control. So much love, hopes, lives destroyed; and how much suffering I by hubris caused. So much - for what? Some selfish passing pleasure; no external change that lasted; that ever could, would, last. Since real change, discovered, is only and ever within ourselves, alone - there, interior, ready to gently touch another, one gift of one person personally known so that only now perhaps I am with, of, the numen living.

Thus I am returned to sometimes where I so briefly was, my purpose altered, far beyond the goals I in arrogance so vainly figured. For I am nothing special, unique; only some half-remembered vague aspirations of this age, whose words, life - as so many - perhaps uncovers divinity as the divine but whose

past concerned creating illusion, illusions, in expiation of a humanity then so lost.

Returned, as when I with tent, wandered, roamed. Returned, as those sunny warm days that Summer in Leeds when - before a monastery claimed me - I would walk barefoot inanely smiling so pleased to be free, young, alive.

Returned as when, bus-arrived, love caught me and she that April day embraced me with such hope, such gentle hope, such simple sharing dreams that remembrance now brings so many tears of sadness. For I in selfishness broke them.

Returned as that day - so many many years on - when love for me lived within another as we two so slowly walked some Worcester streets...

How foolish, how so very foolish, to have lost such times, such love, by lust for change, by such selfish stupidity as lived within me still and still until years years further on that other dying came in May to almost break betake me.

Now, I am only someone living - a simple living - with a certain fallible inner understanding, born of suffering, deaths, distress, despair. So there is so aptly now only slow quiescent walks alone and such memories, such memories, as I hope I hope have made a better man.

August 2011

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This Only This

In the garden, heard through the large open window, the birds having sensed the onset of Spring sing as they sing at this most glorious time of year. And I, I overwhelmed again by the sadness emanating even here from my knowing of the suffering-causing personal deeds of my past. So many, so many I had not thought to count so many - until now. So many how could I while buoyed by hubris have hurt that many? So much deception, so many lies, while they - the friends, family, wives, lovers - trusted with that goodness born of heavenly-human hope.

No prayers, no supplication, to wash away, remove, the manifold stains. If only, if only I (as once, those several times) believed, so that penance, absolution - embraced - might bring the chance to dream, to-be, to see, to love again. But no apologies possible nor by they desired, for they are gone - deceased, or lost those many years ago; no words sufficient, of meaning, to redeem a memory of such a scarring pain.

No mechanism, manufactured, to return before the time of such hurtful hurting with such knowing as so bends me now, down, down and kneeling sans any means of prayer. Only emotion falling, fallen, keeping such memories as some music makes numinously plaintive the joy the pain, century folding folded to century while they the multitudinous I's made the good the trusting suffer. No past of expiations. No Spring of goodness to burgeon forth to herald they through pathei-mathos changed.

Which is why, perhaps, so many still need desire - to trust in - God. For there is this only this: to write to rest to sleep to dream to cease to feel. And the world will still be there when I am gone.

March 2012

Part Three

A Rejection of Extremism Perhaps Explained Some Personal Replies (2011-2012)

No Words Of Mine Can Describe The Remorse

Yesterday was one of those glorious English Summer days of warm Sun, blue sky, when I - after a long walk - had sat down in the tufted grass on that slope of a hill to view the vista below. The river curving as it curved through the hedged-in fields of crops and pasture; the far distant greenful hills unclear in heat-made haze; the country lane that, now devoid of vehicles, would give access again to scattered houses and those well-separated working farms. It felt - perhaps was - paradise on Earth, for I fortunate to have water, food enough to feed me for a day; clothes and boots - though worn - sufficient for their purpose; even a place - dry, undamp, with bed - to sleep such sleep as might by night be gifted. It felt - and was -

good to be alive, touched a little and for a while by some type of inner peace. So little, so very little, really needed...

The problem in the past had been me, my lack of understanding of myself and my egoism. It was my fault: not the place, not the time, not the people, for I so desired with that arrogance of youth to exchange this paradise, here, for those ideas, the idealism, the abstractions, I carried around in my prideful hubriatic head. Seldom content, for long, since happiness came with - was - the pursuit, or the gratification of my personal desires. So destructive, so very destructive. So hurtful, inconsiderate, selfish, profane.

The defining moment, for me - in terms of understanding myself, in terms of understanding politics and the error of my decades of extremism - was the tragic personal loss of a loved one in May 2006. In the hours following that event I just knew - tearfully knew without words - my own pathetic failure; what I had lost, what was important. Thus there came upon me that day a sense of overwhelming grief, compounded by a remembrance of another personal loss of a loved one thirteen years earlier. For it was as if in those intervening years I had learned nothing; as if I had made the life and the dying and death of Sue, in 1993 - and of what we shared in the years before - unimportant.

I have no words to describe how insignificant, how worthless, I felt that day in May 2006; no words to describe, recall, retell, the remorse, the pain. Suffice now to recount that my life was never, could never be, the same again. Gone - the arrogance that had sustained me for so many experiential decades. Gone - the beliefs, the abstractions, the extremisms, I had so cherished and so believed in. That it took me another three years, from that day, to finally, irretrievably, break the bonds of my Shahadah sworn six years earlier - and the oath of personal loyalty that I believed still bound me to one person still alive then in a far distant land - most certainly says something more about me, about my character, about my interior struggles.

Thus it was that I came to know, to feel, how irrelevant politics and political organizations were for me, personally. So that ever since I have had no desire whatsoever to involve myself in politics - or even in trying to somehow change the world be it by politics, or by religion, or by whatever. Instead, my concern has been to try to [fully] understand and thence reform myself; to reflect upon my four decades of diverse involvements, discovering as I did those involvements for the extremisms they were; and to try to, and finally sans all abstractions, answer important questions such as Quid Est Veritas.

As I wrote in my May 2012 essay Pathei-Mathos, Genesis of My Unknowing:

"What I painfully, slowly, came to understand, via pathei-mathos, was the importance - the human necessity, the virtue - of love, and how love expresses or can express the numinous in the most sublime, the most human, way. Of how extremism (of whatever political or religious or ideological kind) places some abstraction, some ideation, some notion of duty to some ideation, before a personal love, before a knowing and an appreciation of the numinous. Thus does extremism - usurping such humanizing personal love - replace human love with an extreme, an unbalanced, an intemperate, passion for something abstract: some ideation, some ideal, some dogma, some 'victory', some-thing always supra-personal and always destructive of personal happiness, personal dreams, personal hopes; and always manifesting an impersonal harshness: the harshness of hatred, intolerance, certitude-of-knowing, unfairness, violence, prejudice.

Thus, instead of a natural and a human concern with what is local, personal and personally known, extremism breeds a desire to harshly interfere in the lives of others - personally unknown and personally distant - on the basis of such a hubriatic certitude-of-knowing that strife and suffering are inevitable. For there is in all extremists that stark lack of personal humility, that unbalance, that occurs when - as in all extremisms - what is masculous is emphasized and idealized and glorified to the detriment (internal, and external) of what is muliebral, and thus when some ideology or some dogma or some faith or some cause is given precedence over love and when loyalty to some manufactured abstraction is given precedence over loyalty to family, loved ones, friends.

For I have sensed that there are only changeable individual ways and individual fallible answers, born again and again via pathei-mathos and whose subtle scent - the wisdom - words can neither capture nor describe, even though we try and perhaps need to try, and try perhaps (as for me) as one hopeful needful act of a non-religious redemption."

Therefore I have no political views now; I do not and cannot support any political organization, as I do not adhere to nor believe in nor support any particular religion or even any conventional Way of Life. All I have are some personal and fallible answers to certain philosophical, personal, ethical, and theological,

questions. No certainty about anything except about my own uncertainty of knowing and about the mistakes, the errors, of my past.

Having written so much - far too much - for so many decades and having made so many suffering-causing mistakes, I also have no desire now to write anymore about anything, except perchance for a few missives such as this, as part perhaps of my needed expiation, and in explanatory reply when asked of certain things. Such as in exposition of my mistakes, my remorse, and particularly in explanation of the personal love, the gentleness, the compassion, the humility, the peace, that I feel - feel, not know - might possibly enable us to find, to feel, our paradise on Earth, and so not cause suffering, not add to the suffering that so blights this world and has so blighted it for so long, mostly because of people such as me. The ideologues, the extremists, the fanatics, the terrorists, the bigots, the egoists. The unhumble ones unappreciative of the numinous: those whose certainty of knowing - and those whose sense of a personal 'destiny' - makes them uncompassionate, unempathic, hateful, prejudiced, intolerant, and devoted to either 'their cause' or to themselves. Those whose happiness comes with - and is - the pursuit, and/or the gratification of their so selfish desires.

Just how many more seasons - years, decades, centuries, millennia - will we humans as a species need to find and to live our mortal lives in compassionate, empathic, paradisaal peace?

June 2012

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Letter To My Undiscovered Self

For nearly four decades I placed some ideation, some ideal, some abstraction, before personal love, foolishly - inhumanly - believing that some cause, some goal, some ideology, was the most important thing and therefore that, in the interests of achieving that cause, that goal, implementing that ideology, one's own personal life, one's feelings, and those of others, should and must come at least second if not further down in some lifeless manufactured schemata.

My pursuit of such things - often by violent means and by incitement to violence and to disaffection - led, of course, not only to me being the cause of suffering to other human beings I did not personally know but also to being the cause of suffering to people I did know; to family, to friends, and especially to those - wives, partners, lovers - who for some reason loved me.

In effect I was selfish, obsessed, a fanatic, an extremist. Naturally, as extremists always do, I made excuses - to others, to myself - for my unfeeling, suffering-causing, intolerant, violent, behaviour and actions; always believing that 'I could make a difference' and always blaming some-thing else, or someone else, for the problems I alleged existed 'in the world' and which problems I claimed, I felt, I believed, needed to be sorted out.

Thus I as a neo-nazi, as a racist, would for some thirty years and by diatribes spoken, written, rant on and on about these alleged problems: about 'the Jewish/Zionist problem, about 'the dangers of race-mixing', about the need for 'a strong nation', about 'why we need a revolution', about 'the struggle for victory', about 'the survival of the Aryan race', and so on and so on. Later on, following my conversion to Islam, I would - for some seven or so years - write and talk about 'the arrogance of the kuffar', about 'the need for a Khilafah', about 'the dangers of kufr', about 'the need for Jihad against the kuffar', and so on and so on.

Yet the honest, the obvious, truth was that I - and people like me or those who supported, followed, or were incited, inspired, by people like me - were and are the problem. That my, that our, alleged 'problems' (political/religious), were phantasmagorical; unreal; imagined; only projections based on, caused by, invented ideas that had no basis in reality, no basis in the simple reality of human beings. For the simple reality of most human beings is the need for simple, human, things: for personal love, for friendship, for a family, for a personal freedom, a security, a stability - a home, food, playfulness, a lack of danger - and for the dignity, the self-respect, that work provides.

But instead of love we, our selfish, our obsessed, our extremist kind, engendered hate. Instead of peace, we engendered struggle, conflict, killinInstead of tolerance we engendered intolerance. Instead fairness and equality we engendered dishonour and discrimination. Instead of security we produced, we encouraged, revolution, violence, change.

The problem, the problems, lay inside us, in our kind, not in 'the world', not in others. We, our kind - we the pursuers of, the inventors of, abstractions, of ideals, of ideologies; we the selfish, the arrogant, the hubriatic, the fanatics, the obsessed - were and are the main causes of hate, of conflict, of suffering, of inhumanity, of violence. Century after century, millennia after millennia.

In retrospect it was easy to be, to become, obsessed, a fanatic, an extremist - someone pursuing some goal, someone identifying with some cause, some ideology; someone who saw 'problems' and felt such 'problems' had to be sorted out. For such extremism, such goals, fulfilled a need; they gave a sense of identity; a sense of belonging; a sense of purpose. So that instead of being an individual human being primarily concerned with love, with and responsible for personal matters - the feeling and issues and problems of family, friends, loved ones - there was a feeling of being concerned with and part of 'higher more important things', with the inevitable result one becomes hard, hardened, and thence dehumanized.

Easy to be thus, to be an outward extremist; just as it is easy for some other humans (especially, it seems, for men) to be and remain extremists in an inner, interior, way: selfish, hubristic, arrogant, unfeeling, and thus obsessed with themselves, their physical prowess, and/or subsumed by their personal desires, their feelings, their needs, to the exclusion of others. For - despite our alleged, our believed in, 'idealism' - we the outward extremists were, we had become like, those selfish, hubristic, arrogant, unfeeling humans; only that instead of being slaves to our personal desires, feelings, needs, we were enslaved to our ideals, our goals, our ideologies, our abstractions, and to the phantasmagorical problems we manufactured, we imagined, or we believed in.

In essence, it was a failure of humanity on our, on my, part. A failure to see, to know, to feel, the human - the individual - reality of love, of peace. A failure to personally, as individuals, be empathic, compassionate, loving, kind, fair.

For love is not some ideal to be striven for, to be achieved by some supra-personal means. It is just being human: among, with, other humans, in the immediacy-of-the-moment. From such a human, individual, love - mutual and freely given, freely returned - there is peace: tranquillity, security.

That it took me four decades, and the tragic death of two loved ones, to discover these simple truths surely reveals something about the person I was and about the extremisms I championed and fought for.

Now, I - with Sappho - not only say that,

I love delicate softness:
For me, love has brought the brightness
And the beauty of the Sun [1]

but also that a personal, mutual, love between two human beings is the most beautiful, the most sacred, the most important, the most human, thing in the world; and that the peace that most of us hope for, desire in our hearts, only requires us to be, to become, loving, kind, fair, empathic, compassionate, human beings.

For that we just have to renounce our extremism, both inner and outer.

February 2012

Notes

[1]

ἔγω δὲ φίλημ' ἀβροσύναν [...] τοῦτο καὶ μοι
τὸ λάμπρον ἔρωσ ἀελίῳ καὶ τὸ κάλον λέλογχε.

Sappho, poetic fragment: P. Oxyrhynchus. XV (1922) nr. 1787 fr. 1 et 2

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Four Replies: Just My Fallible Views, Again

The following extracts are from several personal e-mail replies, sent between June and September of 2012, to a lady correspondent originally from England but then living in an Eastern European country.

Reply 1

You seem very much preoccupied with lessons you have learned from grief and regret, pain and suffering [...]

[My] recent propensity to be somewhat subsumed with a certain sadness [arose] from not only pondering on such questions as pathei-mathos, the causes/alleviation of suffering, and the nature of religion, expiation, and extremism, but also from understanding, from feeling, just how much suffering I personally have caused during my extremist decades and knowing that had it not been for the tragic death of a loved one some six years ago I would most probably have continued my career as a suffering-causing extremist.

Also, having spent decades trying to idealistically inspire people or manipulate them, and being manipulative either for allegedly idealistic reasons (some political or religious cause) or for purely selfish reasons, I finally came to know just how easy it is to make excuses for one's mistakes and unethical behaviour, especially in relation to some ideology or some political or religious cause. Having good intentions, I discovered, is not a valid reason to cause suffering, although believing one acted from good intentions does and can salve one's conscience. For I came to the conclusion that idealism itself was one of the fundamental causes of suffering, and that ultimately it is matter of us taking individual responsibility for ourselves and all our actions; for the suffering we cause, have caused, or can cause. To shift that responsibility onto others (as in some chain-of-command) – or onto some political cause or some faith – is just, in my fallible view at least, unethical.

As is positing or believing in some supreme deity who will decide matters for us (and judge us and others) and/or who has, apparently, laid down what is right and what is wrong.

There are somewhat complex and difficult questions here (or at least they seem complex and difficult questions to me). Questions such as if there is no God/supreme-deity – and no mechanism such as karma and thus no rebirth – then how to understand suffering and what do reformation of ourselves and expiation mean, and do they even have, or should they have, any meaning sans religion? How do we – sans religion and ideology – decide, know, what is ethical and what can motivate us to act ethically? What is innocence? Horrid things happen every day to people who do not deserve them. Every minute of every day somewhere some human being suffers because of some deed done to them by some other human being. Should that concern us? If so, why, and what could/might we do about it, and will what we do cause more suffering?

What I have termed 'the philosophy, the way, of pathei-mathos' – that is, my now much revised 'numinous way' – is just my attempt to answer such questions. And an attempt born from me accepting the truth about myself and my suffering-causing past. To do otherwise, I feel and felt, would have been to somehow in some way demean – to not learn from – that tragic recent death of a loved one. To, instead, continue with the arrogance, the hubris, of my past.

Perhaps it would have been easier for me to just accept the answers of some existing Way or of some religion. Certainly, a religious expiation could have eased the burden, relieved and relieve some or most of the grief, felt. A burden, a grief, which certainly has fuelled and infused my writings these past few years and some of which writings are my rather feeble attempts at a non-religious but hopefully still numinous expiation.

[...]

Reply 2

Perhaps all we can do is try and communicate, in some way (but gently) that wordless (empathic) knowing of another human being to others. A wordless humanizing knowing that I have come to appreciate many men seem to so often lack or believe or feel is far less important than their macho posturing and their love of and seeming need for conflict, control, competition, and war. Perhaps if women were more assertive, empowered, accepting of themselves, and perhaps if men appreciated women more – and men (heaven forfend) developed within themselves certain muliebral qualities – there might be less suffering in the world.

[...]

In my personal experience at least there is and was a positive aspect to Catholicism, as there is (again in my view and my experience) a positive aspect to most if not all conventional religions from Islam to Judaism to Buddhism to Christianity.

This is, they have the propensity to remind us of the need for humility by setting certain limits regarding our behaviour, and by in some way and in their own manner making us aware of the numinous, the sacred. Which is why, over the decades, I have learned to respect them and their adherents while accepting that their answers, their way, are not my answers, my way.

In respect of the sacred, for instance, I still find that one of the most beautiful expressions of the numinous is Catholic chant: Gregorian, Cistercien, and Vieux-Roman. Indeed, one of my favourite pieces of music is now, as it has been for decades, *Répons de Matines pour la fête de Saint Bernard*. One of my treasured memories is, as a monk, singing the office of Compline and then, in the sublime silence of the church, going to the Lady Chapel to kneel in contemplative wordless prayer on the stone floor in front of a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Such peace, such purity, in those moments. Another treasured memory is, decades later and when a Muslim, travelling in the Western Desert and with my Egyptian guide stopping to face Makkah and pray Zuhur Namaz while the hot Sun beat down and a hot breeze blew sand to cover part of my prayer mat. Again, a purity of silence – no one else around for perhaps a hundred miles – and a wordless warm feeling of connexion with something pure and far beyond and balancing our human hubris: to place us into the necessary supra-personal perspective.

Perhaps on balance the positive, humanizing, virtues of such religions now outweigh their negative qualities? Certainly, it seems to me, that most of the worst excesses of – for example – Christianity are now and hopefully historical (and one thinks here of excesses such as the Inquisition).

You just seem so sad... and it's such a pity to waste time being sad when there are a million and one reasons not to be.

In a strange way a certain sadness seems to keep me focussed, balanced, and human, preventing – sans religion – the return of that arrogant, hubriatic, violent individual who incited and preached hatred, intolerance, violence, killing, and who was responsible for causing much suffering.

[...]

Thus consciously recalling my own pathei-mathos, and that of others, and feeling the sadness that is part of such a learning, is I feel somewhat necessary, at least for me and for now.

Reply 3

As I type this I am listening to the orchestral version of Ravel's Pavane pour une Infante Defunte, and the beautiful music, your message, remind me yet again of our strange human condition; of our ability, our potential, to do what is fair, to be kind and to love, and also of our propensity to hate, to resort to violence, to be barbaric, as if the suffering of so many for so many millennia meant nothing, with nothing learned, except by a few.

A while ago, when I chanced to be travelling in England the train stopped at a station to allow new passengers to embark, I noticed a group of some four young men, in their early twenties. Yet even had not two of them been wearing (what I am informed are called) 'hoodies' embroidered with the name and symbol of their organization I would have recognized them. For forty years ago that would have been me, there, at such a place on such a day as that. A young man enthusiastically on his way to some political demonstration, or some meeting; proudly, defiantly, displaying his allegiance to his extremist cause, and standing, walking - holding himself - in such a way that you know he is ready for, even eager for, a fight.

This distant, momentary, and regardable encounter caused this ageing man - a when beyond three score - a certain sadness. What value, then - what purpose - my writings these past few years? For it was as if the pathei-mathos of that aged man, as that of so many others - our knowing of the human cost and consequences of hatred - had little or no effect. The same prejudice; the same propensity and need for violence; the same disruption of so many non-harming innocent lives; the same lack of empathy, understanding, love; the same intolerance and the same spewing forth and distribution of ignorant propaganda. Only the names, the people, the symbols and the flags, change; year following year, decade after decade.

I well knew the perceived enemies of these latter-day types: the people hated, reviled; the subject of the speeches, the propaganda, of their leaders.

I well knew how they hated, and why. I well knew the slyness of their leaders, of how they desired to describe, to positively portray, themselves - and the excuses made regarding violence. Above all, perhaps, I know so well the ignorance, the intolerance, the inhumanity, on which their beliefs, their cause, was founded, and which ignorance, which intolerance, which inhumanity, was indeed their cause, whatever the words, whatever the name, whatever the flag, whatever the year.

Not long after that impersonal encounter I did personally try to rationally engage with a few supporters of that organization, in an effort to correct - from personal experience - at least some of their prejudices about Islam and Muslims. To no avail, of course, so deep, irrational, was that prejudice, so strong the hatred of their perceived enemies; so alien to them was any vestige of humility. And would I, some forty

years ago, have listened to some old man pontificating about his experiences, his life, his learning? I doubt it. For I then, as they now, had that certainty-of-knowing, that arrogance, that is one of the foundations of extremism, of whatever kind.

Perhaps my political opponents of decades past were right and that the only effective way to deal with such people of intolerance, hatred, violence, and prejudice is to oppose them 'on the streets' and take every opportunity to reveal them for the bigots they are... But I no longer have any definitive answers, having only a certain certitude about my own unknowing.

Reply 4

[...]

To have such [youthful] certainty might make life easier and perhaps - in my case - as enjoyable as I remember those now long gone decades of youth and early manhood. I, as I am sure many others do and have done, have occasionally day-dreamed about returning to some such time in the past with the understanding and the knowledge gained in the intervening years and so perhaps act differently and (at least in my case) thus avoid causing the suffering so caused then.

But I do believe that my lack of certainty now is - even at the cost of a certain sadness - a good thing for me, as it prevents that arrogance of my youthful self from returning and seems to somehow better enable me to appreciate, to feel, the numinous and thus the distinction between what is good and what is bad.

Hence I find myself in the curious position of now possibly understanding and appreciating the wordless *raison d'etat* of Catholic monasticism, manifest as this is in a personal humility; a humility that during my time as a monk my then still hubriatic self could not endure for long. Which recent understanding and appreciation led me for a short while at least, and only a few years ago, to wistfully if unrealistically yearn to return to that particular secluded way of life. And unrealistic because for all that understanding, appreciation, and yearning, I no longer had the type of faith that was required, the type of Christian faith I did have when I had lived that monastic way of life. A lack of faith I really discovered and felt when I went, during that not-too-long-ago period of yearning, to stay once again and for a while in a monastery...

You really do seem to have been born with an overwhelming urge to fix the world, don't you? Is that why you're so sad? Because you can't fix it?

Unfortunately, I do seem to have been cursed, for some forty years, with idealism and with a hubriatic, fanatical, belief in what I deludedly believed was 'a good cause'. Which idealism and which belief caused me, as an extremist, to inflict and contribute to suffering; to incite violence, hatred, prejudice, intolerance.

But my sadness now is because of that extremist past; because of my arrogance; because I did cause such suffering; because I for so long incited violence, hatred, prejudice, intolerance. Because I did what was wrong, and cannot undo the harm done.

This sadness - this knowing of my own mistakes, this knowing of my own arrogance, this knowing of the harm I have done - means that I have no desire whatsoever to try and 'fix the world'. Rather, it means a deep personal remorse, a desire - however silly it might seem to others - for expiation. It means I do not like myself - as a person - knowing what I did, what I was capable of, and maybe still am capable of. It means I have to remember - every day - my mistakes, my uncertainty of knowing, and what is good, numinous, beautiful, innocent. It means living a quiet and quite reclusive life.

Which sadness and which remembering were part of the genesis of my philosophy of *pathei-mathos*. Of my feeling that perhaps we - as compassionate individuals aware of our fallibility and past mistakes - should not concern ourselves with what is beyond the purview of our empathy. Which in practice means the living of a private, a very personal, life where we do not concern ourselves with things we admit we do not really understand and have no personal knowledge of; that we do not meddle in the affairs of people we do not know and do not interact with on a personal basis; and that we only ever get involved in valourous defence of someone unfairly treated or unfairly attacked if we personally encounter such a situation or such an event.

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One Error-Prone Self

The reason why I now do not - and have no desire to - "get involved with social change" (or to "go out into the world and try to give something back" as another correspondent recently expressed it) is the reality of

me having made, and knowing and feeling I made, so many mistakes, shown such poor judgement, been so arrogant, so selfish, for so many decades - for most of my adult life. Given this reality, I simply do not trust myself anymore not to cause suffering, not to make even more mistakes, not to show poor judgement again. Just as I know my responsibility, my blame, for those my past mistakes and their human consequences.

Thus, why would I want to inflict myself on the world anymore? External engagement might in theory (just might) be possible for me again were I to have the guidance, the oversight, of others; a moral authoritative framework provided by good people I could empathize with and trust to guide, advise, correct me. But even then, even then given my past propensity to be hubriatic and selfish, I might veer away from doing what was right.

For the simple honest truth is that I now feel, in my very being, that I have no right to, can find no justification for me to - beyond that necessitated by personal honour in the immediacy of the moment [1] - interfere in the lives of others, in however small a way even if my initial motives might be (or seemed to me to be) good. For who I am to judge, decide, things beyond the purview of empathy and a very personal honour? I am just one fallible exceedingly error-prone human being with a long proven history of impersonal interference, of hubriatic, suffering-causing, and selfish, deeds. Someone who does not trust himself anymore and who values and tries to cultivate wu-wei. Which is the major reason why some months ago I ceased to write (to pontificate) - about anything; leaving me with only some few and sporadic (and soon also to cease) personal correspondences such as this [2].

In effect, I feel I am not - by being reclusive - retreating from the world, just seeking not to inflict my error-prone self on the world, on others. An error-prone self, a person, I admit I now do not like very much. Which is why there is also no longer any desire, not even any secret desire, to share my life, in however small or complete a way, with anyone or even with others be they friends old or new. Of course I could be wrong, and am just being silly or stupid. But it is how I have come to feel.

All I now have therefore are the brief human contacts that this type of reclusive non-religious life allows or finds is fitting. The smile, the cheery return of a 'hello' or a 'good morning' when a person is passed while out walking. Or perchance talk of the weather. No reason for me to be gruff, aloof or rude. Quite the contrary - a need to smile; to be polite; perhaps even a little charming and briefly. As if such small so human things so briefly made might be some minuscule emanation of that wordless quiet quite inexplicable inner joy and peace which somehow in some strange manner seems to flow within when I am out, outdoors, wherever whenever, able thus to feel the freshness of the air, see clouds and sky, feel this living planet as Nature lives and changes, and be again one particular if fragile brief mortal emanation, one microcosmic none-harming connexion, to all Life. For there, alive, it is as if I am who and what I now should be: no thought, no words, to spoil or soil earth, wind, sky, sea, clouds, heavens, or water.

But yes, there is a certain inner emptiness, and often, and bearing grief and sadness, when alone indoors. Inner vacant sometimes colding spaces which perhaps a belief in God - or the gods - might fill, and which certainly a partner or prayer or both would warm and dissipate. Yet this certain inner emptiness, such sadness, I sense is perhaps is as it should be for me, as part expiation for the varied harm my varied pasts - in this one life - have caused.

So many, so very many many, others in so many places world-wide far less fortunate than I, so that I have to - must - accept my pottering hopefully now non-harmful way of life, remembering. Always remembering that *θάνατος δὲ τότε ἔσσεται, ὁπότε κεν δὴ Μοῖραι ἐπικλώσωσ'* [3] and the suffering I personally have caused, balanced (perhaps) as such remembering is by a (perhaps naive) hope that someone or some many may learn and change as I seemed to have learnt and changed: learned to see, to feel, to try to gently be, the goodness we humans are capable of and have often shown ourselves to be capable of. A goodness revealed by empathy, and thus presenting to us an understanding of innocence, peace, forgiveness, honour, love and joy, far beyond any words I know.

The grievous reprehensible sadness-causing mistake I as extremist, with my fanatical hubriatic certitude of knowing, made for some forty years - and which all extremists of whatever kind always make - was/is to place some idea, some ideal, some dogma, some abstraction, before the innocence of human beings and before those quite simple things which empathy and *pathei-mathos* reveal and which express our humanity:

"...the desire for personal love and the need to be loyally loved; the need for a family and the bonds of love within a family that lead to the desire to protect, care for, work for, and if necessary defend one's loved ones. The desire for a certain security and stability and peace, manifest in a home, in sufficiency of food, in playfulness, in friends, in tolerance, in a lack of danger. The need for the dignity, the self-respect, that work, that giving love and being loved,

provide..." [4]

and a knowing of, a feeling for, and acknowledgement of, innocence: where those who are personally unknown to us are unjudged by us and are given the benefit of the doubt, since this presumption of innocence of others – until or unless direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, proves otherwise – is the fair, the reasoned, the numinous, the human, thing to do.

That reprehensible mistake I made is why extremists embody and manifest hate and violence and conflict; because extremists dehumanize, as well as so often enjoying and needing the exhilaration, the sense of identity, the 'enemies', that hate and violence and conflict and abstractions give birth to and always thereafter nurture. A dehumanization so evident in the truth that extremists place some goal, some idea, some ideal, some dogma, some abstraction, some political/social/religious agenda, before a personal love, before a personal loyalty, before stability, peace, and innocence; blind as extremists mostly are - willfully or neglectfully, or naturally because of their character - to the good and to the good people of human intentions which and who exist and which and who have existed in those societies such extremists almost invariably, because of their hubriatic certitude-of-knowing, seek to undermine, destabilize, decimate, overturn, revolutionize, or destroy.

But I have no chanted, sung, or contemplative Opus Dei to try, in monastic peace and with hope and faith, to balance - Soli Deo Honor et Gloria - the unwise deeds of so many; nor any longer a desire or need to interfere in the lives of others. So there is for me only the living of each moment as it passes: no aim, no goal. Instead:

The smile of joy when Sun of Summer
Presents again this Paradise of Earth
For I am only tears, falling

November 2012

Notes

[1] As I mentioned in *The Numinous Balance of Honour* section of my *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary*,

"[The] personal virtue of honour, and the cultivation of wu-wei, are - together - a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἁρμονίη. For personal honour is essentially a presencing, a grounding, of ψυχή - of Life, of our φύσις - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη."

[2] The minor reason why I some months ago ceased to write is that my *Recuyle of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos* contains (in my fallible view) all that is required for an understanding of, and all that is relevant to, my now completed *weltanschauung*.

[3] 'Our ending arrives whenever wherever the Moirai decide'. Attributed to Καλλίνου, as recorded by Ἰωάννης Στοβαῖος in his *Ἀνθολόγιον* (c. 5th century CE).

In respect of Μοῖραι (τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἑρινύες) - Trimorphed Moirai with their ever-heedful Furies - qv. Aeschylus [attributed], *Prometheus Bound*, 515-6, and Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 130:

Μοῖρ' ἀλαπάξει πρὸς τὸ βίαιον
...by the purging Moirai subdued

[4] *Some Personal Musings On Empathy* [Part II of *Recuyle of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*]

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A Slowful Learning, Perhaps

"And what the dead had no speech for, when living,
They can tell you, being dead: the communication
Of the dead is tongued with fire beyond the language of the living." [1]

Perhaps it is incumbent upon us to now celebrate, remember, transcribe, only the kind, the gentle, the

loving, the compassionate, the happy, and the personal, things - and those who have done them - and not the many things that have caused suffering, death, destruction, and inflicted violence on others. For, so often it seems, we human beings have and have had for millennia a somewhat barbaric propensity to celebrate, to remember, to transcribe, our seeming triumphs of personal pride and of victory over others - be such others some declared enemy or some designated foe - always or almost always forgetting the suffering, the deaths, the destruction, that such a seeming, and always transient, victory over others has always involved, and always or almost always forgetting the suffering, the hurt, the unhappiness, that our selfish prideful desire to triumph, to succeed, causes in someone or some many somewhere.

For millennia so many have been fixated on either our selves - our pride, our success, our needs, our desires - or on the pride, the success, the needs, the security, the prosperity, we have assigned to or we accepted as a necessary part of some ideal, some entity, some supra-personal abstraction.

Thus, anciently, in the name of some Pharaoh or some Caesar, or some King, or some Chief, or some leader, or some religious faith, or on behalf of some interpretation of some religious faith, we sallied forth to war or to battle, causing suffering, death, destruction, and doing violence, to others. Invading here; invading there. Attacking here; interfering there. Defending this, or defending that. Destroying this, or destroying that.

Thus, latterly, in the name of some country, or some nation, or some political ideal, or some cause, or on behalf of some-thing supra-personal we believed in, we sallied for to war or did deeds that caused suffering, death, destruction, and inflicted violence on others. Defending this, or attacking that. Invading here; or colonizing there. Dreaming of or determined to find glory. Always, always, using the excuse that our cause, our ideal, our country, our nation, our security, our prosperity, our 'way of life', our 'destiny', hallowed our deeds; believing that such suffering, death, destruction as we caused, and the violence we inflicted on others, were somehow justified because 'we' were right and 'they' our foes, were wrong or in some way not as 'civilized' or as 'just' as us since 'their cause' or their 'way of life' or way of doing things was, according to us, reprehensible.

Whose voice now tells the story of all or even most of those who suffered and those who died in conflicts four thousand years ago? Three thousand, two thousand, years ago?

It is as if we, as a sentient species, have learnt nothing from the past four thousand years. Nothing from the accumulated pathei-mathos of those who did such deeds or who experienced such deeds or who suffered because of such deeds. Learnt nothing from four thousand years of the human culture that such pathei-mathos created and which to us is manifest - remembered, celebrated, transcribed - in Art, literature, memoirs, music, poetry, myths, legends, and often in the ethos of a numinous ancestral awareness or in those sometimes mystical allegories that formed the basis for a spiritual way of life.

All we have done is to either (i) change the names of that which or those whom we are loyal to and for which or for whom we fight, kill, and are prepared to die for, or (ii) given names to such new causes as we have invented in order to give us some identity or some excuse to fight, endure, triumph, preen, or die for. Pharaoh, Caesar, Pope, Defender of the Faith, President, General, Prime Minister; Rome, Motherland, Fatherland, The British Empire, Our Great Nation, North, South, our democratic way of life. It makes little difference; the same loyalty; the same swaggering; the same hubris; the same desire, or the same obligation or coercion, to participate and fight.

How many human beings, for instance, have been killed in the last hundred years in wars and conflicts? Wars and conflicts hallowed, or justified, by someone or some many somewhere. One hundred million dead? More? How many more hundreds of millions have suffered because of such modern wars and conflicts?

It is almost as if we - somehow flawed - need something beyond our personal lives to vivify us; to excite us; to test ourselves; to identify with. As if we cannot escape the barbarian who lies in wait, within; ready to subsume us once again so that we sally forth on behalf of some cause, some leader, or some ideal, or some abstraction, or as part of some crusade. As if we human beings, as Sophocles intimated over two thousand years ago, are indeed, by nature, and have remained sometimes honourable and sometimes dishonourable beings [2], able to sometimes be rational, thinking, beings, but also unable to escape our desire, our need, our propensity, to not only be barbaric but to try to justify to ourselves and to others our need for, and even our enjoyment of, such barbarity.

Or perhaps the stark truth is that it is we men who are flawed or incomplete and who thus need to change. As if we, we men, have not yet evolved enough to be able to temper, to balance, our harsh masculous nature with the muliebral; a balance which would see us become almost a new species; one which has, having finally sloughed off the suffering-causing hubriatic patriarchal attitudes of the past,

learnt from the pathei-mathos of our ancestors, from the pathei-mathos of our human culture, born and grown and nurtured as our human culture was, has been, and is by over four thousand years of human-caused suffering. A learning from and of the muliebral, for the wyrdful thread which runs through, which binds, our human pathei-mathos is a muliebral one: the thread of kindness, of gentleness, of love, of compassion; of empathy; of the personal over and above the supra-personal.

A learning that reveals to us a quite simple truth; that what is wrong is causing or contributing to suffering, and that, with (at least in my admittedly fallible opinion) one exception and one exception only [3] we cannot now (again, at least in my admittedly fallible opinion) morally justify intentionally causing or contributing to the suffering of any living being.

How many more centuries - or millennia - will we need? To learn, to change, to cease to cause such suffering as we have for so many millennia caused.

My own life - of four decades of suffering-causing extremism and personal selfishness - is, most certainly, just one more example of our manful capacity to be stupid and hubriatic. To fail to learn from the pathei-mathos of human culture, even though I personally had the advantages of a living in diverse cultures and of a 'classical education', and thus was taught or became familiar with the insights of Lao Tzu, of Siddhartha Gautama, of Jesus of Nazareth, of Sappho, Sophocles, Aeschylus, Cicero, Livy, Marcus Aurelius, Dante Alighieri, Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, TS Eliot, EM Forster, and so many others; and even though I had the opportunity to discover, to participate in, and thus felt, the numinosity, the learning, inherent in so many other things, from plainchant to Byrd, Dowland, Palestrina, Tallis, to JS Bach and beyond. And yet, despite all these advantages, all these chances to learn, to evolve, I remained hubriatic; selfish, arrogant, in thrall to ideations, and like so many men somewhat addicted to the joy, to the pleasures, of *kampf*, placing pursuit of that pleasure, or some cause, or some ideation, or my own needs, before loved ones, family, friends. Only learning, only finally and personally learning, after a death too far.

Is that then to be our human tragedy? That most of us cannot or will not learn - that we cannot change - until we, personally, have suffered enough or have encountered, or experienced, or caused, one death too many?

November 2012

Notes

[1] TS Eliot, Little Gidding

[2] As Sophocles expressed it:

πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ κούδεν ἄνθρωπου δεινότερον πέλει...
σοφὸν τι τὸ μηχανόεν τέχνας ὑπὲρ ἐλπίδ' ἔχων
τοτὲ μὲν κακόν, ἄλλοτ' ἐπ' ἐσθλὸν ἔρπει

There exists much that is strange, yet nothing
Has more strangeness than a human being...
Beyond his own hopes, his cunning
In inventive arts - he who arrives
Now with dishonour, then with chivalry

Antigone, v.334, vv.365-366

[3] The one exception is personal honour; the valourous use of force in a personal situation, as mentioned in The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary.

ooo

Miserere Mei, Deus

In respect of religion, there seems to have grown within me, this past year, a feeling regarding prayer, especially contemplative prayer, or rather that quiet way of being when - with no expectation of or belief in God - no words are desired or required and one is aware of the numinous in such an unaffected way that there is a calmness emanating not from within - not caused by our knowing or feeling of self - but from that ineffable vastness beyond which includes us and all the life that seeps into us, there in our stillness: emanations, of not only the dreams, the hopes, the love, the sadness, the sorrow, the grief, the pain, the joy, the tragedy, felt, known, experienced by we humans millennia after millennia, but also of

the being, the essence, of the other life around us, here as Nature, and elsewhere, which, as we, 'hath but a short time to live'.

A feeling, an intimation, of perhaps in some small way now understanding the Latin Opus Dei - Officium Divinum - as a needful daily reminder of our needful humility, as the plaintive cry Miserere Mei, Deus so reminds, and as the Namaz of Islam also so reminds with its Ruku, Sajdah, and recitation of Subhana Rabbiyal a'la. A needful daily reminder that we are transient beings, prone to dishonour, selfishness, and hubris, but who can be loving and kind, and beings prone to the charisma, the temptation, of words, either our own or those spoken or written by others. A reminder that we can so easily forget, have so often forgotten, "that gentleness, that modest demeanour, that understanding, which derives from an appreciation of the numinous and also from one's own admitted uncertainty of knowing and one's acknowledgement of past mistakes. An uncertainty of knowing, an acknowledgement of mistakes, that often derive from πάθει μάθος." [1]

A feeling, thus, of again understanding the necessitude we humans seem to have for prayer and for God, for Allah, for the gods, for the divine; and why this need, and its varied expression over millennia, should be respected and not profaned by that hubriatic personal certitude-of-knowing which enthral, and has enthralled, so many especially in more recent times, making many of them prejudiced against organized religions and often against other expressions of spirituality.

Personally, I have - fully knowing my past hubris, the suffering I have caused, and aware of my manifold errors and mistakes over four decades - a great respect for other religions and spiritual ways, and aware as I am how they each in their own manner, express, have expressed, or are intimations of, the numinous. For instance, I have come to appreciate, more and more over the past few years, the numinosity of the sacred music of the Christian Church (especially Catholicism), from before Gregorian chant to composers such as Byrd, Dowland, Lassus, to Palestrina, to Phillipe de Monte, and beyond. So much so that such sacred music is now the only music I can listen to, out of choice, redolent as it is, has become, for me, of the beautiful, of humility, of tragedy, of a sacred suprapersonal joy, of what is or can be divined through contemplative prayer. A remarkable treasure of culture, of pathei-mathos...

Without such religious, such spiritual, such organized, reminders, daily or weekly - that is, without prayer and without what is perhaps the best that religions and spirituality manifest - how do we balance another need of ours? That need to cause suffering and cry havoc, and a need whose genesis, perhaps, resides in our desire to be, to express, to re-affirm the separation-of-otherness, manifest as this is and has been in our own self-importance, our egoism, our greed; and in our belief that 'we', our assumed or our assigned category, are better than, superior to, 'them', the others: that 'we' are 'right' or have right on our side while 'they' do not and are wrong, leading as such belief so often does and so often has done to conflict and war and to us treating 'the others' in a dishonourable, uncompassionate, way because we, or those we follow and obey, have dehumanized 'them'. For I now incline toward the view that without such categorization, such assumptions - such a prejudice, such a belief - about 'us' and 'them', without such greed, such self-interest, and such a need to express, to manifest, importance, then war and suffering-causing armed conflict are not possible.

Is humility, therefore and as most religions and spiritual ways inform us, a necessity for us, as human beings? And if so, then how to manifest such humility, to be reminded of such a need, if we, as I now, personally have no expectation of or belief in God, or in Allah - in Heaven or Jannah - or in gods, or even in mechanisms such as rebirth and karma? Such questions have greatly occupied me for the past three years.

Given what I have intuited about our human nature - what many others have intuited or discovered over millennia - and what I believe I may have learned from my own pathei-mathos, I feel humility is indeed a necessity for us, as a means of guiding us toward avoiding causing suffering; as a means of placing our own life in the cosmic perspective of Life. That is, as a means of appreciating our nature as fallible, error-prone, beings who have the ability, the character, to not only refrain from committing the error of hubris but to also rationally understand why hubris is an error and what the numinous may be, beyond ideations and beyond the myths, the allegories, the spiritualities, the words, that we have used and do use in order to try and express it.

As to how to manifest humility - sans religions, sans prayer to a deity or deities, (etcetera) - I admit I do not know, although my Recuyle Of The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos is my attempt to find, and to try and express, some answers [2]. Fallible answers such as the importance, the numinosity, of personal love; fallible answers such as empathy, and the knowing, the understanding, of others (and of ourselves) that empathy provides and of how such empathy and such empathic knowing is and can only be personal.

Fallible answers such as an appreciation of - and the presumption of - innocence, understood as

innocence is as an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us - of whom we have have no empathic knowledge - are therefore unjudged by us and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt until direct personal experience and individual and empathic knowing of them prove otherwise; and fallible answers such as appreciating how the separation-of-otherness leads to, is the genesis of, hubris.

Which leads me, and has led me, to other related questions. Without religions or some form or forms of social spirituality - without a belief in Heaven or Jannah or in a promised afterlife, or in rebirth and karma - how can humans change and so avoid the rotten behaviour, the hubris, that causes or contributes to suffering, and should we, as individuals or collectively, even try to change others, or should we concern ourselves only with our own inner and outer reformation? Has The State [3] assumed such a moral rôle by means of laws, punishments, and other mechanisms of authority or persuasion, and should The State assume or be allowed to assume such a moral rôle? My own answers, fallible and such as they are [4], are that our change, our reformation, are personal; consequences of pathei-mathos, a balanced judgement, and of empathy, and thus involve an appreciation of the numinous; and that the only non-suffering, non-hubriatic, way to change or try to change, to reform, others is by personal, direct, example and by valourous deeds in the immediacy of the moment. These answers are thus spiritual, apolitical, and imply that

"...what matters [is] our own moral character, our interior life, our appreciation of the numinous, and the individual human beings we interact with on the personal level; so that our horizon is to refine ourselves into cultured beings who are civil, reasoned, empathic, non-judgemental, unbiased, and who will, in the words of one guide to what is moral, Ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ." [5]

December 2nd, 2012

Notes, Post Scriptum:

[1] *Toward Humility - A Brief Personal View*, included in *Pathei-Mathos: A Path to Humility* (2012)

[2] In addition to that recueil, the text *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos* provides a reasonable overview of such answers.

[3] As mentioned in *Politics, Society, Social Reform, and Pathei-Mathos*, The State is defined as:

The concept of both (1) organizing and controlling - over a particular and large geographical area - land (and resources); and (2) organizing and controlling individuals over that same geographical particular and large geographical area by: (a) the use of physical force or the threat of force and/or by influencing or persuading or manipulating a sufficient number of people to accept some leader/cliq̄ue/minority/representatives as the legitimate authority; (b) by means of the central administration and centralization of resources (especially fiscal and military); and (c) by the mandatory taxation of personal income.

[4] Outlined in *Recuyle Of The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos* and *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*.

[5] The quotation is from my *Prejudice, Extremism, Islamophobia, and Culture*.

Appendix

Usage of Terms

Abstraction

An abstraction is a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing.

Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average)

value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed.

Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future.

All abstractions involve a causal perception, based as they are on the presumption of a linear cause-and-effect (and/or a dialectic) and on a posited or an assumed category or classification which differs in some way from some other assumed or posited categories/classifications, past, present or future. When applied to or used to describe/classify/distinguish/motivate living beings, abstractions involve a causal separation-of-otherness; and when worth/value/identity (and exclusion/inclusion) is or are assigned to such a causal separation-of-otherness then there is or there arises hubris.

Abstractions are often assumed to provide some 'knowledge' or some 'understanding' of some-thing assigned to or described by a particular abstraction. For example, in respect of the abstraction of 'race' applied to human beings, and which categorization of human beings describes a median set of values said or assumed to exist 'now' or in some recent historical past.

According to the philosophy of pathei-mathos, this presumption of knowledge and understanding by the application of abstractions to beings - living and otherwise - is false, for abstractions are considered as a primary means by which the nature of Being and beings are and have been concealed, requiring as abstractions do the positing and the continuation of abstractive opposites in relation to Being and the separation of beings from Being by the process of ideation and opposites.

Descriptor

A descriptor is a word, a term, used to describe some-thing which exists and which is personally observed, or is discovered, by means of our senses (including the faculty of empathy).

A descriptor differs from an ideation, category, or abstraction, in that a descriptor describes what-is as 'it' is observed, according to its physis (its nature) whereas an abstraction, for example, denotes what is presumed/assumed/idealized, past or present or future. A descriptor relies on, is derived from, describes, individual knowing and individual judgement; an abstraction relies on something abstract, impersonal, such as some opinion/knowing/judgement of others or some assumptions, theory, or hypothesis made by others.

An example of a descriptor is the term 'violent' [using physical force sufficient to cause bodily harm or injury to a person or persons] to describe the observed behaviour of an individual. Another example would be the term 'extremist' to describe - to denote - a person who treats or who has been observed to treat others harshly/violently in pursuit of some supra-personal objective of a political or of a religious nature.

Extremist/Extremism

By extreme I mean to be harsh, so that my understanding of an extremist is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious nature. Here, harsh is: rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic.

Hence extremism is considered to be: (1) the result of such harshness, and (2) the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists. In addition, a fanatic is considered to be someone with a surfeit of zeal or whose enthusiasm for some objective, or for some cause, is intemperate.

In the philosophical terms of my weltanschauung, an extremist is someone who commits the error of hubris.

Fanatic

Someone with a surfeit of zeal or whose enthusiasm for and/or commitment to some cause or ideal or ideology is excessive, intemperate.

Ideation

To posit or to construct an ideated form - an assumed perfect (ideal) form or category or abstraction - of some-thing, based on the belief or the assumption that what is observed by the senses, or revealed by observation, is either an 'imperfect copy' or an approximation of that thing, which the additional assumption that such an ideated form contains or in some way expresses (or can express) 'the essence'

or 'the ethos' of that thing and of similar things.

Ideation also implies that the ideated form is or can be or should be contrasted with what it considered or assumed to be its 'opposite'.

Ideology

By the term ideology is meant a coherent, organized, and distinctive set of beliefs and/or ideas or ideals, and which beliefs and/or ideas and/or ideals pertain to governance, and/or to society, and/or to matters of a philosophical or a spiritual nature.

Incitement

Incitement is used in the sense of 'to instigate' or to provoke or to cause or to 'urge others to'.

Indefinity

var. indifinity. Unmeasurable; immeasurable; endlessness; of no known limit. [Derived from indefinite c.1600 ce]

Innocence

In general, innocence is regarded as the attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us, are unjudged us by and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence – until personal experience and individual knowing of them prove otherwise – is the fair, the moral thing, to do.

In specific instances, such as quite young children, innocence implies actions are blameless, without harmful intent, and thus should be understood as causing no harm.

Masculous

Masculous is a term, a descriptor, used to refer to certain traits, abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with men, such as competitiveness, aggression, a certain harshness, the desire to organize/control, and a desire for adventure and/or for conflict/war/violence

/competition over and above personal love and culture. Extremist ideologies manifest an unbalanced, an excessive, masculous nature.

Masculous is from the Latin *masculus* and occurs, for example, in some seventeenth century works such as one by William Struther: "This is not only the language of Canaan, but also the masculous Schibboleth." *True Happines, or, King Davids Choice: Begunne In Sermons, And Now Digested Into A Treatise*. Edinbvrgh, 1633

Muliebral

The term muliebral derives from the classical Latin word *muliebris*, and in the context the philosophy of Pathei-Mathos refers to those positive traits, abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with women, such as empathy, sensitivity, gentleness, compassion, and a desire to love and be loved over and above a desire for conflict/adventure/war.

Politics

By the term politics is meant both of the following, according to context. (i) The theory and practice of governance, with governance itself founded on two fundamental assumptions; that of some minority - a government (elected or unelected), some military authority, some oligarchy, some ruling elite, some tyrannos, or some leader - having or assuming authority (and thus power and influence) over others, and with that authority being exercised over a specific geographic area or territory. (ii) The activities of those individuals or groups whose aim or whose intent is to obtain and exercise some authority or some control over - or to influence - a society or sections of a society by means which are organized and directed toward changing/reforming that society or sections of a society in accordance with a particular ideology.

Radical Islam

By radical Islam is meant a particular modern harsh interpretation of Deen al-Islam. This is the belief that practical Jihad against 'the enemies of Islam' and the occupiers of Muslim lands is an individual duty incumbent upon every able-bodied Muslim; that Muslims should live among Muslims under the guidance of Shariah; that Muslims should return to the pure guidance of Quran and Sunnah and distance

themselves from the ways and the influence of the kuffar.

Many though not all radical Muslims also support the restoration of the Khilafah; are intolerant of those Muslims they consider have allied themselves with the kuffar; and believe that 'martyrdom operations' against enemies are permissible according to Quran, Sunnah, and Ijmah. In addition, many supporters of such operations also believe that the deaths of non-combatants in some or all such operations are permissible according to the aforementioned criteria.

Separation-of-Otherness

The separation-of-otherness is a term used, in the philosophy of pathei-mathos, to describe the implied or assumed causal separateness of living beings, a part of which is the distinction we make (instinctive or otherwise) between our self and the others. Another part is assigning our self, and the-others, to (or describing them and us by) some category/categories, and to which category/categories we ascribe (or to which category/categories has/have been ascribed) certain qualities or attributes.

Given that a part of such ascription/denoting is an assumption or assumptions of worth/value/difference and of inclusion/exclusion, the separation-of-otherness is the genesis of hubris; causes and perpetuates conflict, hatred, violence, and suffering.

The separation-of-otherness conceals the nature of Beings and beings; a nature which empathy and pathei-mathos can reveal.

Society

By the term society is meant a collection of people who live in a specific geographic area or areas and whose association or interaction is mostly determined by a shared set of guidelines or principles or beliefs, irrespective of whether these are written or unwritten, and irrespective of whether such guidelines/principles/beliefs are willingly accepted or accepted on the basis of acquiescence.

State

By the term The State is meant:

The concept of both (1) organizing and controlling – over a particular and large geographical area – land (and resources); and (2) organizing and controlling individuals over that same geographical particular and large geographical area by: (a) the use of physical force or the threat of force and/or by influencing or persuading or manipulating a sufficient number of people to accept some leader/cliue/minority/representatives as the legitimate authority; (b) by means of the central administration and centralization of resources (especially fiscal and military); and (c) by the mandatory taxation of personal income.

Terrorism

A useful definition of terrorism is that it is the calculated use of violence or the threat of violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of an ideology or of goals that are generally considered to be political, religious, or ideological.

The Good

The good is considered to be what is fair; what alleviates or does not cause suffering; what is compassionate; what is honourable; what is reasoned and balanced.

Violence

By the term violence is meant the use - by a person or persons and in pursuit of an ideology or of goals that are generally considered to be political, religious, or ideological - of physical force sufficient to cause bodily harm or injury to a person or persons.

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Extremism, Terrorism, Culture, And Physis A Question Of Being

Disinclined as I am, and as I have been for many years, to comment on recent events, I have - after much reflexion - decided to respond to certain questions asked of me, given that several friends and diverse individuals (communicating through correspondence forwarded to me through intermediaries) have expressed an interest in my opinion about some recent events in France because of my forty years of (now regretted) practical experience of extremism [1] and extremists and which experience included not only being an advocate, as a Muslim, of what has become known as 'Islamic extremism', but also of being a neo-nazi activist and ideologue who preached and who advocated subversion, insurrection, hatred, and terrorism.

The recent events in France, where seventeen people were killed at four locations between the 7th and 9th of January 2015 - and similar events on other lands, from September 2001 (9/11) onwards - have led many people to speculate about the problem of, about causes of, and what may be required to prevent, such acts.

My admittedly fallible view, derived from my personal decades of experience, is that simple cause-and-effect answers are rather misguided, however naturally instinctive and/or politically expedient they might be - and/or however effective (or perhaps necessary) some of them might be in the short-term: of years, of a decade or more. For I incline toward the view that the long-term solution does not lie in more legislation, or in more security measures, or in idealizing one culture over and above another (as in the West verses Islam), or in invading other lands, or even in attempting to combat 'extremism' by means of advocacy of a 'moderate' interpretation of some religion or some political ideology. Rather, the long-term solution lies in understanding our basal physis [2] as human beings and then considering how - or even if - that basal physis can be changed, evolved.

For the reality - the truth - of our being is that we humans can always find, and have always found - century after century, millennia after millennia - some cause or some ideology or some ideation or some interpretation of some religion or some dogma or some leader to allow us to express, to live, what is solely masculine [3]. For as I know from my own experience and involvements such an expression, such a living, vivifies, excites, and has so often provided us (or a significant portion of us) with a sense of purpose, an identity, and thus given our lives meaning.

Thus, for that significant portion of us, it is our basal nature - our basal character - as human beings which is at fault, the cause; not some current or past harsh interpretation of some religion or of some weltanschauung; not some 'extremist' ideology, per se; not some failure to tackle extremism; not some deficiency of law nor some failure (of intelligence, or otherwise) by the Police or by some State security service. That is, the harsh modern interpretation of a religion such as Islam (manifest for example in al-Qa'ida and in groups such as ad-Dawlah al-Islamiyah fil 'Iraq wa ash-Sham), or the extremism manifest in nazism and fascism (past and present) are symptoms, not the cause.

For it is my considered opinion - fallible as it is and based as it is on what (admittedly limited) knowledge I have of the circumstances - that the perpetrators of recent events in France simply found, in a harsh interpretation of Islam, something which not only gave them a sense of purpose, a goal - which gave their lives meaning - but also provided them with an excuse to behave according to their physis or what they believed their physis should be: to be what they were or had become or should become. That is, lacking that empathy - such compassion and such honour, such muliebral virtues - as would have engendered within them a feeling for, an intuition of, and thus an appreciation of, innocency [4] and of individuals as individuals and not as abstracted 'enemies' or as somehow 'inferior' to them or as a means whereby what they believed in, or desired (such as some after-life), could be achieved.

In other words, a harsh modern interpretation of a particular religion hallowed what is masculine to the detriment of what is muliebral, making such a basal, such an unbalanced, masculine physis an ideal to be imitated and strived for, and which masculine ideal included the notion of a personal immolation, via kampf and a dishonourable disregard for the innocency of others, as a means to some posited goal. An unbalanced masculine physis also evident in - and idealized by - the ideologies of communism, nazism, and fascism, and in and by the 'puritanical' and inquisitorial interpretations of Christianity centuries before.

How then can that basal physis be changed or evolved? How can the masculine be balanced with the muliebral thus avoiding such unbalance, such bias toward the masculine, as has brought so much suffering recent and otherwise? All I have is a rather philosophical, quite long-term, and quite personal answer. Of, in terms of individuals, the development by individuals of empathy and the cultivation of the virtue of personal honour; and, in terms of society, Studia Humanitatis: that is, education to form, to shape, the manners and the character, of individuals by not only acquainting them with such topics as are, and were traditionally, included in that subject, but also of them being educated in such knowledge concerning our physis as our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos has bequeathed to us [5].

David Myatt
January 2015

Notes

[1] As I have explained in many of my post 2009 writings, by *extreme* is meant *to be harsh*, so that I consider an

extremist is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious nature. Here, *harsh* is: rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic, uncompassionate.

Hence I consider *extremism* to be: (a) the result of such harshness, and (b) the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists. In addition, a fanatic is considered to be someone with a surfeit of zeal or whose enthusiasm for some objective, or for some cause, is intemperate.

[2] I use the term *physis* (φύσις) as a revealing, a manifestation, of not only the true nature of beings but also of the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being. *Physis* is often apprehended (and thus understood) by we humans as the nature, the character, of some-thing; as, for example, in our apprehension of the character of a person.

[3] By the term *masculous* is meant certain traits, abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with men, such as competitiveness, aggression, a certain harshness, the desire to organize/control, and a desire for adventure and/or for conflict/war/violence/competition over and above personal love, compassion, and culture. In my view, extremist ideologies manifest an unbalanced, an excessive, *masculous* nature.

Masculous is from the Latin *masculus* and occurs, for example, in some seventeenth century works such as one by William Struther: "This is not only the language of Canaan, but also the *masculous* Schibboleth." *True Happiness, or, King Davids Choice: Begunne In Sermons, And Now Digested Into A Treatise*. Edinbvrgh, 1633

[4] I use the term 'innocence' to refer to a presumed attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us, are therefore unjudged by us and who thus, as honour requires, are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of the innocency of others – until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise – is the fair, the reasoned, the honourable, the cultured, the virtuous, thing to do.

[5] Refer to my May 2014 essay [Education And The Culture Of Pathei-Mathos](#), and my more recent [Some Conjectures Concerning Our Nexible Physis](#).

(Extracts from)

**The Ethos of Extremism
Some Reflexions on Politics and A Fanatical Life**

Introduction

As someone variously described - by assorted academics, authors, journalists, politicians, and others - as an extremist, a fanatic, a theoretician of terror [1], a neo-nazi thug, the man who shaped mind of a bomber, an example of the axis between right-wing extremists and Islamists [2], a man of extreme and calculated hatred [3], as someone at the forefront of extreme right-wing ideology in Britain since the mid-1960s [4], a ferocious Jihadi [5], and as an ardent defender of bin Laden [6], some personal reflexions on my forty years of extremism may be of interest to a few people, especially given that, as a result of experience, a pathei-mathos, I have come to reject racism, National-Socialism, hatred, and all forms of extremism, having developed a personal weltanschauung, a non-religious numinous way, centred around empathy, compassion, fairness, and love.

In respect of my extremist past - whatever and whenever the extremism - there has been, and there remains:

"...a deep sorrow within me; born from a knowing of inexcusable personal mistakes made, inexcusable suffering caused, of fortunities lost; a sorrow deepened by a knowing, a feeling, a learning, of how important, how human, a personal love is. Indeed, that love is the most important, the most human, the most numinous, virtue of all." [7]

These brief reflexions are primarily concerned with past personal feelings, past political experiences, and past motivation - that is, with perhaps some of the underlying causes of extremism - and I have striven to be as honest as possible in describing these even if the result is an unfavourable impression of me or at least of the person I was. Furthermore, I will leave others to judge these former feelings, experiences, and motivations, of mine, and draw whatever conclusions, if any, they can about such extremism as I describe - be such conclusions personal, or political, or arrived at by means of some social or psychological theory applicable to subjects such as extremism and its causes.

On a more academic note, it might be useful to explain how I, in the light of practical experience, understand important terms such as extremism. By *extreme* I mean *to be harsh*, so that an *extremist* is a person who tends

toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious nature. Here, *harsh* is: rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic. Thus *extremism* is considered to be: (1) the result of such harshness, and (2) the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists. In addition, a fanatic is considered to be someone with a surfeit of zeal or whose enthusiasm for some objective, or for some cause, is intemperate.

In respect of racism, I accept the standard definition, which is that racism is a prejudice and antagonism toward people regarded as belonging to another 'race', as well as the belief some 'races' are better than or superior to others, and that what is termed 'race' defines and explains, or can define and explain, the behaviour and the character of the people considered to belong to some postulated 'race'.

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Part One: 1968-1973

Becoming Nazi

My practical involvement in right-wing extremist politics really began in 1968 when I, still at school and not long returned from a childhood in the Far East and colonial Africa, became an active supporter of the newly formed National Front and of Colin Jordan's newly formed British Movement. My initial motivation for joining these organizations and becoming politically active was simple: to further the cause of National-Socialism and to enjoy the comradeship, the struggle for power, and the violence.

Some time before becoming so involved, I had chanced upon a copy of Shirer's book *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* and was inspired by the described actions of Otto Ernst Remer during the July 1944 plot against Hitler. Familiar as I was with *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* - with Hellenistic culture and history in general - I youthfully, rashly, made a connexion between the heroes of ancient Greece and Remer, impressed as I was by Remer's loyalty and sense of duty. This led me to, over subsequent months, read everything I could find about Hitler and the Third Reich; a reading which took me to local libraries and bookshops, then to bookshops and libraries in London. I even managed to find and buy copies (not originals) of old 8mm film of nazi rallies and some German propaganda films made during WW2, viewed using an old home projector; for I had discovered there was, even then in the 60's, something of an 'underground' market in nazi memorabilia.

Suffice to say that my reading and my viewing enthused me so that after a

few months I considered myself a National-Socialist, an admirer of Adolf Hitler, believing that National-Socialism could create a new heroic age. To mark my 'conversion', I bought a small gold swastika tie-pin from a seller of nazi memorabilia and did not mind when, out wearing it, some people stared - for I was prepared either to launch into a rant about NS and Hitler or for a fight.

Thus while my initial motivation was naively idealistic and somewhat schoolboyish, I soon came to embrace NS racial doctrines, aided by acquiring and reading a copy of the English edition of HS Chamberlain's two volume work *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*. This meant I accepted that some races were superior, and others inferior; and that 'the Aryan race' - being the most superior, the most evolved - had a special 'destiny'. As for the extermination of the Jews, to be honest for some months I vacillated between two extremes - between believing 'it was unfortunate but perhaps necessary, an act of war' and between believing it 'was Allied propaganda'.

Horrid as acceptance of such genocide is, I had already become, without knowing it, an extremist; for I was prepared to accept or to dismiss horrid facts, certain truths, in the belief that what mattered was the goal, the ideal, and that to achieve this one had to be harsh, even fanatical and brutal. In addition, I had come to regard war - modern war - as necessary, as the breeding ground of arête, and in war people are killed or slaughtered, just as the victors, the Greek heroes, in the Trojan war slaughtered many of the people of Troy after its fall and just as Alexander decimated the people of Massaga.

Later on, I was to discover that I was far from being alone, in neo-nazi circles, in this detestable acceptance of brutality and genocide. For instance, I can recall several discussions about the extermination of the Jews with support being voiced for such measures, and several occasions when a certain song, well-known in neo-nazi circles in the 60's and 70's, was sung by 'comrades', with the song beginning "Gas 'em all, gas 'em all, the long, and the short and the tall..."

However, in the months following my 'conversion' to the cause of National-Socialism I could not quite shake-off - for all my new enthusiasm and fanaticism - certain uncomfortable moral feelings regarding the holocaust, and so began reading voraciously about the subject, a reading which included trawling through multi-volume accounts such as *The Trial of German Major War Criminals: Proceedings of the International Military Tribunal Sitting at Nuremberg, Germany*. But in the end, after months of such reading and study, there came a point when I simply accepted, out of a desire to believe, that the genocide 'was Allied propaganda' so that, to me then and subsequently, further research regarding, or rational debate about, the matter became unnecessary. In effect, I came to fanatically believe it was war propaganda, and this fanatical belief was immune to criticism as I became intolerant of, dismissive of, others who tried to convince me that the horrors of the camps were real.

In retrospect, I needed to believe it was propaganda, a myth, because to do

otherwise would destroy the imaginary, the idealistic, the perfect, the romanticized, National-Socialism I then believed in and accepted. To do otherwise would mean that Hitler was not as I imagined him to be, as I hoped he was: a noble and good man who had triumphed against all the odds purely out of a love for his people and his land. Thus it might be correct to conclude that my research into the matter then was biased, born not out of a desire to find 'the truth' but from a need to prove that my own conclusions, assumptions, and beliefs, were correct. There might therefore have been an element of faith involved here, and subsequently, such that inconvenient, or awkward, facts and truths are ignored, dismissed, or regarded as the 'propaganda' of those opposed to one's beliefs.

Hatred, Love, and Violence

Although - on joining the NF and BM - I was very naive about politics, something of a tabula rasa, I soon developed the same prejudices and the same hatreds as the people I came to associate with; prejudices and hatreds aided by pamphlets and books read, loaned and given, and by discussions with party members, especially those belonging to BM. Thus I came to regard 'immigrants' as somewhat uncivilized, certainly inferior to White people, and considered their removal from 'our land', our country, as a necessity. Before this, I had no opinions, no views, about such matters, and my understanding of National-Socialism was greatly aided and developed by personal discussions with, and by written correspondence I had with, Colin Jordan.

During this formative period, I subscribed to items such as *The Thunderbolt* newspaper published by Edward R. Fields and so regularly received anti-Jewish and anti-Black reports; reports that seemed to confirm the necessity of racial separation and the need for a final solution to 'the Jewish problem'. For I had, in common with nearly all BM members and many NF members, come to believe that the Jews, in England, as in many other Western lands, had too much power and too much influence, were somehow by nature badly disposed toward White people, and thus were our mortal enemies.

In practice these beliefs and prejudices, this racism, meant three obvious things, and one interesting and curious thing, at least it is curious and interesting to me, now, on reflexion. The three things are:

- (1) That I developed a very idealized, a very romanticized, view of and naive love for those I regarded as my own people, my own race - especially in respect of English people; regarding them as probably the most civilized people on Earth who had built the best, the most noble, Empire the world had ever seen, and who had 'civilized' or brought civilization to large parts of the world.
- (2) That I developed a prejudice and antagonism toward other races in general, and in particular against 'Blacks' and Jews, and thus, as a group, and politically, hated them and did not wish to associate with them.

(3) That I regarded violence in pursuit of my beliefs as natural and necessary, and came to regard political enemies - such as 'Reds' - as legitimate targets of political violence.

The one interesting and curious thing is:

That despite my racism, my nazi beliefs and ideals, my political activism, I was not personally offensive to or prejudiced or violent toward or hated individuals of other races that I met, including Jews.

Thus, and apropos all four things, I somehow and in some way managed to compartmentalize my personal life and my political life, for although I enjoyed political brawls, and was not averse to using violence, it was not in my nature to be personally rude or offensive to or violent toward people as individuals, whatever their perceived ethnicity; unless, of course, they threatened me personally, one individual to another, or had personally threatened someone I cared about. In fact, my hatred and violence was more directed toward political enemies - especially during political confrontations - than it was to other races; so directed that for many years, from 1968 to 1974, I would actively seek out such potentially and hopefully violent political confrontations and enjoy them. This enjoyment, this seeking after violent confrontation, perhaps explains why Martin Webster, in 1971 after meeting with me a few times, described me to a friend of his (who was studying at the same University as me) as "having a death wish", a description which rather irked me then.

That said, about compartmentalization, I did for a long time - directly and indirectly - incite hatred and violence against other races, both by speeches, often vitriolic, impassioned, and always extempore, I gave at political events; in discussions with comrades and others; by means of articles I wrote, and by posters, leaflets, stickers, I designed. But this was, to me at the time, impersonal, just propaganda, somewhat calculated, and regarded as a necessity in order to achieve certain political goals - and was probably more reprehensible for so being impersonal and propagandistic.

Only on a few occasions was I directly, personally, involved in violence against ethnic minorities, and these were unplanned, spontaneous, incidents involving several 'ethnics', one of which incidents led to me being arrested and given a prison sentence, but in all of which incidents - to be honest - I was or became motivated by dislike of and anger at 'these foreigners' because I felt they did not belong in 'my country' and should 'go back to where they belonged'.

The particular racial incident that led to my arrest and my first term of imprisonment occurred in the early 1970's, following some racial clashes in Wakefield between skinheads and 'ethnics', in this instance people of or descended from those of Pakistani origin. On the day in question I, then domiciled in Leeds, was out with Eddy Morrison and a few other comrades handing out anti-immigration leaflets in Wakefield hoping to capitalize on the violence and so possibly gain some new recruits for the cause. The leafleting

over, we came across a group of skinheads, some of whom I vaguely knew. Sensibly, Morrison left while I, sensing there might be - and hopeful there would be - some violence, went with the skinheads looking for trouble. Thus it would be fair to say that I was responsible for what followed, as the Judge at my subsequent criminal trial judged I was. Our group - these young lads and I - wandered around for a while until we found some young Pakistani men whom we racially abused and then began to throw stones and bricks at. They ran away, and we gave chase... Suffice to say, when this first skirmish was over, we - buoyed by our success and I seem to recall at my instigation - went off in search of more targets. Eventually, after perhaps an hour or so - maybe more, maybe less - we found ourselves the subject of a large Police operation with officers chasing us. We split up and I, not knowing the area, ended up on some industrial lot with several Police officers blocking the only escape route. Soon, the Police had caught and arrested all of us.

Thus, during these early years there was - for me at least - a strange mixture of an idealized non-personal love, of hatred, and violence, involved in my actions, as well as racial prejudice and a romanticized view of my people, my land, and of Hitler and National-Socialism. All of which combined to provide me with an aim, a goal, a rôle; and which enthused and vivified me and gave me a sense of identity, a meaning and a purpose, a sense of duty and of destiny.

Hence I considered myself an Englishman, belonging to a land, to a people, with a great heritage; a people, a land, I idealistically, romantically, naively, loved. A land, a people, a heritage, I believed was threatened by immigration and by immigrants, by alleged machinations of the Jews, and by traitors and enemies such as communists and anti-fascists. I also considered myself a National-Socialist, a follower of Adolf Hitler, since I believed, with the assuredness of faith, that National-Socialism was the only way to restore the 'greatness of my race' and build a better, more heroic, civilization for future generations of my people. To achieve this future, I was prepared to use, and did use, violence - believing that it was necessary to be harsh, and possibly ruthless, in order to secure victory. For such victory - the triumph of National-Socialism - was all that, then, really mattered to me.

This strange mixture - this elixir of extremism, this duty of 'victory or death' - was the reason why I, during those years and normally a rather quiet, well-spoken, polite person, gave impassioned, extempore, speeches at political events, meeting and rallies; why I would launch into a tirade, in private, if someone said something negative about Hitler or National-Socialism; why I was prepared and hoping for violence during some political march or rally; why I would without a moments hesitation walk into a building and smash up some exhibit or some anti-apartheid exhibition or why I, alone, was unafraid to confront one, two, three, or more, enemies 'on the streets'; why I accepted imprisonment with equanimity and a certain pride, knowing that I had done or tried to do what I then considered was my duty to my people, my country.

Part Two: 1973-1975

Ultra-Violence, Covert Action, and Terror

Two significant events during this period (1973-1975) helped shape and develop my extremism. One was that I was released from my first term of imprisonment for violence, and the second was that I was recruited by the underground paramilitary and neo-nazi organization Column 88.

Simply put, prison hardened me even more, while involvement with Column 88 confirmed my faith in the ultimate victory of National-Socialism.

My imprisonment had perhaps the opposite effect to what the Judge at my trial may have intended, for far from 'teaching me a lesson' it only served to make me more fanatical and more violent. It also enabled me to learn new skills and acquire new contacts of a decidedly criminal kind, skills and contacts which - as I have mentioned elsewhere [8] - I put to use following my release when I formed a small gang of thieves to liberate certain goods and fence them in order, initially at least, to fund various political schemes and projects of mine.

In addition, prison life seemed to me to confirm two of the fundamental axioms of National-Socialism, that of the necessity and value of *kampf* and that of the *führerprinzip*. That is, of hardening one's self, being prepared to use force, to be ruthless, unsentimental, in order to survive and prosper; and either earning respect or being obedient and submissive. For prison seemed to be like some ancient uncultured, uncivilized, macho tribal society where force or the threat of force (by both cons and screws), and/or one's personal cunning, were the basis of life, and where those of a violent or of a cunning nature tended to prosper. Perhaps fortunately I was or could be both violent and cunning so it was not really surprising that I ran a racket inside, selling goods liberated from a variety of sources including prison stores.

This increased political fanaticism and more violent nature would lead me, months later and with the help of Eddy Morrison, to found, in December of 1973, a new political neo-nazi organization based in Leeds; the rather grandly named National Democratic Freedom Movement, and which organization would be rather aptly described, some years later, by John Tyndall in the following terms:

" The National Democratic Freedom Movement made little attempt to engage in serious politics but concentrated its activities mainly upon acts of violence against its opponents. [...] Before very long the NDFM had degenerated into nothing more than a criminal gang." [9]

Thus 1973 and especially 1974 became, for me, a time of ultra-violence, criminality, and of a fanaticism even more extreme than that of previous years. A period during which I was regularly involved in fights and brawls, regularly arrested and appeared 'in the dock' - including for running that gang of thieves - and which period would end, perhaps inevitably, with me being sent to prison for a third time.

" Among the highlights of that NDFM year, for me, were the following. I smashed up (with one other NDFM member) an anti-apartheid exhibition, in Leeds (twice). I gave vitriolic extempore speeches at public meetings (some of which ended in violence when our opponents attacked). I waded into some Trade Union march or other, thumped a few people then stole and set fire to one of their banners (arrested, again). I arranged a meeting at Chapeltown, in Leeds (the heart of the Black community then) at which only five of us turned up, including Andrew Brons but not including Morrison. We faced a rather angry crowd of several hundred people, who threw bricks, stones, whatever, at us, and we few walked calmly right through them to our parked vehicles, and rather sedately drove away, our point made. No one said we could do it.

I spoke extempore at Speakers Corner in Hyde Park for around a half an hour to a crowd of over a thousand; it ended in a brawl...Finally, toward the end of that Summer, a meeting we had arranged on Leeds Town Hall steps resulted in a mass brawl when the crowd of around a thousand attacked us, after I had harangued them for around half an hour. Several Police officers were injured as they tried to break up the fights. I was arrested (again) but soon was granted bail...

When my case came to trial, at Leeds Crown Court, I was accused of having "incited the crowd" and generally held responsible for most of the violence." [8]

Everything I did in these years I justified to myself, and often to others, by invoking principles such as 'the survival of the fittest' and by the belief that in order to secure victory for the political cause I believed in, any and all means were justified, from violence to hatred to using rhetoric and propaganda in order to motivate people and gain recruits.

As for Column 88, involvement with that well-organized, now long-defunct, paramilitary group gave strength to my conviction that a National-Socialist victory was possible, for C88 had many overseas contacts, held regular meetings attended by young neo-nazis from all over Europe, and had among its British members not only many older professional people but also some members of the military. In addition, given its paramilitary nature and the paramilitary training undertaken, there was the knowledge that there were many others like me who were, under certain circumstances, prepared to use both physical and armed force in the service of our NS cause.

Thus I became aware that I and the few dedicated National-Socialists I had met in previous years in groups such as British Movement and the National Front were far from alone; that there were many other committed National-Socialists 'out there'. Which awareness, which practically acquired knowledge, not only strengthened my commitment to National-Socialism but which also strengthened my resolve to fight for 'the cause'.

There also developed in me during this time, and because of my involvement with C88, a realization that both covert action and terrorism [10] were or might be useful tactics to employ in the struggle for victory, a struggle which I - extremist and fanatic that I was - accepted would be brutal, violent, and bloody, and thus possibly cost the lives of some of us, some of our opponents, and even some non-combatants. For I was during these years enthused and somewhat motivated by the rise to power of Hitler's NSDAP; a bloody, violent, struggle which had cost the lives of many comrades, from 'the fallen' of November 9th 1923 to Horst Wessel. I thus considered myself, and my comrades, as continuing that struggle - that struggle for the supremacy of the Aryan race, and the struggle against 'decadence' and our Communist, liberal, and Jewish enemies. In this struggle I personally - inspired by Savitri Devi's book *Lightning and The Sun* - considered the military defeat of The Third, and the death of Adolf Hitler, as but temporary setbacks to be avenged.

In respect of covert action, I came to the conclusion, following some discussions with some C88 members, that two different types of covert groups, with different strategy and tactics, might be very useful in our struggle and thus aid us directly or aid whatever right-wing political party might serve as a cover for introducing NS policies or which could be used to advance our cause. These covert groups would not be paramilitary and thus would not resort to using armed force since that option was already covered, so far as I was then concerned, by C88.

The first type of covert group would essentially be a honeytrap [11], to attract non-political people who might be or who had the potential to be useful to the cause even if, or especially if, they had to be 'blackmailed' or persuaded into doing so at some future time. The second type of covert group would be devoted to establishing a small cadre of NS fanatics, of 'sleepers', to - when the time was right - be disruptive or generally subversive.

Nothing came of this second idea, and the few people I recruited during 1974 for the second group, migrated to help the first group, established the previous year. However, from the outset this first group was beset with problems for - in retrospect - two quite simple reasons, both down to me. First, my lack of leadership skills, and, second, the outer nature chosen for the group which was of a secret Occult group with the 'offer', the temptation, of sexual favours from female members in a ritualized Occult setting, with some of these female members being 'on the game' and associated with someone who was associated with my small gang of thieves.

While I enjoyed and then lived for political action - especially confrontation

and brawls - and was motivated, fanatical, enough to speak extempore in public and take charge in a violent situations on the streets, and loved to plan such violence and motivate people to undertake it, I disliked the day-to-day organization and the (to me) petty manipulation that was, or seemed to me to be, the lot of an organizer and leader. I also lacked the charm, the charisma, the flexibility, a political organizer and leader needed.

In contrast to me, Eddy Morrison had a natural charisma, a certain charm, and was an experienced and adept organizer. He also, unlike me at the time, had a good sense of humour and was well-liked whereas I was probably more feared, or respected, because I was simply considered a nutter, a violent psycho. As a consequence, he was a natural leader; suited to leading the NDFM, and of all the people I knew at the time the most suited to organize and lead such a covert group especially given the fact that its ultimate purpose was to aid our NS cause. However, for all my attempts at persuasion he was uninterested in both C88 and in my ideas regarding covert action. He also, beyond being a fan of horror stories and of HP Lovecraft, had no interest whatsoever in the Occult. Thus I had to make do with someone else as organizer and 'leader' of this covert group, this person - then a comrade, a married businessman living near Manchester - being the one who had suggested the outer, the Occult, form of the group.

For some time, this underground group appeared to flourish, with some 'respectable' people recruited - initially a lecturer, a teacher, a solicitor, among others - with some of the recruits becoming converts to or in some way helping our political cause, and with such clandestine recruitment aided, later on, by some unexpected, non-factual, unwanted, publicity.

But what happened was that, over time and under the guidance of its mentor, the Occult and especially the hedonistic aspects came to dominate over the political and subversive intent, with the *raisons d'etat* of blackmail and persuasion, of recruiting useful, respectable, people thus lost. Hence, while I still considered, then and for quite some time afterwards, that the basic idea of such a subversive group, such a honeytrap, was sound, I gradually lost interest in this particular immoral honeytrap project until another spell in prison for an assortment of offences took me away from Leeds and my life as a violent neo-nazi activist [12].

Birth of A Theoretician of Terror

It is perhaps fair to say - so far as I recall - that I was the one who, in C88, first broached the subject of using certain tactics such as improvised explosive devices and assassinations in a direct campaign against both our enemies and what I often then referred to as 'The System'. Prior to this - so far as I knew - training and discussions had been concerned with and were about possible future events, in particular a Soviet invasion of Western Europe, an invasion scenario which at that time (the early to middle 1970's, the Cold War era) was taken seriously by Western governments and Western military forces.

My basic idea - the plan - was to use such tactics to cause disruption, fear,

and discontent, in order to provoke a revolutionary situation that our NS, our racist, our fascist, or anti-immigrant groups, might be able to take advantage of politically and otherwise; with part of this plan being to encourage the government to introduce more and more 'martial law' type control and regulations, which type of control and regulations (and surveillance) those in the military inclined toward a more authoritarian, or even fascist type, government might use to their advantage. For from such authoritarian or fascist type beginnings, National-Socialism might be covertly, gradually, introduced.

It needs to be remembered this was when 'the troubles' - armed conflict in Northern Ireland - was possibly at its most bloody, and which conflict, together with IRA attacks in mainland Britain, caused consternation and concern both in British government and in certain military circles, with some ordinary ranks, a few junior officers and even a one or two of the higher ranks covertly talking about a scenario when a military coup in Britain might be justified. Not that, so far as I with my limited knowledge know, this minority discontent among certain military - and perhaps a few intelligence - personnel ever become widely known or has even been mentioned in books, memoirs, or articles written about those times. But this discontent did capture a certain mood among certain people during that period, a mood I had some personal knowledge of, partly as a result of C88 contacts, partly as a result of some trips I made to Northern Ireland, and partly as result of other contacts such as squaddies involved with or supportive of right-wing groups.

Thus my ideas, my proposals, were to some extent grounded in the realities of those times. Times when disruptive industrial strikes and disputes were common in Britain, when the National Front could hold rallies and marches of thousands of people and had a membership possibly in excess of 10,000 members, when many more ordinary British citizens were, or seemed to be, generally supportive of the 'stop immigration, start repatriation' campaign, and when there was some support, or seemed to be some support, in certain military and even government circles for a more authoritarian approach to government.

I justified my ideas - the plan - and thus the use of such tactics by immorally believing and suggesting to others that in 'such dire times' victory could not be achieved without sacrifice and blood, and that for our people, our land, to survive and prosper it was necessary for some of us to be hard, ruthless; that 'history' showed that such ruthlessness was effective. And so on and so on. I do remember, on several occasions, idealizing the Roman Empire and ranting about how Rome built and maintained its Empire, its glory; not by negotiations, not by elections, not through a policy of peace and non-violence, but because ruthless men, hardened by war, had conquered, subdued and dealt severely with discontent and threats to 'the Roman way of life', to Rome, and to the Empire. Quite often I would quote some words of Hitler, from *Mein Kampf*, such as that the broad masses respond to what is strong and uncompromising; that a struggle on behalf of a weltanschauung has to be conducted by men of heroic spirit who are ready to sacrifice everything, and that if a people does not fight they do not deserve to live.

Hence, to me now, on reflexion, it does not seem to be hatred - of whatever type - that motivated those ideas, such a terrorist plan, of mine but rather a glorification of war, of strife; a belief in struggle, in 'the survival of the fittest'; a naive desire to personally act based on notions of sacrifice and glory, of being part of a desperate struggle, a war, that began with Hitler and the NSDAP. Most of all, perhaps, there was the misguided feeling that 'our people' were under attack, threatened with slavery and then extinction, so that desperate, ruthless, measures were necessary to save them. A feeling that most certainly derived from the absolute conviction I then had that 'race' - one's idealized race - was the most important thing, so that this idealized, mythical, 'race' came before everything, and therefore (so the perverted reasoning went) what was moral was what aided and ensured the survival and prosperity of this 'race'.

As for practical consequences, then, I do not believe there were any, of significance, known to me. For I discovered little support for these ideas, this plan, probably for a quite simple reason, which was that the people in C88 disposed toward and trained for action preferred to concentrate on C88's stated aims and objectives: of being a practical bulwark in the event of a Soviet invasion or an internal Communist, extreme left-wing, revolution, and of slowly infiltrating National-Socialists into positions of influence within British society.

However, perhaps it was these ideas of mine, my enthusiasm for and rants about such action - to selected C88 people of course [13] - that later on resulted in a sort-of 'bomb making package' being produced by some of them (a package complete with several pairs of disposable surgical gloves), one of which packages was delivered to me, in Leeds, on my release from prison in 1976 but which I personally did not use given that shortly thereafter - for reasons outlined in *Myngath* - I, suffering from a loss of idealism, had a change of heart, and decided to become a monk in a Catholic monastery. A loss of idealism, a moral change, that would, however and unfortunately, not last that long.

Notes

[1] *Searchlight*, July 2000

[2] Mark Weitzman: *Antisemitismus und Holocaust-Leugnung: Permanente Elemente des globalen Rechtsextremismus*, in Thomas Greven: *Globalisierter Rechtsextremismus? Die extremistische Rechte in der Ära der Globalisierung*. 1 Auflage. VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften/GWV Fachverlage GmbH, Wiesbaden 2006, ISBN 3-531-14514-2, pp.61-64

[3] *Searchlight*, July 2000

[4] *Sunday Mercury*, July 9, 2000

[5] Martin Amis, *The Second Plane*. Jonathan Cape, 2008, p.157

[6] Robert S Wistrich, *A Lethal Obsession: Anti-Semitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad*, Random House, 2010.

[7] David Myatt, *Some Personal Perceiversations*. e-text, February 2012.
See also my compilation *Meditations on Extremism*

[8] David Myatt, *Myngath*. 11th revised edition, 2011.

[9] *Spearhead*, April 1983.

[10] A possible definition of terrorism is: " The calculated use of violence or the threat of violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological."

[11] Honeytrap meaning 'something that is tempting' - as in the modern usage of honeypot - and also 'something covert to attract/entrap a particular type of person'. That is, a type of 'sting' operation. Thus, State-sponsored espionage is not implied.

[12] This new life later on included entering the noviciate of a Catholic monastery, and which monastic experience led me to reform myself, at least in respect of immoral and criminal activities and thus in respect of involvement with such immoral honeytraps. However, as recounted here in Part Four, I had occasion, during the 1980's, to renew my association not only with some old C88 comrades but also with the mentor of that Occult honeytrap when, after of lapse of many years, I became involved again in neo-nazi politics and revived my project of using clandestine recruitment for 'the cause'. By this time, that Occult group had developed some useful contacts, especially in the academic world, so some friendly co-operation between us was agreed; a co-operation which continued, sporadically, until just before my conversion to Islam in 1998.

This clandestine recruitment of mine was for a small National-Socialist cadre which went by a variety of names, beginning with 'G7' (soon abandoned), then *The White Wolves* (c. 1993), and finally the *Aryan Resistance Movement* aka Aryan Liberation Army [qv. Part Five for details].

However, while some of these Occult contacts were, given their professions, occasionally useful 'to the cause' and to 'our people', by 1997 I had come to the conclusion that the problems such association with Occultism and occultists caused far outweighed the subversive advantages; a conclusion which led me to re-write and re-issue a much earlier article of mine entitled *Occultism and National-Socialism*, and which revised article was subsequently published in the compilation *Cosmic Reich* by Renaissance Press of New Zealand. As I wrote in that article - "National-Socialism and Occultism are fundamentally, and irretrievably, incompatible and opposed to each other."

By the Summer of 1998 I had abandoned not only such co-operation and

contacts with such Occult groups but also such clandestine recruitment on behalf of National-Socialism, concentrating instead on my Reichsfolk group and my 'revised' non-racist version of National-Socialism which I called 'ethical National-Socialism'. Later still, following my conversion to Islam, I was to reject even this version of National-Socialism.

[13] I recall one occasion, early on, trying to discuss my ideas - the plan - with C88's organizer in his home while, at my suggestion, very loud military music was played, from a Hi-Fi system, in the hope that it might drown out any covert listening or recording devices. Since the reality was that we could not hear what the other person said, that particular silly ploy of mine was very quickly discontinued.

Extracts from
Part Six: 1998-2002

Conversion to Islam

There was no sudden decision to convert to Islam. Rather, it was the culmination of a process that began a decade earlier with travels in the Sahara Desert. During the decade before my conversion I regularly travelled abroad, with this travel including well-over a dozen visits to Egypt and a few visits to other lands where the majority of the population were Muslim.

Egypt, especially, enchanted me; and not because of the profundity of ancient monuments. Rather because of the people, their culture, and the land itself. How life, outside of Cairo, seemed to mostly cling to the Nile - small settlements, patches and strips of verdanity, beside the flowing water and hemmed in by dry desert. I loved the silence, the solitude, the heat, of the desert; the feeling of there being precariously balanced between life and death, dependant on carried water, food; the feeling of smallness, a minute and fragile speck of life; the vast panorama of sky. There was a purity there, human life in its essence, and it was so easy, so very easy, to feel in such a stark environment that there was, must be, a God, a Creator, who could decide if one lived or died.

Once, after a long trip into the Western Desert, I returned to Cairo to stay at some small quite run-down hotel: on one side, a Mosque, while not that far away on the other side was a night-club. A strange, quixotic, juxtaposition that seemed to capture something of the real modern Egypt. Of course, very early next morning the Adhaan from the mosque woke me. I did not mind. Indeed, I found it hauntingly beautiful and, strangely, not strange at all; as if it was some long-forgotten and happy memory, from childhood perhaps.

Once, I happened to be cycling from Cairo airport to the centre of the city as dawn broke, my route taking me past several Mosques. So timeless, so beautiful, the architecture, the minarets, framed by the rising sun...

Once, and many years before my conversion, I bought from a bookshop in Cairo a copy of the Quran containing the text in Arabic with a parallel English interpretation, and would occasionally read parts of it, and although I found several passages interesting, intriguing, I then had no desire, felt no need, to study Islam further. Similarly, the many friendly conversations I had with Egyptians during such travels - about their land, their culture, and occasionally about Islam - were for me just informative, only the interest of a curious outsider, and did not engender any desire to study such matters in detail.

However, all these experiences, of a decade and more, engendered in me a feeling which seemed to grow stronger year by year with every new trip. This was the feeling that somehow in some strange haunting way I belonged there, in such places, as part of such a culture. A feeling which caused me - some time after the tragic death of Sue (aged 39) from cancer in the early 1990's - to enrol on, and begin, an honours course in Arabic at a British university [8].

Thus, suffice to say that a decade of such travel brought a feeling of familiarity and resonance with Egypt, its people, its culture, that land, and with the Islam that suffused it, so that when in the Summer of 1998 I seriously began to study Islam, to read Ahadith, Seerah, and the whole Quran, I had at least some context from practical experience. Furthermore, the more I studied Islam in England in those Summer months the more I felt, remembered, the sound of the beautiful Adhaan; remembered the desert - that ætherial purity, that sense of God, there; and remembered that haunting feeling of perhaps already belonging to such a culture, such a way of life [9].

Hence my conversion to Islam, then, in September of that year, seemed somehow fated, wyrdful.

[...]

Supporting Al-Qaeda

In many respects my move away from a naive Muslim convert toward extremism was similar to my much earlier, previous, move from naive youthful admirer of Otto Ernst Remer to fanatical, racist, neo-nazi. That is, a gradual change; a process that involved associating with, and learning from, people who already had a particular interpretation of events, and of 'the cause' they believed in.

Hence it was not that I suddenly made some kind of unilateral decision of my own as a result of literature that I by myself found and read - such as printed books, or items accessed via the medium of the internet. Rather, the essence of the move to extremism was talks, discussions, with Muslims over a period of a year or more; literature, items, those brothers gave or loaned or suggested I read; and a long period of reflexion on those talks, discussions, and items accessed, read and studied.

After my conversion in 1998 I would regularly attend Namaz at my local Mosque, and had arranged time-off work in order to be able to attend

Jummah Namaz. At the end of Jummah Namaz we would all form a circle and sing the beautiful nasheed *Ya Nabi Salaam Alayka* - something I always looked forward to - after which each one of us would greet and shake the hand of the Imaam, an elderly learned man, white of beard, and of great dignity. On several occasions I noticed one of the brothers leaving before the singing of this Nasheed. Then, one Friday, as he happened to be praying next to me and with Namaz over, I asked him if, this week, he would be staying to sing the nasheed. He did not approve of that nasheed, he said, for reasons he would be happy to explain were I to meet with him. Thus, and later on, I learned the reasons for his objection; reasons which he explained by quoting from memory, and in Arabic, various texts. Further discussions with him, and then with some other brothers elsewhere, followed.

Naively enthusiastic as I was then regarding Islam - eager to learn more about my new Way of Life - I found these and other discussions with many other Muslims interesting, intriguing, and exciting, and so enrolled on a residential course in Arabic in order to better understand the texts they referred to. And it from some brothers on that course that I came to learn about Jihad, the Khilafah, and the Palestinian problem, subjects and an issue which, hitherto, had neither interested me nor as a Muslim concerned me, although I was vaguely aware of them. The course over, more discussions with other brothers - and some travels to Muslim lands - followed, with the result I began to be aware that I, as a Muslim, had certain duties and obligations, given by Allah; that life as a Muslim meant more than praying five times a day, attending Jummah Namaz, fasting during Ramadan, avoiding alcoholic beverages, eating halal food, and - if feasible - going on pilgrimage to Makkah.

There thus slowly, gradually, developed in me a sense of duty toward the Ummah - the duty of Jihad - and a certain resentment against 'the machinations of the kuffar', as well as a sense of injustice in respect of the continued treatment of the Palestinians.

[...]

Notes

[1] *Searchlight*, July 2000

[2] Mark Weitzman: *Antisemitismus und Holocaust-Leugnung: Permanente Elemente des globalen Rechtsextremismus*, in Thomas Greven: *Globalisierter Rechtsextremismus? Die extremistische Rechte in der Ära der Globalisierung*. 1 Auflage. VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften/GWV Fachverlage GmbH, Wiesbaden 2006, ISBN 3-531-14514-2, pp.61-64

[3] *Searchlight*, July 2000

[4] *Sunday Mercury*, July 9, 2000

[5] Martin Amis, *The Second Plane*. Jonathan Cape, 2008, p.157

[6] Robert S Wistrich, *A Lethal Obsession: Anti-Semitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad*, Random House, 2010.

[7] David Myatt, *Some Personal Perceiversations*. e-text, February 2012. See also my compilation *Meditations on Extremism*

[8] I soon left that university however, for personal and practical reasons to do with a romantic involvement with a lady who lived hundreds of miles away.

[9] In retrospect, this feeling concerning Islam is still there within, still living in me, for being Muslim is (it seems to me) manifest in the stark simple beauty of living in the desert or passing through it alone; for there in the dangerous silence we are or can be one with ourselves, aware of the numinous sans words, sans abstractions; aware of our fragile, fallible, error-prone, nature; of our need for the humility of the numinous.

One possible explanation of this feeling that I have found is that of The Religious Society of Friends: that there is 'that of God' in every person, and that answering to 'that of God' can and has taken various forms over millennia with such forms equally deserving of respect since there is an underlying unity, the same spiritual essence beyond those different outer forms.

Thus I am still respectful of the Muslim Way of Life, of what I sense is its numinous essence. Similarly, I resonate with the numinous essence of the Christian message because of understanding, of feeling, 'that of God'; and therefore also feel the numinous in Buddhism, in Taoism, in Judaism, and in many other Ways.

The Ethos of Extremism
Some Reflexions on Politics and A Fanatical Life
by David Myatt

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Meditations on Extremism, Remorse, and The Numinosity of Love

David Myatt

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Preface

The effusions in this compilation were the result of several years of interior reflexion - of meditation - upon my extremist past and my decades of selfishness; a reflexion which, from 2006 to 2012, led me to develop and then refine my 'numinous way' into the philosophy of *pathei-mathos*. Consequently, these effusions deal, in a quite personal way, with matters such as remorse, extremism, expiation, sorrow, and the reformation of individuals.

As I wrote in the essay *So Much Remorse*, included here,

"So much remorse, grief, and sorrow, within me for the unwise suffering-causing deeds of my past. Yet all I have in recompense for decades of strife, violence, selfishness, hate, are tears, the cries, alone - and words, lifeless words, such as this; words, to - perhaps, hopefully - forewarn forswear so that others, some few, hearing, reading, may possibly avoid, learn from, the errors that marked, made, and were, my hubris."

For this second edition, I have added a few more effusions and, for context,

included my essay *The Development Of The Numinous* as an appendix. I have also taken the opportunity to correct a few typos.

David Myatt
January 2016

The Suffering of Words

A warm morning in late May and I watched the green scenery pass as I sat in a train conveying me to the place which, except for the past six weeks, has been my home these last four years.

For those six weeks - emotional turmoil while I stayed with she whom I love and loved while the beauty and growth and spreading green of May passed me by as I lived, confined, within a city. So much emotion - too much; too much, sometimes, many times, as I went beyond the limits of what I in my arrogance had assumed was my calm, reflective, self to find such passion - and, sometimes, such anger and annoyance - as perplexed me. For days, a kind of restraint - but then feelings would burst forth to leave me wondering and, sometimes, ashamed. What was I to do as she in her inner pain and torment verbally lashed out? I know what I should have done - been more patient; more supportive; more loving; placing her feelings, her life, before my own. But I made excuses for my failings here, not knowing the depth of her despair even though I who loved her should have known this, felt this. I made excuses for my selfishness, and listened to her Doctor; to others; to my sometimes selfish desires, when I should have listened to her far more.

Thus do I feel and now know my own stupidity for my arrogant, vain, belief that I could help, assist, change what was. No blame for me, her relatives say - but I know my blame, my shame, my failure, here. Thus am I fully humbled by my own lack of insight; by my lack of knowing; by an understanding of my selfishness and my failure - knowing myself now for the ignorant, arrogant person I was, and am.

How hypocritical to teach, to preach, through writings, feeling as I do now the suffering of words, for she whom I loved killed herself only hours after I had left. Killed herself - only hours after I had left, despite her pleading for me to stay. There are no words to describe my blame; no words - for I had gone for a selfish break, to walk in the fields of the Farm.

So I am lost, bereft; guilty, crying, mourning the loss of her beauty, her life, her love, Never again to hold her hand; to embrace her. Never again to share a

smile; a peaceful moment; our dream of being together in our home. The fault is mine, and I have to carry this knowledge of unintentionally aiding the ending of a life, this burden, and the guilt, hoping, praying, that somehow, sometime, somewhere I can give some meaning to her life, and perhaps live without ever again causing any suffering to any living thing. Or should I, out of honour, ease this all-consuming pain and guilt by joining my beloved? I do not know; cannot decide. I miss her so much, so deeply, my mind suffused with images of what I did and did not do and should have done. If only I had not gone - or gone back to sit with her in that small garden as she wished.....

I shall never be the same again, deeply knowing that I do not understand.

30 May 2006

(In Memory of Frances, died Monday, May 29, 2006)

A Silent Dweller

Yet again I have spent an hour or so sitting in the hot Sun in the garden of this Farm, feeling and thinking many things, on a day before that day which marks a month since Fran's tragic death.

Something seems to have happened at, or because of, my brief stay at the monastery: something slowly grown, within me, as a result of being there, and I do not understand how or why this is so. Perhaps it was the time alone, in silence. Or the many attempts to pray, to believe. Or the knowledge of my failings, laid bare among such surroundings and among such people of genuine goodness. I do not know, and do not, really, even wish to work such things out. It just is what it is - a gentle, but wonderful, appreciation of the innate beauty and goodness of life, which I felt, and feel, is in some indefinable way a gift from Fran, something which gives her death some meaning, at least to me.

This feeling first suffused me a few days ago in the hills when, cycling along a quiet lane, I stopped on a warm and sunny morning to hear two Skylarks above a field of Poppy-filled wheat: life in all its quiet stillness was beautiful and good, then, and it was as if Fran, or something of her, was around, with her somehow and faintly smiling in that way she often smiled. So, on my return, I quickly wrote out my *The Ineffable Goodness* poem, as some attempt at a positive tribute for her.

Now, a few days further on, I am beginning to feel somewhat re-assured about life, again - remembering all the good times, the good days, Fran and I shared,

and feeling that she may at last have found the peace that certainly eluded her for most of the last two troubled years of her life. Thus, there are for me moments of happiness, again - and moments of sadness because she cut short her life even though so many people, myself included, loved her, and even though she had such beauty, such talents, such promise of happiness had she only been able to appreciate herself as others appreciated her. So, both the happiness and the sadness merge to form something, in me - something new; something deep, and strange, so that I am beginning again to sense that warm glowing goodness and beauty which is and can be presenced in some numinous music, in some Art, in good, compassionate deeds, in prayer, and especially in a noble personal love.

Where does this leave me, now? With a certain knowing of how Fran changed me for the better, and with a desire to remember this discovery, this insight: to transform myself, my life, through a calm, compassionate, acceptance and use whatever causal time remains to me to gently do what is right, to cease to cause suffering, to accept the beauty of each moment, in a numinous way, and to remember Fran with the dawning and the ending of each day.

There remains, of course, the difficult, perplexing, sometimes still troubling question of belief, of prayer - but I feel this is resolving itself, as such things often do, in its own slow, inner way. Not a sudden moment of insight, but instead a gradual dawning, as when Sun slowly breaks through a thin but total covering of cloud in Spring and Autumn to bring that blue I, we, so admire and which seems to express something of the wonder of life, of Nature, of the Cosmos. Hence, there is an increasing awareness, for me, of Nature, of us as one connexion; an awareness of The Numinous Way, manifest in compassion, empathy, gentleness and honour. Above all manifest in gentleness, in letting-be; in an appreciation of how the numen is and can be presenced, in us, in our lives.

Thus, I am calm again, for the moment, gently remembering the beautiful Frances, and hoping that I can live up to my own words, as a monk, or a nun, hope in silent, contemplative, prayer to live up to the Jesus within, and external, to them. Yet - there is still a vague, rather ill-defined yearning, to be part of something beyond me, which might aid me to remember, which might and which could and which should correct me, guide me. A yearning to surrender to the beauty, the presencing, that was and is manifest in early polyphony, in the Latin Opus Dei sung in some monastic Choir. A yearning to just be in such a place, without words, without thought - suffused with the centuries of being, with the goodness, the numinous silence, that pervades cloisters, a Choir, an Abbey. I did not find that at that monastery - at least outwardly - for there was the mostly English Office; the modern buildings. Perhaps it is the essence behind all such things that I feel, that I yearn for, that I seek - the essence beyond even the Latin Opus Dei; beyond the numinous office of Latin Compline, and beyond that beautiful silent, reverent prayer before a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The essence beyond the wheatfields where Skylarks sing; beyond the beauty of some women; beyond the sharing of exquisite moments with such

a woman. Beyond all such worldly things, all such causal manifestations. How to live always in and with the Essence itself? With, within, the Numen? Always in the presence of The Numen? To be at peace, and in silence, at last? I do not know - and perhaps I never will know. What I do feel, what I do believe I now know, is that all such manifestations of the Numen are important; that they all have their place, and all perhaps may serve the same ultimate purpose - that of bringing us closer to the ineffable beauty, the ineffable goodness, of life; that of transforming us, reminding us; that of giving us as individuals the chance to be good, to presence the good, to be part of the Numen itself.

Hence, there is now a real gentle tolerance in me - a silent dweller, who dreams. I just hope - desire - that this will last, although given my past multitude of mistakes, there is perhaps little for me to be optimistic about in this respect...

June 25, 2006

Such A Moment Of Tears

A short while ago I was listening to a recording of the Monks of the Abbey Saint-Maurice and Saint-Maur at Clervaux singing *Hodie Christus Natus Est*. I do not know why I wept on hearing this - except that perhaps the beautiful, numinous, divine-like music reached me, as such music often does, beyond that intellect whose pride and arrogance has often blighted my life.

There was such a purity in such music as if it takes away in some indefinable way the almost physical moments of despair when I remember the stupid deeds of my past. If only I had not done that - or said that... If only I could go back to some, many, moments in time. So much regret.

In such listening, in such a moment of tears, I seem to be so many places, so suffused with so many emotions - I am by the door, the last time I saw Fran, as I selfishly left to leave her, to leave her alone with her anguish, alone with that anguish which prompted her to take her own life, only hours later; I am back again in what seems to be the pure, gentle, days of my novitiate when in Choir I strive to praise through the Latin plainchant that which I felt, knew, then was the essence of the good.

And yet at the same time I am also. in such moments of tears, the pain, the suffering, of so many people for so many centuries - crying out without words for it to end; for the warm Sun of a wordless love to break forth from this sad Winter of darkness so that the suffering of so many for so long will end. Thus, there is again that straining yearning when we fall to our knees as tears stream

forth; hoping, hoping... For answers.

But, yet again, there are no answers; no answers are found, given, to us, now; no words in reply to such tears; no gentle comfort coming forth from - somewhere. We are alone, just alone, again, wiping the tears away from our eyes, our face, to slowly rise, and look out of the window toward the hills where the trees stand, Winter-bare, under a cloudy sky.

Such a desire to pray - to say some words for comfort; for myself; for the so many others who suffer; who have suffered; who will suffer, in anguish, despair, sadness, pain. But the words refuse to issue forth from lips, from the mind, as if I would be a hypocrite for saying them, without belief, without that heartfelt sincerity of faith. Perhaps that would after all be too easy; too soon. Too easy, too soon - for me who has caused so much suffering for so many people for so many years. And it seems somewhat strange that now, when I do not believe, but often desire to believe, that I read Saint Benedict's Rule regarding humility when - as monk who did believe - I did not read it, except in a cursory way. Then, the read words had no meaning - they were only words, of some book. Now: now, some of the words seem to have a life, a meaning: "...but then I was humbled and overwhelmed with confusion..." As if I am some learner of some lesson; a slow learner, who took decades to know, to truly feel, to fully understand, and so cease - or at least strive to cease - to cause suffering to any living thing.

So, now it is back to my life in this world - to the many things to occupy the time of day before the hours of sleep arrive to sometimes gracefully bring a certain peace.

December 2006
(Extract from a letter sent to a religious of OSB)

Between Dishonour and Desire

The clouded sky of most of the daylight hours has given way at last to breaks of blue, and - another day's work over - I sit by the window that overlooks the hills beyond where trees begin that turning of colour which so marks the downward part of an English Autumn - and my very being is moved as there plays within this room Bach's so numinous Aria *Ich habe genug*.

Thus does beauty live, again, and somewhere, here: as if I reaching out can almost touch its very being as one might reach to touch one's nearby gentle loving lover. But: there is instead only that ache, that sighing, that knowing of a loneliness, clinging - kept small, undepressing, by only memories of so many

times, pastly shared, which in their dwelling bring some solace, as out beyond such a presencing of beauty here we still in our, in this, moment feel so many people of this world subsumed in folly, lostness: hubris hiding compassion, a personal love hiding somewhere between dishonour and desire.

Yet, and yet - we have to hope; to cling to such a wistful dream of ours as the early mist of yesterday's sun-full morning clung to the meadow fields of the Farm as I alone walked among the trees, by hedges, while the light of Dawn broke to reveal a clear sky which sucked away that mist from dewy ground, mist-fully rising only feet, only a few feet, above where the tops of the still growing grass, now only sparsely flowered, gave way to the still cold air seeping up toward the horizon of my dreaming brightening so slowly warming sky.

Thus are there tears as one man's so small being seeks a Cosmos where belief knows, learns, cares and yet still so honourably desires. But this is not, yet, that death where one might so easily so peacefully pass to that which awaits, beyond - for there seems, feels, so much more living still to do; so many more spaces of causal Time to so drearily fill with ordinary life until we again can be taken away by such sublime perfection of another numinous moment such as this...

2007

One More Foolish Failure

I am such a fool; such a failure, in evolutionary terms, in the perspective of the Cosmos. Here I am, entering the sixth decade of my life, having spent the last forty years seeking experience and wisdom and having, in that time, made so many errors, mistakes, and been the cause of much suffering, personal and otherwise.

How then can I be deemed wise? How - when I have leant, from sorrowful experience, from my own *pathei-mathos*, from the personal tragedy of the dying and the death of two loved ones, and yet have always always, until now, returned to pursuing suffering-causing abstractions and unethical goals?

There is no excuse for this failure of mine, year following year - although of course I have always made excuses for myself, as failures often do. Wordy, moral-sounding, inexcusable excuses almost always of the unethical "the end justifies the means" kind.

No excuses - because from sorrow, from personal tragedy, I felt, dis-covered, the unethical nature of all abstractions, be they deemed political, religious, or social. And yet I always seemed, until a month ago, to gravitate back toward

them, as if there was some basic flaw in my personal nature, my character, that allowed or even caused such a return, such a stupid forgetting of lessons learnt; as if I was in truth an addict, addicted to challenges, to strife, to violent change, because such challenges, such strife, such violence brought or seemed to bring a vivifying existence, a sense of belonging, of being alive - and yes, a feeling of being different, special, in the sense of believing that one is able to make a difference, to the world.

Thus, I have been human - all too human, far too human; caught, trapped, by that egotism, that bloated self-esteem, that has blighted our species for centuries, for millennia, and made us place some goal, some idealism, some ideal, some abstraction, before empathy, before compassion, before our evolution into higher beings.

In addition, for a long time, I desired, yearned with all my being, with a sorrowful passion, to believe again in God, in Allah, Ar-Rahman, Ar-Raheem, As-Salaam - who thus could forgive, redeem, and guide, and from whom there might, could be, redemption and thus catharsis, and who thus could take away those doubts about myself, my actions, that never, ever, left me when I returned to the foray, to the pursuit of some inhuman suffering-causing abstraction or other.

Only in moments during all these years - these long, these too-long, four years - did my being reach out again to the Cosmos, my bloated all-too-human self-esteem punctured, brought down to Earth, by some incident, or some intimation of the divine, of The Numen; as when I chanced to listen, to hear, to feel, *In timorie Dei* from *Répons Matines pour la fête de saint Bernard*, and knew again as if for the first time the essence of one allegory, the suffering, the hopes, the errors, the potentiality, of human beings, century upon century - bringing thus a profusion of tears so that moisture fell from my eyes to moisten my beard as, outside my room, the modern world flowed as it flowed, replete with noise and ego... Or as when I out walking along some Promenade by some sea caught the smile, the very essence, of a woman, youthful, who passed me by in warming Sun and whom I in that one transcended moment seemed to become with all her happiness, sadness, hopes, memories and living: such an intimation of goodness, there, nascent, ready and willing to spring forth when a trusting love caught her, again. Or as when I sat in Sun to watch a young family, in some town Park, playing as such young fathers, mothers, often played with their children less than a decade in their living.

Or as when I watched from a boat the Sun set over a calm almost wave-free Sea, the red disk descending, larger, slowly, there where sea horizon cut the darkening of Earth's sky to cause such a profusion of changing colour that one was calmed, again, in those moments; stilled and almost awed as one watched, felt, such beauty, presenced on such a home as this.

But only in moments, during all those years.....

Perhaps all religions were, in their genesis, an answer to such stubborn foolish human forgetfulness that brought me down, for all those years; and - in their development - an aid to remembering what we so easily forget, what I so easily forgot, except in such transient moments; an aid, a means, by their rites, of presencing for us, in our ordinary, daily, lives, some intimation of the divine, of what we might, could, should be, when we cease because of egotism to forget, when we remember the suffering of others and especially the suffering that we ourselves have caused, and thus acquire or develop the dignity of humility that we human beings so desperately need, and always have needed.

Perhaps - until, that is, those religious ways lost or obscured, the numen, the numinous, in, by and through abstractions, dogma, by requiring the certainty of a certain belief, or by changing their ancient rites in some vain unnecessary temporal effort to be "modern and relevant".

I tried; I did try, for years - to return to such ways, such religious answers; needing them - hoping to find in and through them and their rites that constant remembrance, that constant presencing, of the numinous that I felt, knew, understood, would keep me a better, more enlightened, more empathic, and compassionate, person, mindful through humility of my own errors, arrogance, and mistakes.

But it did not work, for me - except in moments; far too few moments. For always there were deep feelings of there being something missing in their rites; of there being something just too abstract, too un-numinous, in their requirement that one accepts certain beliefs and dogma. As if the pure numinous essence has somehow by some means and over time been lost, or might not have been fully there even in their genesis.

Perhaps, possibly, probably - this is just my all-too-human arrogance re-asserting itself, yet again. My presumption, my illusion, of knowing, born from some all-too-human desire. But the stark simple truth was that such accepted, conventional, religious means did not work for me - or no longer worked for me. No longer presenced the numen, for me; no longer enabled me to rise, to go, beyond my selfish, foolish, error-prone self, to where the essence of empathy and compassion and the numen itself seemed to live, far beyond our temporal world of selfish suffering-causing human beings.

Thus did I slowly, sometimes painfully, from my *pathei-mathos*, construct for myself, over years, my own Way.

But even this Numinous Way of mine seems incomplete, as it is only my own uncertain and possibly quite feeble answer. For even now I seem to have no means, in and through this Way of mine, to presence the Numen, on a regular

temporal basis to remind myself of the mistakes of my past, to feel again the living numinous Cosmos beyond that often mundane world which has now become the place of my daily living.

Thus is there the same old haunting question - of how long will it be before I in my addiction forget The Numen, yet again, and so return to the suffering-causing habits of so many previous years?

For now, I can only hope against hope that I have strength enough, memories enough, humility enough, to keep me where I know I should belong: infused, suffused, with the world of the numinous, enabling thus such an empathic living as can make us and keep us as ethical, compassionate, human beings; one sign toward the higher human type we surely have the potential to become.

March 2010

Letter To My Undiscovered Self

For nearly four decades I placed some ideation, some ideal, some abstraction, before personal love, foolishly - inhumanly - believing that some cause, some goal, some ideology, was the most important thing and therefore that, in the interests of achieving that cause, that goal, implementing that ideology, one's own personal life, one's feelings, and those of others, should and must come at least second if not further down in some lifeless manufactured schemata.

My pursuit of such things - often by violent means and by incitement to violence and to disaffection - led, of course, not only to me being the cause of suffering to other human beings I did not personally know but also to being the cause of suffering to people I did know; to family, to friends, and especially to those - wives, partners, lovers - who for some reason loved me.

In effect I was selfish, obsessed, a fanatic, an extremist [1]. Naturally, as extremists always do, I made excuses - to others, to myself - for my unfeeling, suffering-causing, intolerant, violent, behaviour and actions; always believing that 'I could make a difference' and always blaming some-thing else, or someone else, for the problems I alleged existed 'in the world' and which problems I claimed, I felt, I believed, needed to be sorted out.

Thus I as a neo-nazi, as a racist [2], would for some thirty years and by diatribes spoken, written, rant on and on about these alleged problems: about 'the Jewish/Zionist problem, about 'the dangers of race-mixing', about the need for 'a strong nation', about 'why we need a revolution', about 'the struggle for victory',

about 'the survival of the Aryan race', and so on and so on. Later on, following my conversion to Islam, I would - for some seven or so years - write and talk about 'the arrogance of the kuffar', about 'the need for a Khilafah', about 'the dangers of kufr', about 'the need for Jihad against the kuffar', and so on and so on.

Yet the honest, the obvious, truth was that I - and people like me or those who supported, followed, or were incited, inspired, by people like me - were and are the problem. That my, that our, alleged 'problems' (political/religious), were phantasmagorical; unreal; imagined; only projections based on, caused by, invented ideas that had no basis in reality, no basis in the simple reality of human beings. For the simple reality of most human beings is the need for simple, human, things: for personal love, for friendship, for a family, for a personal freedom, a security, a stability - a home, food, playfulness, a lack of danger - and for the dignity, the self-respect, that work provides.

But instead of love we, our selfish, our obsessed, our extremist kind, engendered hate. Instead of peace, we engendered struggle, conflict, killing. Instead of tolerance we engendered intolerance. Instead fairness and equality we engendered dishonour and discrimination. Instead of security we produced, we encouraged, revolution, violence, change.

The problem, the problems, lay inside us, in our kind, not in 'the world', not in others. We, our kind - we the pursuers of, the inventors of, abstractions, of ideals, of ideologies; we the selfish, the arrogant, the hubristic, the fanatics, the obsessed - were and are the main causes of hate, of conflict, of suffering, of inhumanity, of violence. Century after century, millennia after millennia.

In retrospect it was easy to be, to become, obsessed, a fanatic, an extremist - someone pursuing some goal, someone identifying with some cause, some ideology; someone who saw 'problems' and felt such 'problems' had to be sorted out. For such extremism, such goals, fulfilled a need; they gave a sense of identity; a sense of belonging; a sense of purpose. So that instead of being an individual human being primarily concerned with love, with and responsible for personal matters - the feeling and issues and problems of family, friends, loved ones - there was a feeling of being concerned with and part of 'higher more important things', with the inevitable result one becomes hard, hardened, and thence dehumanized.

Easy to be thus, to be an outward extremist; just as it is easy for some other humans (especially, it seems, for men) to be and remain extremists in an inner, interior, way: selfish, hubristic, arrogant, unfeeling, and thus obsessed with themselves, their physical prowess, and/or subsumed by their personal desires, their feelings, their needs, to the exclusion of others. For - despite our alleged, our believed in, 'idealism' - we the outward extremists were, we had become like, those selfish, hubristic, arrogant, unfeeling humans; only that instead of

being slaves to our personal desires, feelings, needs, we were enslaved to our ideals, our goals, our ideologies, our abstractions, and to the phantasmagorical problems we manufactured, we imagined, or we believed in.

In essence, it was a failure of humanity on our, on my, part. A failure to see, to know, to feel, the human - the individual - reality of love, of peace. A failure to personally, as individuals, be empathic, compassionate, loving, kind, fair.

For love is not some ideal to be striven for, to be achieved by some supra-personal means. It is just being human: among, with, other humans, in the immediacy-of-the-moment. From such a human, individual, love - mutual and freely given, freely returned - there is peace: tranquillity, security.

That it took me four decades, and the tragic death of two loved ones, to discover these simple truths surely reveals something about the person I was and about the extremisms I championed and fought for.

Now, I - with Sappho - not only say that,

I love delicate softness:
For me, love has brought the brightness
And the beauty of the Sun [3]

but also that a personal, mutual, love between two human beings is the most beautiful, the most sacred, the most important, the most human, thing in the world; and that the peace that most of us hope for, desire in our hearts, only requires us to be, to become, loving, kind, fair, empathic, compassionate, human beings.

For that we just have to renounce our extremism, both inner and outer.

February 2012

Notes

[1] As mentioned elsewhere - in the missive *So Much Remorse* - by the term *extreme* I mean *to be harsh*, so that an *extremist* is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious nature. Here, *harsh* is: rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic. Thus *extremism* is considered to be: (i) the result of such harshness, and (ii) the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists. Thus in simple terms an extremist is someone who lacks empathy, compassion,

reason, and honour.

In addition, by fanatic is meant someone with a surfeit of zeal or whose enthusiasm for some objective, or for some cause, is intemperate.

[2] In respect of racism, I accept the standard definition, which is that racism is a prejudice and antagonism toward people regarded as belonging to another 'race', as well as the belief some 'races' are better than or superior to others, and that what is termed 'race' defines and explains, or can define and explain, the behaviour and the character of the people considered to belong to some postulated 'race'.

[3]

ἔγω δὲ φίλημ' ἀβροσύναν [...] τοῦτο καί μοι
τὸ λάμπρον ἔρωσ ἀελίῳ καὶ τὸ κάλον λέλογχε.

Sappho, poetic fragment: P. Oxyrhynchus. XV (1922) nr. 1787 fr. 1 et 2

Numinous Expiation

One of the many problems regarding both The Numinous Way and my own past which troubles me - and has troubled me for a while - is how can a person make reparation for suffering caused, inflicted, and/or dishonourable deeds done. For, in the person of empathy, of compassion, of honour, a knowledge and understanding of dishonour done, of the suffering one has caused - perhaps before one became such a person of compassion, honour, and empathy - is almost invariably the genesis of strong personal feelings such as remorse, grief, and sorrow. The type of strong feelings that Christopher Marlowe has Iarbus, King of Gaetulia, voice at the end of the play *The Tragedie of Dido Queene of Carthage*, written c.1587:

Cursed Iarbas, die to expiate
The grief that tires upon thine inward soul.

One of the many benefits of an organized theistic religion, such as Christianity or Islam or Judaism, is that mechanisms of personal expiation exist whereby such feelings can be placed in context and expiated by appeals to the supreme deity. In Judaism, there is Teshuvah culminating in Yom Kippur, the day of expiation/reconciliation. In Catholicism, there is the sacrament of confession and penance. In Islam, there is personal dua to, and reliance on, Allah Ar-Rahman, Ar-Raheem, As-Salaam.

Even pagan religions and ways had mechanisms of personal expiation for wrong deeds done, often in the form of propitiation; the offering of a sacrifice, perhaps, or compensation by the giving or the leaving of a valuable gift or votive offering at some numinous - some sacred and venerated - place or site.

One motivation, in the case of pagan religions and ways, for a person to seek expiation is fear of *wrake*; fear of the retribution or of the misfortune, that - from the gods - might befall them or their descendants in this life. Similarly, for those acceptive of an all-knowing, all-seeing supreme deity - or even of the Buddhist mechanism of karma - there is also fear of *wrake*; fear of the punishment, the retribution, the misfortune, that might await them in the next life; or, in the case of Buddhism, the type of life that might result when next they are reborn.

As the Owl explains in the mediæval English religious allegory *The Owl and the Nightingale*,

ich wat þar schal beo niþ & wrake

I can see when there shall be strife and retribution [1]

All such religious mechanisms of expiation, whatever the theology and regardless of the motivation of the individual in seeking such expiation, are or can be cathartic; restorative, healing. But if there is no personal belief in either a supreme deity or in deities, how then to numinously make reparation, propitiation, and thus to not only expiate such feelings as remorse, grief, and sorrow but also and importantly offset the damage one's wrong actions have caused, since by their very nature such suffering-causing actions are *ὑβρις* and not only result in harm, in people suffering, but also upset the natural balance.

In truth, I do not know the answer to the question how to so numinously make reparation, propitiation. I can only conject, surmise. One of my conjectures is enantiodromia; of the process, mentioned by Diogenes Laërtius and attributed to Heraclitus, of a wholeness arising both before and after discord and division [2]. This wholeness is the healthy, the numinous, interior, inward, and personal balance beyond the separation of beings - beyond *πόλεμος* and *ὑβρις* and thus beyond *ἔρις*; beyond the separation and thence the strife, the discord, which abstractions, ideations, encourage and indeed which they manufacture, bring-into-being. As Heraclitus intimated, according to another quotation attributed to him -

εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον εἶναι ζυγόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα [χρεών]

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord *δίκη*, and that beings are naturally born by discord. [3]

But what, then, in practical personal terms are this wholeness and this process termed enantiodromia? To me, this wholeness is a knowing and an acceptance of both the importance of the numinous principle of *Δίκη* [4] and the necessity of wu-wei [5] - and a knowing which empathy can provide - and thence a desire to live life in a non-interfering manner consistent with empathy, compassion, reason, honour, and humility. And it is this very knowing, this very desire to live in such a manner, which is enantiodromia; which is cathartic, restorative, healing; with a natural humility and the cultivation and practice of reason - *σωφροεῖν*, a fair and balanced judgement - being the essence of this personal process, the essence of enantiodromia.

For the human virtue of humility is essential in us for us not to repeat our errors of *ὑβρις*, a humility which our *πάθει μάθος* makes us aware of, makes us feel, know, in a very personal sense. For we are aware of, we should remember, our fallibility, our mortality, our mistakes, our errors, our wrong deeds, the suffering we have caused, the harm we have done and inflicted; how much we personally have contributed to discord, strife, sorrow.

In addition,

"...by and through humility, we do what we do not because we expect some reward, or some forgiveness, given by some supra-personal supreme Being, or have some idealized duty to such a Being or to some abstraction (such as some nation, some State) but because it is in our very nature to do an act of compassion, a deed of honour: to do something which is noble and selfless.

That is, we act, not out of duty, not out of a desire for Heaven or Jannah, or enlightenment or some other "thing" we have posited - not from any emotion, desire or motive, not because some scripture or some revelation or some Buddha says we should - but because we have lost the illusion of our self-contained, personal, identity, lost our Earth-centric, human-centric, perspective, lost even the causal desire to be strive to something different, and instead just *are*: that is, we are just one microcosmic living mortal connexion between all life, on Earth, and in the Cosmos. For our very nature, as human beings, is a Cosmic nature - a natural part of the unfolding, of the naturally and numinously changing, Cosmos." [6]

Thus a personal humility is the natural balance living within us; that is, we being or becoming or returning to the balance that does not give rise to *ἔρις*. Or, expressed simply, humility disposes us toward gentleness, toward kindness, toward love, toward peace; toward the virtues that are balance, that express

our humanity.

This personal humility inclines us toward *σωφρονεῖν*; toward being fair, toward rational deliberation, toward a lack of haste. Toward a balanced judgement and thence toward a balanced life of humility, *we-wei*, and a knowing of the wisdom of *Δίκη*.

There is nothing especially religious here, nor any given or necessary praxis. No techniques; no supplication to some-thing or to some posited Being. No expectation of reward, in this life or some posited next life. Only an interior personal change, an attempt to live in a certain gentle, quiet, way so as not to intentionally cause suffering, so as not to upset the natural balance of Life.

February 2012

Notes

[1] v.1194. The text is that of the Cotton Caligula MS in the British Library as transcribed by JWH Atkins in *The Owl and the Nightingale*, Cambridge University Press, 1922.

[2] The quotation from Diogenes Laërtius is: *πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα* (ix. 7)

My translation is: *All by genesis is appropriately apportioned [separated into portions] with beings bound together again by enantiodromia.*

As I mentioned in my essay *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*:

I have used a transliteration of the compound Greek word - *ἐναντιοδρομίας* - rather than given a particular translation, since the term enantiodromia in my view suggests the uniqueness of expression of the original, and which original in my view is not adequately, and most certainly not accurately, described by a usual translation such as 'conflict of opposites'. Rather, what is suggested is 'confrontational contest' - that is, by facing up to the expected/planned/inevitable contest.

Interestingly, Carl Jung - who was familiar with the sayings of Heraclitus - used the term enantiodromia to describe the emergence of a trait (of character) to offset another trait and so restore a certain

psychological balance within the individual.

[3] Fragment 80 - qv. *Some Notes on Πόλεμος and Δίκη in Heraclitus B80* and also *The Balance of Physis - Notes on λόγος and ἀληθέα in Heraclitus*.

As I noted in *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*, it is interesting that:

"in the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, and in circulation at the time of Heraclitus, a personified πόλεμος (as the δαίμων of kindred strife) married a personified ὕβρις (as the δαίμων of arrogant pride) [8] and that it was a common folk belief that πόλεμος accompanied ὕβρις - that is, that Polemos followed Hubris around rather than vice versa, causing or bringing ἔρις."

[4] In respect of the numinous principle of Δίκη, refer to my short essay *The Principle of Δίκη*.

[5] As mentioned elsewhere, wu-wei is a Taoist term used in my philosophy of The Numinous Way "to refer to a personal 'letting-be' deriving from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive - that is, is ὕβρις. In practice, this is the cultivation of a certain (an acausal, numinous) perspective - that life, things/beings, change, flow, exist, in certain natural ways which we human beings cannot change however hard we might try; that such a hardness of human trying, a belief in such hardness, is unwise, un-natural, upsets the natural balance and can cause misfortune/suffering for us and/or for others, now or in the future. Thus success lies in discovering the inner nature of things/beings/ourselves and gently, naturally, slowly, working with this inner nature, not striving against it."

I first became acquainted with the concept of wu-wei when, as a youth living in the Far East, I studied Taoism and a learnt a martial art based on Taoism. Thus it might be fair to assume that Taoism may well have influenced, to some degree, the development of my weltanschauung.

[6] The quote is from my essay *Humility, Abstractions, and Belief*.

Some Reflexions On Numinous Change Pardonance, Love, Extremism, and Reform

My own somewhat tempestuous, experiential, extremist, and suffering-causing, life - and my quest among various religions - seems to have made me personally aware of the ability we, as human beings, possess or possibly can acquire to change ourselves in a positive, a virtuous, way; of the ability we possess to exchange hatred for love, injustice for fairness, prejudice for tolerance, and violence and killing for peace. The ability, that is, to become compassionate, empathic, honourable, human beings, and thus cease to be the type of beings who have caused or contributed to so much suffering over so many millennia.

This ability to change ourselves, it occurs to me, is the basis for reform, for numinous change, both personal and social; that is, for change that is good, human, humanist; which betakes us away from causing or contributing to suffering, and which thus leads us to restrain ourselves and refrain from causing further pain, distress, injury, harm, grief, to other human beings and to other life.

Such numinous change, in my view, begins with shrift [1], and not necessarily with some confession (of some sin or sins) to some deity or some representative, howsoever appointed, of such a deity, but rather the admission, the confession, to one's self of one's errors, failures, mistakes. This is the self-knowledge, the self-learning, of how one's deeds have harmed others and thus caused or contributed to suffering. There is thus a placing of one's self into a human, into a numinous, perspective and therefore an admission of fallibility and a certain, and a necessary, personal humility. And it from such humility - founded on such self-knowledge - that there arises, or there can arise, within the reformed individual, a genuine and necessary remorse.

Pardonance

To so accept - or to be open to - such a numinous change in someone is, at least according to my weltanschauung, a human, a virtuous, thing to do, requiring as it does empathy enough to recognize and be appreciative of the new individual that so emerges or which can emerge from such shriftness, such self-knowledge, such humility.

Thus, to try and cultivate such acceptance of such individual change - the virtue of pardonance - and of the empathy required to recognize it, may well be a means for us to encourage reform in ourselves, in others, and perhaps therefore also in our societies in a manner which is numinous: gentle, loving, and which

does cause further suffering.

To not do this and to instead be harsh in a generalized way and thus to not take into account individual circumstances, the possibility of change, and the virtue of empathy in recognizing genuine change, is perchance to commit the error of hubris and thus to add to the burden, to aid the cycle, of suffering.

A Personal Perspective - Dealing With Extremism

A question, relevant to reform and personal change, that I have often asked myself in the past few years is what, or who, could or might have prevented me from causing the suffering I caused during my four decade long career as an extremist of various kinds. Which leads to the general question as to what might be one effective way to deal with extremism and extremists, and thus possibly lead to some or many of extremists being reformed, changed; that is, acquiring certain virtues and having those virtues replace the negative, harsh, ideas, ideologies, and emotions, which made them and marked them as extremists and vectors of human suffering.

After a great deal of reflexion, the one tentative answer I have is the answer of learning, personally, from those who suffered because of, or who were affected by, such extremism. In effect, individuals being shown the personal consequences of such actions, such deeds, such violence, such hatred, such prejudice, and such terrorism, as I and others like me supported and/or incited. How the victims of our extremism, and their families and relatives, were affected; how they suffered; what in human terms they lost and was taken from them. A personal encounter with their grief, their sadness, their sorrow, their pain, their loss. Not some history lesson; not an impersonal reading of some books; but personal encounters with victims, with the family and the relatives of victims; or at the very least factual documentaries and recallings that tell the personal, the moving, stories of victims, of the family and the relatives of victims.

A revealing thus of the terrible, the horrid, human cost of extremism and of the idealism that I personally now believe is one of the roots of extremism. For such idealism assuredly dehumanizes, for one places some ideal, some ideology, some goal, some principle, some abstraction, before the human virtues of empathy, compassion, gentleness, and love.

Yet this raises an interesting and important question: are all extremists redeemable, capable of change? Can they all be changed by such a knowing of the human consequences of their extremism?

In all honesty, I have to answer no. For my personal experience over some forty years has unfortunately shown that some people (whether extremists or not)

are, or appear to be, just bad, rotten, by nature and thus possibly/probably irredeemable. I could be mistaken, as I hope that there exists some means to reveal, to nurture, the humanity of such individuals, although I do not know and cannot conceive of what such means might be. What I do intimate, however, is that such irredeemable individuals are, and probably always have been, a minority.

A Personal Philosophy

As I have tried to intimate in some of my recent essays, making empathy, compassion, honour, gentleness, wu-wei, and love, the pre-eminent virtues of my philosophy of The Numinous Way derives from my own pathei-mathos, my own shrifting, and from my reflexion on the self-knowledge, the feelings of remorse and sadness, that arose from them. Hence the ethics of this Way have their genesis in my personal meditations, and are not the result of some critical, academic, detached, study and revision of the various ethical theories that have been proposed by others, ancient or modern.

Furthermore, I admit that I do not have all the answers, or even many of the answers to important moral and philosophical questions, and that the few answers I have arrived at in recent years are only my own fallible tentative and quite personal answers derived from much interior reflexion on the suffering I know I have caused through and because of past deeds, deeds both extremist and personal. A knowing, a reflexion, that I feel has changed me, reformed me.

I would like to believe - to hope - that this personal, this interior, change, possibly evident in some recent writings of mine, and possibly also evident in my philosophy of The Numinous Way, is positive, good; in some way counter-balances the hubris of my past, and is thereby some expiation, some propitiation, for at least some of the suffering caused.

But it is for others, not for me, to judge whether that is so.

March 2012

The text of this article is taken from - and thus summarizes - my answers to some questions recently asked of me by an undergraduate student, and which questions concerned my extremist past, my rejection of extremism, and the ethics of my philosophy of The Numinous Way.

[1] " I will give him a present shrift and advise him for a better place."
Measure for Measure, Act iv, scene ii

So Much Remorse
(Extract from a letter to a friend)

So much remorse, grief, and sorrow, within me for the unwise suffering-causing deeds of my past. Yet all I have in recompense for decades of strife, violence, selfishness, hate, are tears, the cries, alone - and words, lifeless words, such as this; words, to - perhaps, hopefully - forewarn forswear so that others, some few, hearing, reading, may possibly avoid, learn from, the errors that marked, made, and were, my hubris.

Such an elixir of extremism ^[1] which I, with paens born of deluded destiny, refined, distilled, made and - like some medieval fake apothecary - sought to peddle as cure for ailments that never did exist.

Then her - Francine's - death that day late May such that for so long a time such feelings of remorse, grief, and sorrow, overwhelmed so that Sleep when he deigned to arrive arrived to take me only fitfully, slowly, back to Night and usually only after I, in darkness, lay to listen to such music as so recalled another aethereal, beautiful, older, world untainted by the likes of me; a world recalled, made manifest, to me in the sacred music of Josquin Desprez, Dunstable, Tallis, William Byrd, Tomás Luis de Victoria...

Such a longing then in those lengthy days longer nights to believe, to reclaim the faith - Christe Redemptor Omnium - of decades past to then presence, within, a sanctified expiation that might could remove that oppressive if needed burden. Of remorse, grief, sorrow, guilt. But was it only pride - stubborn pride - that bade me resist? Or some feeling of failures, before? Some memory primordial, pagan perhaps, of how why Night - She, subduer of gods, men ^[2] - alone by Herself brought forth day from dark and caused us all to sleep to dream to somewhere and of Necessity to die? I do not know, I do not know that why.

For there was then only interior strife until such time as such longing for such faith slowly ceased; no words in explanation, expiation. Ceased, to leave only the pain of a life mis-spent, left in memories of tears that lasted years. No prayer, no invocations; not even any propitiation to redeem, protect, to save. Only, and now, the minutes passing to hours to days as Sun - greeting, rising, descending, departed - passes from to return to the dark only to be born again anew; each newness unique, when seen.

I have no excuses; the failure of decades was mine. A failure of compassion, empathy, honour. A failure as a human being. There are no excuses for my past, for deeds such as mine. No excuses for selfishness, for a hubris of personal emotion. No excuse for deceit, deception, lies. No excuse for extremism, for racism, for the politics, the religion, of hate. For the simple truth - if so lately-discovered by me - is that the giver the bringer the genesis of Life is Love.

Awed by her brightness
Stars near the beautiful Moon
Cover their own shining faces
When She lights earth
With her silver brilliance
Of love... ^[3]

February 2012

Some Notes (Post Scriptum)

[1] It might be useful to explain how I, in the light of my forty years practical experience of and involvement with extremism, understand terms such as extremism. By *extreme* I mean *to be harsh*, so that an *extremist* is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious nature. Here, *harsh* is: rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic. Thus *extremism* is considered to be: (i) the result of such harshness, and (ii) the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists. In simple terms, an extremist is someone who lacks empathy, compassion, reason, and honour.

Racism is one example of extremism, with racism being a prejudice and antagonism toward people regarded as belonging to another 'race', as well as the immoral belief that some 'races' are better than or superior to others, and that what is termed 'race' defines and explains, or can define and explain, the behaviour and the character of the people considered to belong to some postulated 'race'.

[2] Homer, Iliad xiv, 259 - εἰ μὴ Νῦξ δμήτεια θεῶν ἐσάωσε καὶ ἀνδρῶν

[3] Sappho, Fragment 34 [Lobel and Page] -

Ἄστερες μὲν ἀμφὶ κάλαν σελάνναν
ἄψ ἀπυκρύπτοισι φάεννον εἶδος,
ὅπποτα πλήθοισα μάλιστα λάμπη
γᾶν [ἐπὶ πᾶσαν]
[...] ἀργυρία [...]

And What You Thought You Came For Is...

And what you thought you came for
Is only a shell, a husk of meaning
From which the purpose breaks only when it is fulfilled
If at all. Either you had no purpose
Or the purpose is beyond the end you figured
And is altered in fulfilment.

TS Eliot: Little Gidding

There is now for me a quite simple, solitary, almost reclusive life, almost ended; as if the Cosmos - Wyrð - has contrived to place me exactly where I need to be: in, with, such a situation and surroundings as makes me remember the unwise deeds of those my pasts, and which placement offers more opportunities for one fallible human being to learn, especially about how people are not as, for many decades, I with my arrogance and abstractive purpose assumed.

For now I of the aged poor have no purpose, no ideation, to guide; no assumptions founded on, extrapolated from, some causal lifeless abstraction. No politics; no religion; not even any faith. There is instead only the living of moments, one fluxing as it fluxes to, within, the next. No dreams of Destiny; no supra-personal goals; no desires of self to break the calm of day and night. Only walks, and a being, alone to mingle with weather, Life, Nature as one so mingles when happiness is there inside unsupported by some outer cause or expectation of or from another.

Few possessions, belongings, as if I am a Gentleman of The Road again, but briefly staying here in this some un-heated house; or perhaps some almost-monk of one half-remembered païen apprehension, with neither monastery nor home, who feels now the hidden meaning of life: that this is all that there is or should be, this peace brought because there is a freedom from desiring desires. Someone sad, burdened by a deep naked knowledge of himself, but who and now, too sensitive perhaps, smiles too often and tries to hide the burgeoning tears of joy that sometimes seem to so betake him unawares,

as when that warm late Summer's evening I chanced up that family, there, where a town's centre gave way to greenful Park and when, Sun descending, young mother helped her daughter light that paper lantern. Such joy, such joy, upon those faces, there, as slight breeze carried high perhaps some wistful wish, away.

As when before that walk in rainy woods alone I chanced to smile as dog with youthful lady, towed, came via pavement to pass this old man by. Such brief contact of courteous words exchanged, a smile returned, and off they went their way, their world, to leave only a glimpse, only a glimpse of futures-present-past - and her perfume, lingering, there. I - melded with tree, sky, soil, increasing rain - feeling such a burden of promise there. And there was nothing left to do but walk-on, hoping that someone might, did, treasure the goodness captured there, presenced within one more so mortal human life...

I, now, someone - who unlike so many millions world-wide - fortunate indeed to have shelter, food adequate to feed his gauntness for a day; clothes sufficient to keep-in warmth; and health - though agely ageing, slowly fading - enough to keep him fending for, and fendful of, himself. There could be more; there was far more, but that seems long ago; unneeded now. For this is all that there is, this happiness in moments when - needs fulfilled - no lust for change, having laid in wait within, bursts forth bringing thus such breaking difference as so often causes two, more, far more, humans to break or drift apart.

Emotions governed, basic needs supplied, with memories - of lives - sufficientized for years of daily dreams, what more remains, becomes required? Little, so very little, except we being human, external still, do still so cause such suffering, so much - for what?

For there has come upon me these past few years, of this so simple living, a certain understanding. Of how I am never, was never, ever, totally alone, being only one briefly born connexion. Of just how easy it is to be content, breeding happiness in oneself and others, and how even easier it is to lapse, to fail, to fall; to let feelings, abstractions, guide, control, as when in the past I would breed discontent within myself, with loved ones and others, never satisfied with this or that. For happiness, I presumed, lay in better things - a better home some better place; better food clothes holidays finer wine; that other woman, there; and, perhaps far worse, lay with better way of life for those unknown, a way wrought by deeds done, by pursuit of lifeless ideation as if I, that temporary self, might have made some difference and that those causal shells had or might be given meaning or even by violence, blood, become somehow gifted with the breath of life.

So little self-control. So much love, hopes, lives destroyed; and how much suffering I by hubris caused. So much - for what? Some selfish passing pleasure; no external change that lasted; that ever could, would, last. Since real change, discovered, is only and ever within ourselves, alone - there, interior, ready to gently touch another, one gift of one person personally known so that only now perhaps I am with, of, the numen living.

Thus I am returned to sometimes where I so briefly was, my purpose altered, far beyond the goals I in arrogance so vainly figured. For I am nothing special, unique; only some half-remembered vague aspirations of this age, whose words, life - as so many - perhaps uncovers divinity as the divine but whose past concerned creating illusion, illusions, in expiation of a humanity then so lost.

Returned, as when I with tent, wandered, roamed. Returned, as those sunny warm days that Summer in Leeds when - before a monastery claimed me - I would walk barefoot inanely smiling so pleased to be free, young, alive. Returned as when, bus-arrived, love caught me and she that April day embraced me with such hope, such gentle hope, such simple sharing dreams that remembrance now brings so many tears of sadness. For I in selfishness broke them.

Returned as that day - so many many years on - when love for me lived within another as we two so slowly walked some Worcester streets...

How foolish, how so very foolish, to have lost such times, such love, by lust for change, by such selfish stupidity as lived within me still and still until years years further on that other dying came in May to almost break betake me.

Now, I am only someone living - a simple living - with a certain fallible inner understanding, born of suffering, deaths, distress, despair. So there is so aptly now only slow quiescent walks alone and such memories, such memories, as I hope I hope I have made a better man.

August 2011

Some Personal Perceiverations

Being, Death, Becoming

In the course of the past forty-five years or so of my adult life, I seem to have arrived at an unplanned destination so far removed and so different from where I started it is almost as if I have found not only another world but also another person. As if the I, the youthful self, who existed at the beginning of my journey, has vanished, died, to be mysteriously replaced by another being. For how did that young, that violent, that fanatical, that thuggish, that racist, neo-nazi become transformed into this aged man of the greying hair for whom the most important thing is a loyal love shared between two human beings and who now

quietly, peacefully, preaches personal virtues such as empathy, gentleness, compassion, and *εὐταξία*, and who understands racism for the inhumanity it is?

No, it was not several terms of imprisonment for violence that led to the death of that egotistical arrogant self; nor even nearly two years as a Christian monk. Not even a year spent working in a hospital as a student nurse in those days, long-gone, when such training was mostly practical. Nor even being arrested on suspicion of conspiracy to murder with the prospect of years, possibly decades, in jail.

No, not that conversion to Islam and the almost eight years lived after that. Nor even the forthsithe of the first of two loved ones suddenly unexpectedly taken from me: her death no end then of that, my so selfish vainglorious self.

No, it was none of those, and similar things, in isolation. For that selfish self lived on. Slightly changed, but never changed enough. A self though increasingly divided and struggling within with certain moral dilemmas never divided enough, never struggling enough, since always always a fateful thread unwoven from abstractions began to bind, repair, restore.

For decades, no satori, no enlightenment, engulfed, overwhelmed. No one moment, no one defining event, to change, transform one forever as understanding suddenly dawned. Instead, it was the steady accumulation of experience; the accumulation of personal mistakes, of personal folly year following year, of moral dilemma following moral dilemma; a slow learning - a very slow learning - drip drip dripping away at my surety, my arrogance, my beliefs, as sea-water surging drips away at seemingly stronger rock.

No, no satori - until a second forthsithing came to shock, shake, betake, me; her death a potion to that self but six warm Summers ago. But even then, the poisoned dying self lingered on: three more Winters until a new Spring burst forth with healing Sun so that his dying finally became his death and brought forth a new individual replete, complete, with sorrow.

Sorrow and Love

Following the suicide of my fiancée in 2006 ce, one of the first practical things I instinctively did - I was moved, felt almost compelled, to do - was travel to visit the nearest Catholic Church and, in remembrance of her, light a candle in the Lady Chapel before the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

This instinctive heart-felt act following such a personal tragedy afterwards rather surprised me, an act perhaps brought forth by my upbringing as a Catholic and my time as a monk. Surprised me, for I was still then, nominally at least, a Muslim, and so in theory should have made dua to Allah or travelled to the nearest Mosque. Thus began an intense interior process of reflexion which

was to last some three years, and which was to lead to me developing, refining, my philosophy of The Numinous Way and thus to turning away from the way of al-Islam, away from all causal abstractions.

Part of the personal understanding so developed was that, in respect of other spiritual ways, there was for me a tolerance, a respect; a knowing that my own answers are just my own fallible answers, and that, as I wrote last year:

"...any Way or religion which manifests, which expresses, which guides individuals toward, the numinous humility we human beings need is good, and should not be stridently condemned. For such personal humility – that which prevents us from committing hubris, whatever the *raison d'être*, the theology, the philosophy – is a presencing of the numinous. Indeed, one might write and say that it is a personal humility – whatever the source – that expresses our true developed (that is, rational and empathic) human nature and which nature such Ways or religions or mythological allegories remind us of." *Soli Deo Gloria*

Furthermore:

Þeȝ sume men bo þurȝut gode,
an þurȝut clene on hore mode,
ho[m] longeþ honne nobeles.
Þat boþ her, [w]o is hom þes:
vor þeȝ hi bon hom solue iborȝe,
hi ne soþ her nowiȝt bote sorwe.
Vor oþer men hi wepeþ sore,
an for hom biddeþ Cristes ore.

The Owl and The Nightingale, c. 1275 ce [1]

Though some men be thoroughly good
An thoroughly clean of heart
How longeth they nonetheless
They be not here
For though their soul be saved
They seeth nought but grieving here:
For they for men's sorrows weep
And for themself biddeth Christ have mercy

For there was, and remains, a deep sorrow within me; born from a knowing of inexcusable personal mistakes made, inexcusable suffering caused, of fortunities lost; a sorrow deepened by a knowing, a feeling, a learning, of how important, how human, a personal love is. Indeed, that love is the most

important, the most human, the most numinous, virtue of all.

The Infortunity of Abstractions

The fateful sorrow-causing thread which ran through and which, for nearly four decades, bound and blighted my adult life is the thread of idealism born of the belief that in order to achieve some posited, imagined, 'ideal', generalized, and future, state of affairs, certain sacrifices have to be made by people in the present 'for the greater good' - sacrifices of their happiness, their love, even of their lives. And not sacrifices for one's self, one's loved ones, one's family - but 'for the greater good', with this 'greater good' being described, championed, by politicians, by 'statesmen', by leaders, by 'representatives of the people', or even in former times by potentates, religious leaders, and military commanders.

A 'greater good' variously described and named. For many, it is their 'nation'; for others, 'patriotic/religious/political duty'; for others, it is 'their people' or their 'race'. For others still, it is called 'freedom', or 'democracy', or 'justice' or even, in former times, 'destiny' or God or 'Empire'. The names change, are even sometimes interchangeable, but the thread of love-destroying idealism remains.

Thus, in the name of such things one justifies the use of deadly force and violence so that one goes to war, or supports war; or supports violent revolution. One kills, or supports killing. In the name of such things one justifies a war, an invasion, a revolution, violence, the killing of 'the enemy'. All in the hope that the world of tomorrow will be better than the world of today. A hope alive, kept alive, while thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions, of human beings are killed, injured, and suffer, century upon century, millennia after millennia.

For decades this idealism, this hope, such justification, that thread, gave life, vigour, to the selfish person I was: violent, inciting, propagandistic, fanatical, preacher of revolution, war. But now that thread has, wyrdfully, thankfully, been broken at the cost perhaps of a beautiful life, her death a constant painful reminder that, for me, such love-destroying idealism is:

"...fundamentally wrong and inhuman. That is, it is a manufactured abstraction, a great cause of suffering, and that nothing - no idealism, no cause, no ideal, no dogma, no perceived duty - is worth or justifies the suffering of any living-being, sentient or otherwise. That it is empathy, compassion and a personal love which are human, the essence of our humanity: not some abstract notion of duty; not some idealism. That it is the impersonal interference in the affairs of others - based on some cause, some belief, some dogma, some perceived

duty, some ideology, some creed, some ideal, some manufactured abstraction - which causes and greatly contributes to suffering, and which moves us far away from empathy and compassion and thus diverts us from our humanity and from changing ourselves, in a quiet way, into a more evolved, a more empathic and more compassionate, human being." *A Change of Perspective* (2010 ce)

Now, all I - touched by sorrow - can do now is gently, quietly, reclusively, strive to capture, recapture, a little something of the world of love.

The moment of sublime knowing
As clouds part above the Bay
And the heat of Summer dries the spots of rain
Still falling:
I am, here, now, where dark clouds of thunder
Have given way to blue
Such that the tide, turning,
Begins to break my vow of distance
Down.

A women, there, whose dog, disobeying,
Splashes sea with sand until new interest
Takes him where
This bearded man of greying hair
No longer reeks
With sadness.
Instead:
The smile of joy when Sun of Summer
Presents again this Paradise of Earth
For I am only tears, falling [2]

February 2012

[1] vv.879-886. The text is that of the Cotton Caligula MS in the British Library as transcribed by JWH Atkins in *The Owl and the Nightingale*, Cambridge University Press, 1922. The attempted rendering into modern English is by DWM.

Absque Vita Tali, Verbum Quoad Litteram Est Mortuum

Outside, rain and the un-warm wind of December, with no Sun - no Summer - to warm and bring that joy of wakeing to see the sky deep full of blue so that one smiling is eager still, as youth again, to egress forth toward the sea.

Now I in a rainy month - and approaching my three score and ten - possess both an internal and an external knowing of just what the passing of earthly Time doth to we fragile biological beings, for:

I am an old man,
A dull head among windy spaces

And yet the flow of Life flows on, here - there - when the outer husk, failing, dies, so that I reminded of what I pastly wrote to a friend, having now been so gifted with the gifts of one more solar year:

What, therefore, remains? What is there now, and what has there been? One genesis, and one ending, of one nexion whose perception by almost all others is now of one who lived and who wrote *ἔξ αἰνιγμάτων*.

*τό θ' ὑπέργηρων φυλλάδος ἤδη κατακαρφομένης τρίποδας
μὲν ὁδοῦς
στείχει, παιδὸς δ' οὐδὲν ἀρείων
ὄναρ ἡμερόφαντον ἀλαίνει. [1]*

For there does seem much worth now, a special new species of slowly-joy, to so and so shadowly wander, supported by a stick, since Time itself, unmeasured, stills and one is able to feel the numinous as if flows through, with, such presencings of Life as one meets, greets, passes. As when that other day I walked to wander - never now far from home - and that young unknown stocky man, girlfriend beside and smiling, bade me compliments of the season. Such life there, such potential there, in both, and one was glad to be alive, still, even if no Sun broke forth in warmth. Or glad as when in slow walk in woods nearby wind shook trees to breathe again one's wordless connexion with this living Earth, so strong so strong it became as if one could go back there to where one's loved ones lived, unbroken by such selfish deeds as might have saved them or at least made happier their so short time on Earth. And I was so happy, so happy there remembering those good times, shared, with them.

There has thus grown, within because of age, both a new knowing of how

needful is our need for compassion and of a new if sad perception: of just how many many centuries we forgetful biological beings may need. But all I can do now is walk, remembering, hoping: my words, my dreams, a bridge.

For I am no enigma, my life bared by writings such as this. For words live on to tell just one more story, of redemption. But who will read them when life lives within this husk no more?

December 2011

[1] Thus, he of great Age, his foliage drying up
And no stronger than a child, with three feet to guide him on his travels,
Wanders - appearing a shadow in the light of day.

Aesch. Ag 79-82

So Many Tears

Here am I listening to JS Bach's *Erbarme Dich* and weeping, weeping, weeping: such tears of sadness as if all the pain, all the suffering of the past five thousand years has come to be within me, this selfish man who caused so much suffering, who once - long ago it seems - thought he knew and understood and who thus sent forth so many words.

So many words... Now there is only the pain of knowing; only the anguish of failure; only one allegory among so many to bring that feeling, that knowing, which is far beyond any words I know.

So much failure so many times, by me, by others. Why cannot we learn? Why have we not learnt? Why has not the simple love of one such simple numinous allegory come to stay with us, day after day, decade upon decade, century after century? Why did not the simple love of my own personal leaning born from the

tragedy of one beautiful woman's death stay with me through those so recent weeks of ignorance when I turned back toward a vainful striving?

Why have we always, it seems, regressed toward the mistakes of our past? The mistakes of suffering born from striving for - from adherence to - some abstraction which leeches away that personal love, that compassion, that empathy that is the very essence of our human being?

So and yet again I am humbled by my own knowledge of myself; by that love which has lived within so many others century century and which so briefly lived within me until I became distracted again by the passion of following some stupid inhuman abstraction.

Failure upon failure; death following death; suffering upon suffering. Why have we not learnt? Why have I not learnt? Or am I by my life - by the mistakes of my life, by my own stupidity, time upon time - just one more example among so many examples these past five thousand years?

So much promise - oh how so much promise! - that lives within us, that has lived within some of us but which so many, it seems, take or leech away through their own selfish passion or through their striving for some lifeless un-numinous abstraction, just as it lived within her, him, taken from them as it was taken from them by things not even now fully understood but only felt as when I as in the moment just now past bent down, weeping, weeping, weeping such tears of sadness as if all the anguish of the centuries was seeping out from the depths below.

So, the music ends, and I am once again one man veering toward old age, looking out toward the autumnal hill where the clouds of Dusk have come to cover the setting Sun as begins again one more dark night for this forgetful fool.

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Erbarme dich, mein Gott,
um meiner Zähren willen!
Schaue hier, Herz und Auge
weint vor dir bitterlich.
Erbarme dich, mein Gott.

Bin ich gleich von dir gewichen,
stell' ich mich doch wieder ein;

hat uns doch dein Sohn verglichen
durch sein' Angst und Todespein.
Ich verleugne nicht die Schuld;
aber deine Gnad' und Huld
ist viel größer als die Sünde,
die ich stets in mir befinde.

Miserere Mei, Deus

Extract from a letter to a personal correspondent

In respect of religion, there seems to have grown within me, this past year, a feeling regarding prayer, especially contemplative prayer, or rather that quiet way of being when - with no expectation of or belief in God - no words are desired or required and one is aware of the numinous in such an unaffected way that there is a calmness emanating not from within - not caused by our knowing or feeling of self - but from that ineffable vastness beyond which includes us and all the life that seeps into us, there in our stillness: emanations, of not only the dreams, the hopes, the love, the sadness, the sorrow, the grief, the pain, the joy, the tragedy, felt, known, experienced by we humans millennia after millennia, but also of the being, the essence, of the other life around us, here as Nature, and elsewhere, which, as we, 'hath but a short time to live'.

A feeling, an intimation, of perhaps in some small way now understanding the Latin Opus Dei - Officium Divinum - as a needful daily reminder of our needful humility, as the plaintive cry Miserere Mei, Deus so reminds, and as the Namaz of Islam also so reminds with its Ruku, Sajdah, and recitation of Subhana Rabbiyal a'la. A needful daily reminder that we are transient beings, prone to dishonour, selfishness, and hubris, but who can be loving and kind, and beings prone to the charisma, the temptation, of words, either our own or those spoken or written by others. A reminder that we can so easily forget, have so often forgotten, "that gentleness, that modest demeanour, that understanding, which derives from an appreciation of the numinous and also from one's own admitted uncertainty of knowing and one's acknowledgement of past mistakes. An uncertainty of knowing, an acknowledgement of mistakes, that often derive from πάθει μάθος." [1]

A feeling, thus, of again understanding the necessitude we humans seem to have for prayer and for God, for Allah, for the gods, for the divine; and why this need, and its varied expression over millennia, should be respected and not profaned by that hubriatic personal certitude-of-knowing which enthralls, and has enthralled, so many especially in more recent times, making many of them prejudiced against organized religions and often against other expressions of

spirituality.

Personally, I have - fully knowing my past hubris, the suffering I have caused, and aware of my manifold errors and mistakes over four decades - a great respect for other religions and spiritual ways, and aware as I am how they each in their own manner, express, have expressed, or are intimations of, the numinous. For instance, I have come to appreciate, more and more over the past few years, the numinosity of the sacred music of the Christian Church (especially Catholicism), from before Gregorian chant to composers such as Byrd, Dowland, Lassus, to Palestrina, to Phillipe de Monte, and beyond. So much so that such sacred music is now the only music I can listen to, out of choice, redolent as it is, has become, for me, of the beautiful, of humility, of tragedy, of a sacred suprapersonal joy, of what is or can be divined through contemplative prayer. A remarkable treasure of culture, of pathei-mathos...

Without such religious, such spiritual, such organized, reminders, daily or weekly - that is, without prayer and without what is perhaps the best that religions and spirituality manifest - how do we balance another need of ours? That need to cause suffering and cry havoc, and a need whose genesis, perhaps, resides in our desire to be, to express, to re-affirm the separation-of-otherness, manifest as this is and has been in our own self-importance, our egoism, our greed; and in our belief that 'we', our assumed or our assigned category, are better than, superior to, 'them', the others: that 'we' are 'right' or have right on our side while 'they' do not and are wrong, leading as such belief so often does and so often has done to conflict and war and to us treating 'the others' in a dishonourable, uncompassionate, way because we, or those we follow and obey, have dehumanized 'them'. For I now incline toward the view that without such categorization, such assumptions - such a prejudice, such a belief - about 'us' and 'them', without such greed, such self-interest, and such a need to express, to manifest, importance, then war and suffering-causing armed conflict are not possible.

Is humility, therefore and as most religions and spiritual ways inform us, a necessity for us, as human beings? And if so, then how to manifest such humility, to be reminded of such a need, if we, as I now, personally have no expectation of or belief in God, or in Allah - in Heaven or Jannah - or in gods, or even in mechanisms such as rebirth and karma? Such questions have greatly occupied me for the past three years.

Given what I have intuited about our human nature - what many others have intuited or discovered over millennia - and what I believe I may have learned from my own pathei-mathos, I feel humility is indeed a necessity for us, as a means of guiding us toward avoiding causing suffering; as a means of placing our own life in the cosmic perspective of Life. That is, as a means of appreciating our nature as fallible, error-prone, beings who have the ability, the character, to not only refrain from committing the error of hubris but to also

rationally understand why hubris is an error and what the numinous may be, beyond ideations and beyond the myths, the allegories, the spiritualities, the words, that we have used and do use in order to try and express it.

As to how to manifest humility - sans religions, sans prayer to a deity or deities, (etcetera) - I admit I do not know, although my *Recuyle Of The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos* is my attempt to find, and to try and express, some answers [2]. Fallible answers such as the importance, the numinosity, of personal love; fallible answers such as empathy, and the knowing, the understanding, of others (and of ourselves) that empathy provides and of how such empathy and such empathic knowing is and can only be personal. Fallible answers such as an appreciation of - and the presumption of - innocence, understood as innocence is as an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us - of whom we have have no empathic knowledge - are therefore unjudged by us and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt until direct personal experience and individual and empathic knowing of them prove otherwise; and fallible answers such as appreciating how the separation-of-otherness leads to, is the genesis of, hubris.

Which leads me, and has led me, to other related questions. Without religions or some form or forms of social spirituality - without a belief in Heaven or Jannah or in a promised afterlife, or in rebirth and karma - how can humans change and so avoid the rotten behaviour, the hubris, that causes or contributes to suffering, and should we, as individuals or collectively, even try to change others, or should we concern ourselves only with our own inner and outer reformation? Has The State [3] assumed such a moral rôle by means of laws, punishments, and other mechanisms of authority or persuasion, and should The State assume or be allowed to assume such a moral rôle? My own answers, fallible and such as they are [4], are that our change, our reformation, are personal; consequences of pathei-mathos, a balanced judgement, and of empathy, and thus involve an appreciation of the numinous; and that the only non-suffering, non-hubriatic, way to change or try to change, to reform, others is by personal, direct, example and by valourous deeds in the immediacy of the moment. These answers are thus spiritual, apolitical, and imply that

"...what matters [is] our own moral character, our interior life, our appreciation of the numinous, and the individual human beings we interact with on the personal level; so that our horizon is to refine ourselves into cultured beings who are civil, reasoned, empathic, non-judgemental, unbiased, and who will, in the words of one guide to what is moral, Ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ." [5]

December 2nd, 2012

Notes, Post Scriptum

[1] *Toward Humility - A Brief Personal View*, included in *Pathei-Mathos: A Path to Humility* (2012)

[2] In addition to that recueil, the text *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos* provides a reasonable overview of such answers.

[3] As mentioned in *Politics, Society, Social Reform, and Pathei-Mathos*, The State is defined as:

The concept of both (1) organizing and controlling – over a particular and large geographical area – land (and resources); and (2) organizing and controlling individuals over that same geographical particular and large geographical area by: (a) the use of physical force or the threat of force and/or by influencing or persuading or manipulating a sufficient number of people to accept some leader/clique/minority /representatives as the legitimate authority; (b) by means of the central administration and centralization of resources (especially fiscal and military); and (c) by the mandatory taxation of personal income.

[4] Outlined in *Recuyle Of The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos* and *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*.

[5] The quotation is from my *Prejudice, Extremism, Islamophobia, and Culture*.

Appendix

Concerning The Development Of The Numinous Way

Background

What I term The Numinous Way, as a philosophy and as a way of life, was not the result of a few or many moments of inspiration striking close together in causal Time as measured by a terran-calendar and thus separated from each other by days, weeks, or even a few years.

Rather, it resulted from some nine years of reflexions, intuitions, and experiences, beginning in 2002 when - for quite a few months - I wandered as a vagabond in the hills and fells of Westmorland and lived in a tent, and during

which time I communicated some of my musings, by means of handwritten letters, to a lady living in Oxford whom I had first met well over a decade before.

These musings concerned Nature, our place - as humans - in Nature and the Cosmos; the purpose, if any, of our lives; whether or not the five Aristotelian essentials gave a true understanding of the external world; and whether or not God, or Allah, or some sort of divinity or divinities, existed, and thus - if they did not - whence came mystical insight, knowledge, and understanding, and what value or validity, if any, did such mystical insight, knowledge, and understanding, possess.

During the previous thirty or more years I had occasional intuitions concerning, or feelings, regarding, Nature, divinity, the Cosmos, and 'the numinous'; insights and feelings which led me to study Taoism, Hellenic culture, Buddhism, the Catholic mystic tradition, and become a Catholic monk. Later on, such intuitions concerning the numinous - and travels in the Sahara Desert - led me to begin a serious study of Islam and were part of the process that led me to convert to that way of life.

But these intuitions, feelings - and the understanding and knowledge they engendered - were or always eventually became secondary to what, since around 1964, I had considered or felt was the purpose of my own life. This was to aid, to assist, in some way the exploration and the colonization of Outer Space, and it was enthusiasm for - the inspiration of - that ideal which led me to seriously study the science of Physics, and then to seek to find what type of society might be able to make that ideal a reality, a seeking initially aided by my study of and enthusiasm for Hellenic culture, a culture - manifest in Greek heroes such as Odysseus and in the warrior society home to the likes of the sons of Atreus - which I came to regard as the ideal prototype for this new society of new explorers and new heroes.

After considering, and then rejecting, the communist society of the Soviet Union [1], an intuition regarding National-Socialist Germany [2] led me to seriously study that society and National-Socialism, a study ended when I peremptorily concluded that I had indeed found the right type of modern society. Thus I became a National-Socialist, with my aim - the purpose of my life - being to aid the foundation of a new National-Socialist State as a prelude to the exploration and the colonization of Outer Space, and thus the creation of a Galactic Imperium, a new Galactic, or Cosmic, Reich.

As I wrote in part one of some autobiographical scribblings issued in 1998 and which were based on some writings of mine dating back to the 1970's:

"It is the vision of a Galactic Empire which runs through my political life just as it is the quest to find and understand our human identity,

and my own identity, and our relation to Nature, which runs through my personal and spiritual life, giving me the two aims which I consistently pursued since I was about thirteen years of age, regardless of where I was, what I was doing and how I was described by others or even by myself..."

For it was this aim of the exploration and the colonization of Outer Space, and my rather schoolboyish enthusiasm for it, which - together with the enjoyment of the struggle - inspired my fanaticism, my extremism, and which re-inspired me when, as sometimes occurred during my NS decades, my enthusiasm for politics, for a political revolution, waned, or when my intuitions, my feelings, concerning the numinous and my love of women - the dual inspiration for most of my poetry - became stronger than my political beliefs and my revolutionary fervour.

The aim, the purpose, this idealization, regarding Outer Space even partly motivated my study of and thence my conversion to Islam in 1998. For example, not long before that conversion, in an essay entitled *Foreseeing The Future*, I wrote:

" I firmly believe that Islam has the potential to create not only a new civilization, governed according to reason, but also a new Empire which could take on and overthrow the established world-order dedicated as this world-order is to usury, decadence and a god-less materialism [...] I also believe that a new Islamic Empire could create the Galactic Empire, or at least lay the foundations of it. Perhaps the first human colonies on another world will have as their flag the Islamic crescent, a flag inscribed with the words, in Arabic, In the Name of Allah, The Compassionate, The Merciful."

Thus, as when a National-Socialist, I dedicated myself to my 'new cause', to an ideal I idealistically carried in the headpiece of my head: the cause of Jihad, of disrupting existing societies as a prelude to manufacturing a new one. In this instance, a resurgent Khilafah.

As with National-Socialism, it was the ideal, the goal, the struggle, which was paramount, important; and I - like the extremist I was - hubriatically placed that goal, that ideal, that struggle for victory, before love, fairness, compassion, reason, and truth, and thus engendered and incited violence, hatred, and killing.

In addition, I always felt myself bound by honour to be loyal to either a cause, an ideology, or to certain individuals and so do the duty I had sworn by oath to do and be loyal to those I had sworn to be loyal to. Hence when doubts about my beliefs arose during my decades as a nazi I always had recourse to honour

and so considered myself - even during my time as a monk - as a National-Socialist, albeit, when a monk, as a non-active one for whom there was ultimately no contradiction between the NS ethos and the ethos of a traditional Catholicism, for there was the Reichskonkordat and the agreement Pope Pius XII reached with Hitler.

During my Muslim years I felt bound by the oath of my Shahadah; an oath which negated my NS beliefs and led me to reject racism and nationalism, and embrace the multi-racialism of the Ummah; and which general oath, together (and importantly) with a personal oath sworn a few years after my conversion, would always - until 2009 - bring me back, or eventually cause me to drift back, to Islam and always remind me of the duty I felt I was, as a Muslim, honour-bound to do.

2002-2006

This drift back toward Islam is what occurred after my musings in 2002. I tried to forget them, a task made difficult when later that year I went to live on a farm and also work on another nearby farm. For that living and such work brought a deep personal contentment and further intuitions and feelings, and a burgeoning understanding, regarding the numinous, and especially concerning Nature; some of which intuitions and feelings I again communicated by means of handwritten letters, mostly to the aforementioned lady.

For a while I sought to find a synthesis, studied Sufism, but was unable to find any satisfactory answers, and thus began an interior struggle, a personal struggle I made some mention of in *Myngath*. A struggle, a conflict, between my own intuitions, insights, and burgeoning understanding - regarding the numinous and human beings - and the way of faith and belief; between what I felt was a more natural, a more numinous way, and the necessary belief in Allah, the Quran, the Sunnah that Islam, that being Muslim, required.

For a while, faith and belief and duty triumphed; then I wavered, and began to write in more detail about this still as yet unformed 'numinous way'. Then, yet again honour, duty, and loyalty triumphed - but only a while - for I chanced to meet and then fell in love with a most beautiful, non-Muslim, lady. And it was our relationship - but most of all her tragic death in May 2006 - that intensified my inner struggle and forced me to ask and then answer certain fundamental questions regarding my past and my own nature.

As I wrote at the time:

" Thus do I feel and now know my own stupidity for my arrogant, vain, belief that I could help, assist, change what was [...] I know my blame, my shame, my failure, here. Thus am I fully humbled by my own lack

of insight; by my lack of knowing; by an understanding of my selfishness and my failure - knowing myself now for the ignorant, arrogant person I was, and am. How hypocritical to teach, to preach, through writings, feeling as I do now the suffering of words."

I did not like the answers about myself that this tragedy forced me to find; indeed, I did not like myself and so, for a while, clung onto Islam, onto being Muslim; onto the way of faith, of God, of ignoring my own answers, my own feelings, my own intuitions. For there was - or so it then seemed - expiation, redemption, hope, and even some personal comfort, there. But this return to such surety just felt wrong, deeply wrong.

2006-2009

For there was, as I wrote in *Myngath*,

"...one uncomfortable truth from which even I with all my sophistry could not contrive to hide from myself, even though I tried, for a while. The truth that I am indebted. That I have a debt of personal honour to both Fran and to Sue, who died - thirteen years apart - leaving me bereft of love, replete with sorrow, and somewhat perplexed. A debt to all those other women who, over four decades, I have hurt in a personal way; a debt to the Cosmos itself for the suffering I have caused and inflicted through the unethical pursuit of abstractions.

A debt somehow and in some way - beyond a simple remembrance of them - to especially make the life and death of Sue and Fran worthwhile and full of meaning, as if their tragic early dying meant something to both me, and through my words, my deeds, to others. A debt of change, of learning - in me, so that from my pathei-mathos I might be, should be, a better person; presencing through words, living, thought, and deeds, that simple purity of life felt, touched, known, in those stark moments of the immediacy of their loss.

But this honour, I have so painfully discovered, is not the abstract honour of years, of decades, past that I in my arrogance and stupid adherence to and love of abstractions so foolishly believed in and upheld, being thus, becoming thus, as I was a cause of suffering. No; this instead is the essence of honour, founded in empathy; in an empathy with and thus a compassion for all life, sentient and otherwise. This is instead a being human; being in symbiosis with that-which is the essence of our humanity and which can, could and should, gently evolve us - far away from the primitive unempathic, uncompassionate, beings we have been, and unfortunately often still

are; far away from the primitive unempathic, uncompassionate, often violent, person I had been."

Thus I was prompted - forced - to continue to develop my understanding in what began to be and became my own 'numinous way' and which thus and finally and, in 2009 publicly, took me away from Islam and my life as a Muslim.

2009-2012

Given that the essence of The Numinous Way is individual empathy, an individual understanding, the development of an individual judgement, and the living of an ethical way of life where there is an appreciation of the numinous, the more I reflected upon this 'numinous way' between 2011 and Spring 2012, the more I not only realized my mistakes, but also that it was necessary to remove, to excise, the detritus that had accumulated around the basic insights and the personal pathei-mathos that inspired me to develop that 'numinous way'. Mistakes and detritus because for some time, during the development of that 'numinous way', I was still in thrall to some abstractions, still thinking in terms of categories and opposites, and still fond of pontificating and generalizing, especially about The State [3]. I therefore began to re-express, in a more philosophical manner, the personal, the individual, the ontological, the ethical and spiritual nature, of The Numinous Way, and thus emphasized the virtues of humility, love, and of wu-wei - of balance, of tolerance, of non-interference, of individual interior (spiritual) reformation, of non-striving, of admitting one's own uncertainty of understanding and of knowing.

The year-long [2011-2012] process of refinement, correction, and reflexion resulted in me re-naming what remained of my 'numinous way' the 'philosophy of pathei-mathos', and which philosophy I attempted to outline in the two texts *Reculye of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos* and *Summary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*, the latter of which was also published under the title *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*.

As I mentioned in *Society, Politics, Social Reform, and Pathei-Mathos* [Part Four of *Reculye of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*] -

"Given that the concern of the philosophy of pathei-mathos is the individual and their interior, their spiritual, life, and given that (due to the nature of empathy and pathei-mathos) there is respect for individual judgement, the philosophy of pathei-mathos is apolitical, and thus not concerned with such matters as the theory and practice of governance, nor with changing or reforming society by political means [...]

This means that there is no desire and no need to use any

confrontational means to directly challenge and confront the authority of existing States since numinous reform and change is personal, individual, non-political, and not organized beyond a limited local level of people personally known. That is, it is of and involves individuals who are personally known to each other working together based on the understanding that it is inner, personal, change - in individuals, of their nature, their character - that is is the ethical, the numinous, way to solve such personal and social problems as exist and arise. That such inner change of necessity comes before any striving for outer change by whatever means, whether such means be termed or classified as political, social, economic, religious. That the only effective, long-lasting, change and reform is understood as the one that evolves human beings and thus changes what, in them, predisposes them, or inclines them toward, doing or what urges them to do, what is dishonourable, undignified, unfair, and uncompassionate.

In practice, this evolution means, in the individual, the cultivation and use of the faculty of empathy, and acquiring the personal virtues of compassion, honour, and love. Which means the inner reformation of individuals, as individuals.

Hence the basis for numinous social change and reform is aiding, helping, assisting individuals in a direct and personal manner, and in practical ways, with such help, assistance, and aid arising because we personally know or are personally concerned about or involved with those individuals or the situations those individuals find themselves in. In brief, being compassionate, empathic, understanding, sensitive, kind, and showing by personal example."

The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos

It is the philosophy of pathei-mathos which represents my weltanschauung. For I now consider that most of my writings, my pontifications, concerning 'the numinous way' - written haphazardly between 2002 and Spring 2012 - are unhelpful; or of little account; or irrelevant; or hubriatic; or detract from or obscure the basic simplicity of my weltanschauung, a simplicity I have endeavoured to express in *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*.

24th April 2012
(Revised November 2012)

Notes

[1] During this study of communism, in the 1960's, I began to learn Russian and would regularly listen to communist radio broadcasts such as those from Rundfunk der DDR, something I continued to do for a while even after becoming a National-Socialist. Indeed, on one occasion I wrote a letter to Radio Berlin which, to my surprise, was read out with my questions answered.

[2] As I have mentioned elsewhere - for example, in *Myngath* - this intuition regarding the Third Reich arose as a result of me reading an account of the actions of Otto Ernst Remer in July of 1944. For I admired his honour and his loyalty and his commitment to the duty he had sworn an oath to do. Here, I felt, was a modern-day Greek hero.

[3] These un-numinous, errorful, hubriatic, pontifications about 'the state' included essays such as the reprehensible January 2011 text *The Failure and Immoral Nature of The State* and the February 2011, text *A Brief Numinous View of Religion, Politics, and The State*.

Among the abstractions (categories) which needed to be excised from a supposedly abstraction-less and empathic numinous way were 'the clan', and 'culture', and the divisive category 'homo hubris', a divisive category I hubriatically pontificated about in essays such as the 2009 text *Homo Hubris and the Disruption of the Numinous*, based as that text was on an earlier, 2002, essay.

cc David Myatt 2012, 2016
Second Edition

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Concerning the 2011 Massacre in Norway A Personal Analysis of an Extremist

Given the many people, recently and over the past eight months, who have inquired as to my view of, or asked me questions concerning, the 2011 massacre and bombing in Norway, I have – somewhat reluctantly – decided to make the following personal comment about those events and the person responsible.

As is well-known, in July of 2011 a bomb left near a government building in Oslo, Norway, killed eight people. The bomber then – on the nearby island of Utøya – shot dead sixty-nine people, the majority of whom were young people.

Let us call this person, for the sake of convenience, Rumpeldhatevik. Someone who may well in the future be the subject of a children's rhyme, such as:

Today hate, tomorrow kill
For murdering innocents takes great skill
For none know my evil game
Since Rumpeldhatevik be my name!

Rumpeldhatevik, as his hubristic attempts to justify his barbaric killings at his trial revealed, is an excellent example of both an extremist and of the consequences, the effects, the dangers, of extremist ideology. His behaviour during his criminal trial – defiant, posturing, proud, unforgiving, hateful, self-obsessed – is also an excellent example of the inhumanity of extremists; of their hubris, their insolence; their harshness.

Of how they place some ideology, some abstraction, some cause, some ideal, some goal, before human beings; of how they inhumanly categorize and prejudge individuals; of how extremists are born, and of how they become immune to – or more usually lack – empathy and the human virtues of compassion, kindness, love, humility, and tolerance. Of how they are or become unbalanced, or are made more unbalanced, through and because of some ideology.

In common with many extremists, the ideology Rumpeldhatevik adhered to provided him with a sense of identity and a feeling of importance, a mission, as well as an excuse for his behaviour and his actions.

The extremist ideology he believed in – and which a lot of people in the lands of the West now seem to believe in – is one founded on the following notions or beliefs, and many of which notions and beliefs derive from prejudice, intolerance, ignorance, and/or a dislike/fear of difference:

- 1) That what is termed multiculturalism 'does not work' and is detrimental to 'native European cultures/Western civilization/European people'.
- 2) That Muslims in Western lands are a problem, partly or mostly because it is believed 'they (or most of them) do want to integrate' and want to establish Shariah.
- 3) That Islam and/or Shariah 'is/are barbaric, backward and dangerous', and 'a threat'.
- 4) That most if not all Western politicians and governments (and their supporters) are 'traitors' for encouraging and allowing immigration (especially of Muslims), and tolerating and encouraging diversity.
- 5) That these 'traitors' need to be dealt with, for if 'something is not done soon' then Europe and America will 'suffer the dire consequences of immigration' and there will be 'an Islamification of Europe/America'.
- 6) That 'defending my country' from Islamification/immigration/multiculturalism is the most important thing.
- 7) That what prevents Islamification/immigration/multiculturalism 'is good'; and what aids or encourages Islamification/immigration/multiculturalism 'is bad'.

In essence, this is fascism. Where some abstract, some idealized, some mythical, national and cultural identity is revered; where 'defending this identity/one's country' is a priority; where there are identifiable (and dangerous) enemies who are disliked/hated and who must be countered and fought; where direct action and/or revolution (involving or inciting violence) are called for; where there is intolerance of same-sex relationships; where there is a masculine bias; where 'foreign influences' (and foreigners) need to be tackled and removed; where 'strong leadership' is needed to remedy the situation; and where liberalism and liberal democracy are regarded as part of the problem.

This new fascist ideology – where 'non-White' immigrants, and especially Muslims and Islam itself, are regarded as perhaps the main threat – is one founded on the separation-of-otherness, a lack of empathy, and thus on the immorality of prejudgement of individuals. An ideology which thus does not regard perceived enemies as innocent and which therefore encourages, and incites, hatred, intolerance, and violence against perceived enemies and even allows for if not encourages the killing of such enemies. And it is this inhuman disregard of, this lack of understanding of, the true meaning of innocence – or the lack of the capacity to feel innocence in others – that runs through all extremist ideology and which are the *raison d'être* of so many extremists, whether they know it or not, and mostly they do not know it, given how they always seem to attempt to excuse their barbarism by appeals to their ideologies.

Again, Rumpeldhatevik is an example of this; of this immorality, this inhumanity, of the unbalance of hubris; of this lack of understanding of, a lack of feeling for, innocence. For he stated at his trial that the young people he killed were "not innocent but people who worked to actively uphold multicultural values."

He did not know the people he killed. He had no personal quarrel with them. They had never done anything to personally harm him. He did not bother to get to know them. He – with his certitude of knowing, his belief in his ideology – had no sympatheia with them; not even when he began killing them and saw their pain, their agony, heard their screams, saw them injured and dying. To him, they were simply inferior beings, worthless. Not individual humans who had hopes, dreams; who had parents, friends, partners, who loved them, cared about them, who would grieve for their suffering, their injuries, their death.

For the capacity to feel, to sense, innocence in others is part of what makes us human. A capacity Rumpeldhatevik so evidently lacked and lacks. As mentioned in my *The Politics and Ideology of Hate*:

"In general, innocence is regarded as the attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us, are unjudged us by and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence – until personal experience and individual knowing of them prove otherwise – is the fair, the moral thing, to do"

Thus as someone who has so grossly, so insolently, overstepped the limits of fairness – whose guilt is beyond question, and who has attempted to excuse his inhuman behaviour – the honourable, the best, thing to do would be for Rumpeldhatevik to be executed. Failing such an honourable outcome, let us hope that the *Ἐρινύες* torment him for the rest of his life.

David Myatt
April 17th, 2012

Understanding And Countering Muslim Extremism

Preface

This article - commissioned after the events in Paris on the evening of Friday the 13th, 2015 - will explain what Muslim extremism is, and what might be done to counter such extremism.

Based as my analysis and conclusions are on forty years of practical experience of extremism and extremists - which experience includes ten years as a radical Muslim - it presents 'an insider view' of the problem and thus provides a somewhat different perspective to that presented by many contemporary writings on the subject.

I have provided a glossary of some of the Islamic terms used, and have preferred the term Muslim extremism - the extremism manifested by those Muslims and groups, belonging to the Sunni tradition, who adhere to a particular interpretation of Quran and Sunnah - to the more common term Islamic extremism, since technically Islam is neither an -ism nor an ideology but rather submission by individuals to the will of Allah as manifest in the Quran and Sunnah.

Defining Extremism

A useful definition of extremism - based on practical experience - is that it is the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists, and/or what results from such harsh actions by such extremists. For an extremist is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some supra-personal objective, usually of a political or a religious nature; where by *harsh* is meant rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic, uncompassionate, dishonourable.

An extremist, therefore, lacks an understanding of, or a feeling for, innocency: of treating individuals as individuals and of judging them only on the basis of a personal knowing of them extending over a period of time. Instead, the extremist uses some abstract criteria deriving from whatever ideology, or cause, or interpretation of some religion, or authoritative figure or leader, that they believe in or follow, for whatever reason or from whatever personal motive. Which abstract criteria almost always involves a division of people into an 'us' and a 'them': we, the true believers, the defenders of our cause/movement/leader/ideology/faith, and our enemies who are either intent on destroying/undermining 'us' and/or who are wrong/bad/evil and whom 'we' come to hate and despise, en masse.

Thus the extremist dehumanizes their perceived enemy or enemies, viewing them not as individual human beings but rather as a commodity, as a means to a supra-personal end. Hence why, for example, the statement attributed to ad-Dawlah al-Islamiyah fil 'Iraq wa ash-Sham (Isil, 'Islamic State', Daesh) after the Friday 13 attacks mentioned 'crusaders' and called those massacred in the Bataclan theatre profane 'idolaters', with the statement beginning and ending with Quranic ayat (Al-Hashr 2 and Al-Munafiqun 8). For they were following a strategy outlined, among others, by the pseudonymous Abu Bakr Naji in the 2004 text *إدارة التوحش: أخطر مرحلة ستمر بها الأمة* [Administering The Chaos: The Critical Transition The Ummah Will Experience] ¹ and which strategy is of using violence and killing (including massacres) to provoke a response, to reveal the practical (rather than the theoretical) nature of Jihad (part of which Jihad is to deter the enemy), to wear down enemies, and to polarize and inspire both Muslim youth and 'the Crusader enemy', all of which tactics are explained in the context of the Quran and Sunnah, and thus by reference to Shariah.

This harsh perception of individual human beings as (i) 'a means to an end', and (ii) in terms of abstract categories to which they are assigned, en masse, by extremists on the basis of whatever ideology/cause/faith the extremist believes in or professes, is the *raison d'être* of all extremism. Only the categories, and the aim(s), differ.

Muslim Extremism

The abstract categories of Muslim extremism are those of the kuffar (the unbelievers, infidels, idolaters), the believers (Muslims, the Ummah), apostates (murtads), heretics, and those fighting 'fi sabilillah' (Jihadists).

The aims for which certain categories are used are essentially two-fold: the supra-personal one of the establishment of a khilafah through Jihad, and the personal one of a place in Jannah through either martyrdom or by strictly adhering to what is believed to be the correct interpretation of Quran and Sunnah and thus living according to Shariah.

These two aims - the supra-personal, idealistic, one, and the personal one - are inextricably entwined, and explain why for instance seven of the attackers in Paris immolated themselves by detonating explosives attached to their bodies. For not only could they massacre infidels - and thus support the strategy of 'creating and managing the chaos' - but they would, being Shuhadaah, attain the goal of Jannah.

These aims and categories are defined by particular interpretations of Quranic Ayat and Ahadith, and it is these particular interpretations which distinguish the harsh interpretation of Islam - the extremism of certain Muslims - from that of the majority of Muslims who reside in the countries of the West.

Countering Muslim Extremism

Some examples may suffice for such a harsh interpretation to be perceived in context and thus understood for what it

is, an extremist deviation. For there seems to be a distinct lack of knowledge about Islam both among Muslim extremists and those who (mostly associated with far-right political groups) react with hatred against Muslims in general as a result of the atrocities committed by some Muslim extremists. Both of which sides - with their 'us' and 'them' attitudes and divisions - just inflame and increase the conflict that groups such as Daesh and al-Qaida need and encourage.

Thus, neither side seems to know nor appreciate such clearly expressed sentiments, in the Quran, as the following:

"Remember that Allah is The Most Merciful, He Who Often Forgives." 5:34 Interpretation of Meaning

"You who believe, be firm in being fair - as a witness for Allah - even though it is not to your own advantage, nor to the advantage of your kin, and whether the matter concerns the rich or the poor. For Allah is the best protector (of all). Do not just follow your own desires, for you may deviate, and turn away, and Allah is always knowing of all that you do." 4:135 Interpretation of Meaning

"Be loyal and do your duty to Allah; fear Him and always speak with honour. He will direct you to do honourable deeds and will forgive your mis-deeds. And whosoever obeys Allah and His Messenger will achieve the greatest achievement of all." 33:70-71 Interpretation of Meaning

"Observe the limits which Allah has set." 9:112

"Be forgiving and generous, for would you not seek Allah's forgiveness for yourself? For Allah is indeed The Most Merciful: He Who Often Forgives." 24:22 Interpretation of Meaning

Truths evident in the hadith regarding Mu'adh ibn Jaba as narrated by Abu Musa:

When Allah's Messenger (salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam) sent him and Mu'adh bin Jabal to Yemen, he said to them: "Make things easy for the people rather than difficult; provide them with reports of good, and do not let them turn away [from what is honourable]. You should both work together, with mutual respect, understanding and loyalty." Bukhari, Vol 8, Book 73, Number 145

and in the hadith narrated by Abdullah bin 'Amr:

"The Prophet (salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam) never used insulting words and neither did he ever speak maliciously. He used to say that "the closest to me from among you is the person who has good manners and a noble character." Bukhari: Volume 5, Book 57, Number 104

and in ahadith such as:

"Those who believes in Allah and the Last Day should either speak honourably or be silent." Muslim Book 1, 75

For what these examples illustrate - and many more could be adduced - is that one effective way to counter Muslim extremism is for Muslims themselves to, using Quran and Sunnah, counter the harsh interpretation of Islam by the extremists. To thus express the humanity that is at the heart of Islam; a humanity so evident in the millions of Muslims, world-wide, who know or who intuitively feel that

"The 'Ibaad of Ar-Rahman are those who walk on earth in humility." 25:63 Interpretation of Meaning

and that

"We have made you [Muslims] a Wasat [just and noble] people, that you be examples for all other peoples as the Messenger [Muhammad] is an example for you." 2: 143 Interpretation of Meaning

There is therefore no need - as individuals such as Cheryl Benard suggested in her 2003 text *Civil Democratic Islam: Partners, Resources, and Strategies* - for the West to support and "encourage a moderate, democratic interpretation and presentation of Islam", since Islam as understood and practised by the majority of Muslims world-wide enshrines the same values that make, and have made, the societies of the West what they are, as those who are familiar with Studia Humanitatis - ancient and modern - will assuredly appreciate, ² with such a strident promotion and sponsorship of a Western-made "moderate, democratic interpretation" of Islam only confirming what Muslim extremists already believe - that the modern West is their enemy, and at war with Islam - and thus not only aiding resentment, disaffection, among many young Muslims but also contributing to the spread of Muslim extremism.

Beyond Missiles, Drones, And Invasions

Have Western programmes of 'de-radicalization' and of 'tackling extremism' - of engaging with and encouraging 'moderate' Muslims and a 'moderate' Islam, of promoting a 'modernist Islam' - worked? Apparently not, given the attacks in Mumbai, Tunisia, France, and the numerous planned attacks that have been prevented in Britain and elsewhere, thanks to the security services.

Fourteen years after 9/11 - and almost five years after the death of bin Laden - and despite the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, and military interventions in places such as Syria and Yemen, there are more Muslim extremists in more countries than ever. As recent police raids in France have revealed, such extremists have no difficulty in acquiring arms, from hand-guns to semi-automatic rifles, to rocket launchers.

The issue of Muslim extremism is not complex; it is simple. For the issue is one of interpretation of texts such as the Quran and Sunnah, and of a particular interpretation, or interpretations, being used by various groups and individuals to inflame passions and provide individuals - such as the disadvantaged, the disaffected, and those inclined toward idealism - with a sense of identity and a purpose which is vivifying. ³

To counter such extremism there has to be, and of necessity from within Muslim communities and by individual Muslims, a promotion of classical Islamic jurisprudence and thus of the independence, the authority, the learning, of the Qadi. For a problem that was classically understood in Islam - and which is important and relevant today - was the distinction made by Muslim scholars between fiqh (classical Islamic jurisprudence) and Shariah, with fiqh understood as our fallible understanding and attempts at interpretation, and with Shariah being the divine and perfect guidance given by Allah. For fiqh was based on the principles of acceptance of diversity of scholarly opinion, on custom ⁴, and on logical deductions by individuals that are stated to be fallible and thus not immutable. ⁵ Such a distinction allows for reasoned change, accepts the necessity of diverse opinions, the necessity of individual independent scholarly judgement in trials, in arbitrations, and in determining penalties.

However, in modern times, this classical distinction between fiqh and Shariah - with its allowance for reasoned change based on diverse scholarly opinion, its acceptance of local custom, and the necessity of individual independent scholarly judgement in trials, arbitrations, and determining penalties - is not made by extremist groups such as Daesh when they implement their interpretation of 'Shariah law' and which interpretation invariably has an inflexible penal code and immutable penalties with those judging individuals using such an interpretation invariably lacking the learning and the independence of a classically trained Qadi. For it is the practical implementation of 'Shariah' law that is the *raison d'être* of groups such as Daesh and al-Qaida, and it is that implementation, and their interpretations of texts, that needs to be exposed, from within Muslim communities, thus destroying the credibility and the allure that such groups have for a minority of Muslims.

Hence, and in addition to current strategies and tactics, it is (i) the scholarly, years-long, learning required for a correct interpretation of the Quran and Sunnah, and (ii) the roles and importance of classically trained Muslim scholars and of the Qadi, and (iii) the opinions of such learned Muslims, that should be encouraged, supported, and promoted, by Western governments.

David Myatt
2015

[1] The title is generally translated as *Management of Savagery*, although *Administering The Chaos* is more appropriate since what is referred to are not savage deeds per se but rather the violent chaos of the period of transition which, caused by Jihad, will precede the establishment of the Khilafah, with 'administering' capturing both of the implied meanings: that of 'managing' the chaos and that of administering 'the cure', of provoking the chaos as a means to an end.

[2] For thousands of years - from the classical world to the Renaissance to fairly recent times - *Studia Humanitatis* (an appreciation and understanding of our being, our nature, as humans) was considered to be the basis of a good education. Thus, for Cicero, *Studia Humanitatis* implied forming and shaping the manners, the character, and the knowledge, of young people through them acquiring an understanding of subjects such as philosophy, geometry, rhetoric, music, and *litterarum cognitio* (literary culture) with Cicero noting the importance of the Greek virtue of εὐταξία (self-restraint) manifest as that virtue is in manners: in what Muslims term Adab.

[3] What often seems to be forgotten is that extremist groups (Muslim and otherwise) have within their ranks many idealists who - initially at least - have good intentions and believe they are doing what is right and necessary.

[4] لعادة محكمة

[5] One has only to read the chapter on evidence in al-Majalla al Ahkam al Adaliyyah (an Ottoman book of Hanafi jurisprudence published in the late 19th century) to appreciate how a Qadi was guided by logic.

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Glossary

Ayah: a quranic verse. Plural: Ayat.

Ahadith: plural of Hadith (qv).

Fi sabilillah: 'in the cause of Allah'.

Hadith: a recorded saying, or deed, of the Prophet Muhammad.

Islam: literally means submission to the Will of Allah, as manifest in the Quran and Sunnah.

Jannah: Paradise. As recounted, for example, in the following Ayah:

" [Allah] will forgive your transgressions [م ك مُتُوبٌ] and guide you to Jannah wherein are rivers, cascading down, and those

beautiful dwellings set within perpetually-flowering gardens. And this is the success that matters." 61:12 [Interpretation of Meaning]

Khilafah: Caliphate. A Muslim community (or nation/Empire) founded upon Shariah, led by a Khalifah ('Caliph').

Kuffar: those who do not believe in the Way of Islam. Often translated as infidels. Singular: Kaffir.

Qadi: A learned Muslim judge.

Shariah: the Muslim way of living, as manifest in the Muslim legal system, and which system includes the laws governing interactions between Muslims.

Shuhadaah: Martyrs. Muslims who die Fi Sabilillah. Singular: Shaheed. A Shaheed is often called a "witness to the truth (of Islam)".

Sunnah: The example of the life and deeds and sayings of the Prophet Muhammed as recorded in Ahadith.

Related:
[Questions For DWM](#)

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Analysing National Socialism

Contents

- Preface
 - Some Philosophical and Moral Problems of National-Socialism
 - Hitler, National-Socialism, and Politics: A Personal Reappraisal
-

Preface

Republished here are two essays - both written in January 2012 and respectively titled *Some Philosophical and Moral Problems of National-Socialism* and *Hitler, National-Socialism, and Politics: A Personal Reappraisal* - whose genesis was the development and the refinement of my earlier 'numinous way' into the philosophy of pathei-mathos.

The essays, although now somewhat dated [1], are republished because they may have some relevance for those interested in my rejection of extremism, and because the writing of the two essays enabled me to express the thoughts and feelings about the particular extremism named National Socialism engendered by the insights of that 'numinous way'. As I noted in *Some Questions For DWM 2014*,

"My writings, post-2011, were and are really dialogues: interiorly with myself and externally with a few friends or the occasional person who has contacted me and expressed an interest." [2]

In addition, as I wrote in *Letter To My Undiscovered Self*, published in 2012,

"That it took me four decades, and the tragic death of two loved ones, to discover [such] simple truths surely reveals something about the person I was and about the extremisms I championed and fought for. Now, I - with Sappho - not only say that,

I love delicate softness:

For me, love has brought the brightness
And the beauty of the Sun....

but also that a personal, mutual, love between two human beings is the most beautiful, the most sacred, the most important, the most human, thing in the world; and that the peace that most of us hope for, desire in our hearts, only requires us to be, to become, loving, kind, fair, empathic, compassionate, human beings." [3]

David Myatt
2019

[1] Dated, because many of the texts referenced in these old essays are to that earlier 'numinous way' and which texts are now available only in archived versions of my website and weblog, such as at (i) <https://web.archive.org/web/20130602171008/http://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/> and (ii) <https://web.archive.org/web/20130704131205/http://www.davidmyatt.info/>

[2] *Some Questions For DWM 2014*, currently available from <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/questions-for-dwm-2014/>

[3] The letter was included in my tractate entitled *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism: A Very Strange Peregrination* (2013, ISBN 978-1484854266)

The translation of part of a fragment of a poem by Sappho is mine, with the Greek text (P. Oxyrhynchus. XV (1922) number 1787, fr. 1 and 2) being

ἔγω δὲ φίλημ' ἀβροσύναν [...] τοῦτο καί μοι
τὸ λάμπρον ἔρωσ ἀελίω καὶ τὸ κάλον λέλογχε

[ἔγω δὲ φίλημ' ἀβροσύναν] τοῦτο καί μοι
25 τὸ λά[μπρον ἔρωσ ἀελίω καὶ τὸ κά]λον λέ[λ]ογχε

Some Philosophical and Moral Problems of National-Socialism

Introduction

This essay is a brief analysis of the National-Socialist weltanschauung, as manifested in National-Socialist Germany, and according to the philosophical and ethical criteria of my Numinous Way, and which criteria derive from the principles of empathy, compassion, and personal honour.

Empathy, as understood by my philosophy of The Numen [1], establishes a particular ontology and epistemology; Being, the source of beings, as both causal and acausal, and of an acausal knowing distinct from the causal knowing of conventional philosophy and empirical science [2]. The ethical criteria are manifest in both compassion and honour [3], so that:

"the morality of The Numinous Way is therefore defined by a personal honour, a personal compassion, and the personal virtue of justice. For justice is not some abstract concept, but rather a personal virtue, as *εὐταξία* is a personal virtue. For justice is the personal virtue of fairness; the quality of balance." *War and Violence in the Philosophy of The Numinous Way*

The National-Socialism evident in NS Germany was a way of life centred around concepts such as duty, *kampf*, nation, and race. Thus, the individual was judged by, and expected to judge others by, the criteria of race, with particular races assigned a certain value (high or low), as individuals were judged by how well they adhered to the duty they were expected to do in respect of their nation (their land, their people) and the race they were said to belong to or believed they belonged to. In addition, *kampf* between individuals, races, and nations was considered healthy and necessary, with such struggle revealing the worth of individuals and thus those considered fit to lead and assume positions of authority.

Collectivism, Nationalism, and Race

The National-Socialist way of life was – given such concepts as *kampf*, nation and race – a collective one, with one of the highest virtues being the willingness of individuals, if necessary, to sacrifice their own happiness and welfare, and even their lives, for the good of their people, their land, their race. The necessity of this virtue was explained, in part, by the belief that the German *volk* had an historic mission, a particular destiny, so that – coupled with the ideas of race and *kampf* – the individual

was expected to define themselves, to understand themselves, as Germans and as having particular duties and obligations; in effect, to replace their own self-identity with the collective identity of the *volk*.

In order to establish, maintain, and expand this collectivism, certain measures were regarded as necessary, as morally correct, with such measures including military conscription, laws designed to criminalize certain activities, both political and personal, and harsh punishment of those contravening such laws.

In addition, the *führerprinzip* was applied to most aspects of life, with individuals expected to accept and obey the authority so established, since such authority was considered to manifest the will, the ethos, of the *volk*. Hence the loyalty individuals gave, as an expression of their recognized duty as Germans, was personal; not to 'the State' nor even to 'the nation', and certainly not to some government, but rather to individuals who were regarded as embodying the will, the identity, of the *volk*. In practice, this meant Adolf Hitler and those appointed by him or by his representatives, and it was this collectivism, this binding of the *volk* by the *führerprinzip*, that Heidegger tried to philosophically express in his now controversial remarks regarding the *Volksgemeinschaft* and by quoting some words attributed to Aeschylus [4].

There are thus six elements that, from the philosophical and ethical viewpoint of The Numinous Way, may be said to define the National-Socialism of Adolf Hitler. These are: (i) a collective identity and its acceptance; (ii) authority and its acceptance manifest in specific individuals and expected obedience to such authority; (iii) mandatory enforceable punishment of those contravening or not accepting such authority and the laws made by such authority; (iv) the use of particular abstractions (for example nation and race) as a criteria for judgement and for evaluating individual worth; (v) the use of particular abstractions as a criteria for identity; and (vi) the use and acceptance of a particular abstraction – *kampf* – as an embodiment and expression of human nature.

Contra The National-Socialism of Adolf Hitler

In purely practical terms, the acceptance and use of the principle of *kampf* together with the acceptance of Hitler as embodying the collective will of the *volk*, inevitably led to the military defeat of NS Germany. For all mortals are fallible and military defeat is always inevitable, given time and even if such a defeat has internal, not external, causes. For tyrants

and monarchs die, are overthrown, or are killed; Empires flourish for a while – a few centuries perhaps, at most – and then invariably decline and fade away; oligarchies come and go with monotonous regularity, lasting a decade or perhaps somewhat longer; rebellions and revolutions will break out, given sufficient time, and will often succeed given even more time – decades, centuries – and even following repeated and brutal repression.

Thus, philosophically, the general error here by Hitler and his followers was the obvious one of *ὑβρις*. A lack of understanding, an unknowing, of the natural balance – of *δίκη* – as well as a lack of empathy, manifest as this unknowing, this lack, was in the arrogant belief of a personal and a volkish 'destiny' combined with a belief in *kampf* as a natural and necessary expression of human nature. And *ὑβρις φυτεύει τύραννον* – that is, *ὑβρις* plants, is the seed of, the *τύραννον*. Thus, symbolically, we might justifiably say that the *Ἐρινύες* took their revenge, for Hitler and his followers had forgotten, scorned, or never known the wisdom, the truth, that their fallible mortal lives are subject to, guided by, *Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες* [5]. Thus their fate was destined, a fate that Sophocles expressed so well in respect of Oedipus, *tyrannus*:

ὦ πάτρας Θήβης ἔνοικοι, λεύσσετ', Οἰδίπους ὄδε,
ὃς τὰ κλείν' αἰνίγματ' ἤδει καὶ κράτιστος ἦν ἀνὴρ,
οὗ τίς οὐ ζήλω πολιτῶν ἦν τύχαις ἐπιβλέπων,
εἰς ὅσον κλύδωνα δεινῆς συμφορᾶς ἐλήλυθεν.
ὥστε θνητὸν ὄντα κείνην τὴν τελευταίαν ἰδεῖν
ἡμέραν ἐπισκοποῦντα μηδέν' ὀλβίζειν, πρὶν ἂν
τέρμα τοῦ βίου περάσῃ μηδὲν ἀλγεινὸν παθών. [6]

In effect, therefore, and in general terms, the National-Socialism of Adolf Hitler was un-wise; based on a mis-understanding of human nature, and he himself shown, despite his remarkable achievement of gaining power, as lacking a reasoned, a well-balanced, judgement [*σωφρονεῖν*] – since such a balanced judgement would, as Aeschylus explained in the *Oresteia*, reveal that *πόλεμος* [7] always accompanies *ὑβρις* and that only by acceptance of the numinous authority of *πάθει μάθος* (the new law presented to mortals by immortal Zeus) could the tragic cycle of *ἔρις* be ended.

A Numinous View of The National-Socialism of Adolf Hitler

Let us now consider the six points enumerated above, in respect of the philosophical and ethical viewpoint of The Numinous Way.

As mentioned in my essay *A Brief Numinous View of Religion, Politics, and The State*:

"The essence of the numinous view - of the ethical way posited by the Philosophy of The Numen - is empathy and thus the acausal (the affective and effecting) connexion we, as individuals, are to all life, sentient and otherwise, with empathy being the foundation of our conscious humanity.

The practical criteria which empathy implies is essentially two-fold: the criteria of the cessation of suffering, and the criteria of the individual, personal, judgement in the immediacy of the moment. For the Philosophy of The Numen, these two criteria manifest the natural character of rational, conscious, empathic, human beings and thus express the nature of our humanity and of human culture, and which nature is manifest in a practical way in compassion and in personal honour.

Hence these two criteria are used, by The Numinous Way - by the Philosophy of The Numen - to judge our actions, our personal behaviour, and also all the abstractions we manufacture or may manufacture and which thus affect us, as individuals."

(i) A collective identity and its acceptance.

Empathy, as a natural if still under-used and under-developed human faculty, is only and ever individual and of the immediacy of the living moment. [8] It is always personal, individual, and cannot be abstracted out from an individual living being - that is, it cannot have any causal ideation or be represented by or expressed by someone else.

There is the personal, individual, freedom that the knowing that empathy uniquely presents to the individual, and therefore no need of, no sense of, belonging to other than one's immediate surroundings, and no sense of identity beyond the personally known, for all human beings encountered are encountered and empathically known as they uniquely are: as individuals with their own lives, feelings, hopes, and with their own potential and their own past.

Which in essence means The Numinous Way is the way of individuals, and an individual manner of living to be accepted or rejected according to the individual. Thus such a collective identity - and a desire for and

acceptance of such an identity – is contrary to this very individual numinous way.

What matters for The Numinous Way is the individual; their empathy, their honour; their personal judgement. What does not matter are supra-personal manufactured abstractions such as a 'nation'. Consequently, the empathic, honourable, individual only has a duty to themselves, to their immediate kin, and to those personally given a pledge of loyalty: not a duty or obligations to some manufactured collective identity however such identity be expressed.

(ii) Authority and its acceptance manifest in specific individuals and expected obedience to such authority.

As I wrote in *Authority and Legitimacy in the Philosophy of The Numinous Way*:

" For The Numinous Way, it is the exercise of the judgement of the individual – arising from the use of empathy and the guidance that is personal honour – that is paramount, and which expresses our human nature.

That is, it is honour, the understanding that empathy provides, and the judgement of the individual, that are legitimate, moral, numinous, and thence the basis for authority. This means that authority resides in and extends only to individuals – by virtue of their honour, their empathy, and manifest in their own personal judgement, and therefore this always personal individual authority cannot be abstracted out from such personal judgement of individuals. In practical terms, this is a new type of authority – that of the individual whose concern is not power over others but over themselves, and which type of power is manifest in a living by honour, and thence in their self-responsibility and in how they interact with others."

Thus, such non-individual authority, acceptance of and obedience to such authority, is contrary to The Numinous Way.

(iii) Mandatory enforceable punishment of those contravening or not accepting such authority and the laws made by such authority.

Given that, for The Numinous Way, authority and justice are individual

and manifest in individual judgement and through personal honour, such mandatory punishment by some abstract authority is quite contrary to The Numinous Way.

(iv) The use of particular abstractions (for example nation and race) as a criteria for judgement and for evaluating individual worth.

According to both empathy and honour, such a judgement of others, such prejudice, on the basis of some abstraction such as perceived race or 'nationality' is immoral [9]. The only moral, honourable, criteria is to judge *individuals* as individuals, sans all abstractions, on the basis of a personal knowing of them extending over a duration of causal Time. To judge *en masse*, without such a direct, personal, extended, personal knowing of each and every individual is reprehensible.

In addition, it is immoral – unempathic, uncompassionate, dishonourable – to treat people on the basis of their assumed or alleged race or nationality. Thus, the enforced herding of people into 'concentration camps' on the basis of alleged, assumed, race or nationality is quite unjustifiable, inhuman.

(v) The use of particular abstractions as a criteria for identity.

Such abstractions included 'blood' and nationality, so that identity became a matter of individuals being classified – by themselves, others, and by the State – according to certain chosen abstract criteria based on 'race' and heritage. Thus there were distinct notions, distinct levels, of separateness.

Empathy, however, presents us with an acausal-knowing of life, human and otherwise, and this knowing is of ourselves as but one fallible, biologically fragile, mortal, microcosmic nexion, and thus of how our self, our perceived and singular separate self-identity, is appearance and not an expression of the true nature of our being [10], which nature is one of connexions, between living emanations, not one of separations.

Such a revealing of our nature reveals that we should act with empathy and honour in the knowledge that our actions affect others or can affect others, directly, indirectly, emotionally, and acausally. That their joy, their pain, their suffering, their fate is ours by virtue of us as a connexion to them – as a connexion to all life; as one emanation of $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$ [11].

What abstractions do is that they conceal our true empathic, compassionate, honourable nature and, ultimately, sever the connexion we are to *ψυχή*, to The Numen.

As mentioned in *On The Nature of Abstractions*:

" The error of abstractionism – of using existing abstractions and manufacturing other abstractions and using these as the source of ethics, of judgement, and so ascribing a value to them – is the error of *ὑβρις* (hubris). That is, the error of unbalance: of neglecting or being unaware of empathy, and of neglecting or being unaware of or profaning the numinous. In the personal and social sense, *ὑβρις* is revealed in a lack of compassion, a lack of balanced reasoning, and not only ascribing to one's self (or some other abstraction, such as a nation-State) what is assumed to be the perfection of right and of good (or the best current approximation of it) but also acting on that presumption to the detriment, the harm, of others.

This is unethical – as all abstractions are inherently unethical – because what is ethical is determined by empathy, and thus cannot be abstracted out of that direct, immediate, and personal knowing which presences empathy in us, as human beings."

(vi) The use and acceptance of a particular abstraction – *kampf* – as an embodiment and expression of human nature.

As mentioned previously, in the *Contra The National-Socialism of Adolf Hitler* section, *kampf* as principle, as abstraction, is a manifestation of the error of *ὑβρις* and of a lack of empathy.

For empathy, and the cultivation of *σωφρονεῖν*, incline us toward – or should incline us, as individuals, toward – a letting-be; to wu-wei; to a living in the immediacy-of-the-moment. To being compassionate and honourable human beings, concerned only with our own affairs, that of our family, and that of our immediate locality where we dwell, work, and have-our-being.

In addition:

"In The Numinous Way, a distinction is made between war and *combat* in that combat refers to *gewin* – similar to the old

Germanic *werra*, as distinct from the modern *krieg*. That is, combat refers to a more personal armed quarrel between much smaller factions (and often between just two adversaries – as in single combat, and trial by combat) when there is, among those fighting, some personal matter at stake or some personal interest involved, with most if not all of those fighting doing so under the leadership of someone they personally know and respect and with the quarrel usually occurring in the locality or localities where the combatants live.

Thus, war is contrary to The Numinous Way – to the Cosmic Ethic – not only because of the impersonal suffering it causes, but also because it is inseparably bound up with individuals having to relinquish their own judgement, with them pursuing some lifeless un-numinous abstraction by violent means, and with the development of supra-personal abstract and thus un-numinous notions of 'justice' and law.

Hence, there is, for The Numinous Way, no such thing as a 'just war' – for war is inherently unjust and un-numinous. What is just and lawful are honourable individuals and their actions, and such combat as such individuals may honourably and personally undertake, and such violence as they may honourably and of necessity employ in pursuit of being fair and ensuring fairness." *War and Violence in the Philosophy of The Numinous Way*

Conclusion

It should thus be quite clear why The Numinous Way is contrary to and incompatible with the National-Socialism of Adolf Hitler that was manifest in National-Socialist Germany.

January 2012
Revised JD2455956.107

Notes

[1] Refer, for example, to *Introduction to The Philosophy of The Numen* and also *The Natural Balance of Honour – Honour, Empathy, and Compassion in the Philosophy of The Numinous Way*, from which this is a quote:

"As used and defined by The Numinous Way, empathy – *ἐμπάθεια* – is a natural human faculty: that is, a noble intuition about another human being or another living being. When empathy is developed and used, as envisaged by The Numinous Way, it is a specific and extended type of *συμπάθεια*. That is, it is a type of and a means to knowing and understanding another human being and/or other living beings – and thus differs in nature from compassion."

[2] See: (i) *An Introduction To The Ontology of Being*; (ii) *Some Notes Concerning Causality, Ethics, and Acausal Knowing*; (iii) *Acausality, Phainómenon, and The Appearance of Causality*.

[3] qv. *The Natural Balance of Honour*.

[4] In his 1933 speech at the University of Freiburg, where he quoted the following verse (v.514) from *Prometheus Bound* [my translation] –

τέχνη δ' ἀνάγκης ἀσθενεστέρα μακρῶ.

How so very feeble Craft is before Compulsion!

[5]

τίς οὖν ἀνάγκης ἐστὶν οἰακοστρόφος.
Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες

Who then compels to steer us?
Trimorphed Moirai with their ever-heedful Furies!

Aeschylus (attributed), *Prometheus Bound*, 515-6 [My translation]

[6]

You natives of Thebes: Observe – here is Oedipus,
He who understood that famous enigma and was a strong man:
What clansman did not behold that fortune without envy?
But what a tide of problems have come over him!
Therefore, look toward that ending which is for us mortals,
To observe that particular day – calling no one lucky until,
Without the pain of injury, they are conveyed beyond life's
ending.

Oedipus Tyrannus, vv. 1524-1530 [My translation]

[7] In respect of πόλεμος see my *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic* where I suggest that as used by Heraclitus it implies neither kampf nor conflict, but rather – as a quote from Diogenes Laërtius suggests – what lies behind or beyond Phainómenon; that is, non-temporal, non-causal, Being. πόλεμος is thus that which is or becomes the genesis of beings from Being, and also that which manifests as δίκη and accompanies ἔρις because it is the nature of Πόλεμος that beings, born because of and by ἔρις, can be returned to Being (become bound together – be whole – again) by enantiodromia.

[8] Refer, for example, to *Introduction to The Philosophy of The Numen*

[9] See *Empathy and The Immoral Abstraction of Race* and also *On The Nature of Abstractions*.

[10] Refer for example to *Acausality, Phainómenon, and The Appearance of Causality* and also *An Introduction To The Ontology of Being*.

[11] Correctly understood – and as evident by the usage of Homer, Aeschylus, Aristotle, et al – ψυχή implies Life *qua* being.

Hitler, National-Socialism, and Politics - A Personal Reappraisal

Introduction - A Moral Perspective

Almost exactly a year ago, I perhaps somewhat presumptuously, temerarily, penned a rather long essay entitled *The Uncertitude of Knowing* in reply to questions asked of me in relation to National-Socialism, Hitler, and my philosophy of The Numinous Way; and which essay itself was an attempt to elucidate another essay, the year before that, concerning Reichsfolk and a Muslim Khilafah. As I wrote at the beginning of my reply in *The Uncertitude of Knowing*:

" There are interesting, important and rather complex philosophical and ethical issues here, that require detailed, serious, and above all, rational, consideration. To explain, in a satisfactory manner, these issues and offer satisfactory answers would perhaps require a philosophical treatise of length equal to a book, and I have to admit that I currently possess no desire to

write such a book, partly because I am aware that I may not have all or even many of the answers required, and that such answers as I do have, or some of them, might be erroneous and that therefore may need to be amended. Therefore, all I can do here is try in a rather unsatisfactory way to summarize such answers, such views, of mine."

In *The Uncertitude*, the title itself reflecting my concern and approach, I continued to emphasize that my replies were tentative and I – as a result of *πάθει μάθος*, of acknowledging my *ὑβρις* of decades – open to correction and to further learning.

Over the past year I have continued to study, research, and reflect upon these 'complex philosophical and ethical issues' and have had cause, as I anticipated, to amend my conclusions, especially those in respect of National-Socialism, Hitler, and Reichsfolk, some of which new conclusions I have briefly mentioned in my essay, published this month, *Some Philosophical and Moral Problems of National-Socialism*, and which new conclusions led me to withdraw *The Uncertitude of Knowing*.

This further study and research, perhaps wyrdfully, included getting to know people who shared their personal and familial experiences of National-Socialist Germany with me, with these experiences being of those who were the subject of the *Nürnberger Gesetze* and who thus traumatically endured the consequences of those laws and the prejudice and hatred they codified. These direct experiences of the personal and moral effects of National-Socialism were those of individuals that I, through a personal knowing of them, considered to be honourable and which personal experiences thus served to place into perspective, into a moral – a numinous – perspective, the accounts given to me, decades earlier, of some German National-Socialists I had met who fought for and gave their loyalty to Adolf Hitler and which accounts had been formative of what became my decades-long dedication to the cause of National-Socialism, a dedication broken only by my personal experiences of Islam and by the *πάθει μάθος* that was the genesis of my philosophy of The Numinous Way.

As I mentioned in *The Uncertitude of Knowing*:

"All I know – all I say and write – derives from my own diverse personal experiences and my reflexion upon such experiences; from my experience of diverse ways of life, diverse religions, and

by my interaction with individuals..."

Suffice therefore to say that my new encounter and interaction with particular people, my reflexion on those experiences, and my further study and research, has led me to a new personal learning, and to a better understanding of both the ethics of The Numinous Way and of the personal, the moral, implications of those ethics.

However, it is to be expected that some people will not like – nor others understand – where this new learning and my thinking have led me and may be leading me. But as TS Eliot beautifully expressed it in his poem *Little Gidding*:

And what you thought you came for
Is only a shell, a husk of meaning
From which the purpose breaks only when it is fulfilled
If at all. Either you had no purpose
Or the purpose is beyond the end you figured
And is altered in fulfilment.

Ethical Consequences

Empathy – as outlined in various essays including *Introduction to The Philosophy of The Numen* and *The Natural Balance of Honour* – is the basis for the ethics of The Numinous Way, with compassion and a personal honour being how we can, personally as individuals, be ethical in accord with the knowing, the understanding, the insight, that empathy reveals. This empathic revealing is of our affective and effecting connexion to other life, including human beings.

The immediacy of empathy in the living moment means a living-in, a dwelling-in, the moment, inclining us toward to wu-wei and,

"to being compassionate and honourable human beings, concerned only with our own affairs, that of our family, and that of our immediate locality where we dwell, work, and have-our-being." *Some Philosophical and Moral Problems of National-Socialism*

There therefore cannot be, as mentioned in *A Brief Numinous View of Religion, Politics, and The State*, any desire for involvement with politics, since

"the goals, objectives and aims of politics are, by their very nature, based on human-manufactured divisions and categories deriving from a causal separation of beings: that is, which involve denoting individuals on the basis of some principle of inclusion/exclusion, and which principle of inclusion/exclusion (of separation of human beings) is immoral because un-numinous."

What is thus important, moral, numinous, are individuals who – feeling, knowing, suffering and its causes – live and who act with personal compassion and personal honour, with the boundary, the horizon, of such acts being, by the nature of empathy, of the nexion they are, and only and ever of the personal, immediate, local kind. In practical terms, there are and cannot be any supra-personal causes, agendas, aims, goals, for such things take us toward abstractions and beyond the bounds of empathy and of how The Numen is or becomes presented in and through the personal experiencing of, an interaction with, other living beings: human, of Nature, of the Cosmos; and a personal experiencing which is direct, unfettered, undistorted, by any abstraction, by any prejudice, by any division – conscious or unconscious – into ‘us’ and ‘the separate others’.

A consequence of this is that we can only – without causing more suffering or contributing to suffering – alleviate suffering, try to ameliorate what is wrong, by means of personal, direct, compassionate, honourable, acts when we personally encounter suffering, dishonour. No cause, no movement, whether deemed political, social, or religious – nothing supra-personal involving us surrendering our individual judgement of empathy, our individual authority, and our personal honour – can alleviate suffering or ameliorate what is wrong, dishonourable, for such supra-personal things are among the causes of suffering or contribute to or will contribute to suffering, given our past and current human nature.

Hence the only moral change, the only revolution, that is possible – numinous, good – is that of ourselves; within and personal; and this is a reformation of ourselves and then our living of a moral, of an empathic, compassionate, honourable, life.

This precludes the possibility of such a moral individual supporting some cause, some group, some movement, some person, in the belief that such a cause, group, movement, or ‘leader’, can ‘make a difference’ or can or might in some way move us toward some future where there is less

suffering.

Thus it is morally wrong – from the perspective of The Numinous Way – to suggest, as for example I previously did in *The Uncertainty of Knowing*, that a group such as Reichsfolk or a way such as Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jammah might be alternatives "capable of guiding honourable individuals to do what is honourable", and thus have "the ability to alleviate at least some of the suffering which blights this world." And wrong not only because such groups, such ways, are based on immoral abstractions – on principles of inclusion/exclusion – but also because their very nature, their very being, as groups and such ways are incompatible with The Numen, and so cannot and do not in any way presence the numinous or express the numinous since such numinosity only lives, dwells, is manifest – in the personal sense – by individuals leading or inclining toward leading an empathic, compassionate, honourable, life.

In brief, it is personal virtues such as εὐταξία – and their cultivation by individuals – which are important, required, moral, not some group, some organization, some 'leader', or some political aims and goals.

Adolf Hitler and National-Socialism

For a long time, I regarded Adolf Hitler as a good man, an honourable man, and National-Socialism – especially my 'revised version' of National-Socialism manifest in Reichsfolk – as either an intimation of the numinous or as an expression of what is noble and honourable.

Now, in respect of Hitler, I ask two questions: (1) 'what is good' and my answer, manifest in The Numinous Way, is that what is good is what is compassionate; what alleviates suffering; what does not cause or contribute to suffering; what manifests love, empathy; and (2) 'what is honourable' and my answer is what is dignified, what manifests self-control, fairness; a balanced judgement.

How then does Hitler fare according to these criteria? Do his actions – manifest for example in the *Nürnberger Gesetze* and their consequences, in his use of *krieg* in pursuit of some supra-personal aim, and in the use of the abstractions of race and nation – reveal a man of compassion, of balanced judgement, of fairness? Someone who feels and understands the error that is ὑβρις and is therefore circumspect, in touch with and respectful of the numinous? Who knows the limits of appropriate human behaviour? No.

For example, there is nothing honourable in the *Nürnberger Gesetze* and their consequences; in the personal suffering, the deaths, they caused, in the prejudice and the hatred they engendered and codified. Nothing good in the use of *krieg* in pursuit of some supra-personal aim; in the suffering and the deaths caused. Nothing good or honourable in the demand for obedience and in the manipulation of people's emotions by rhetoric and propaganda; nothing good or honourable in the punishment of those who were inclined, as is morally right and justified, not to surrender their individual judgement and who thus refused to be obedient in such supra-personal matters, especially in relation to certain 'political' abstractions, such as 'race', nation, and the *führerprinzip*.

As someone once wrote:

"Das war ein Vorspiel nur, dort wo man Bücher verbrennt,
verbrennt man auch am Ende Menschen."

In respect of National-Socialism – new or old – I now ask similar questions to the ones asked in respect of Hitler. That is, can The Numen, the good, what is honourable, empathic, compassionate – what is moral – be manifest in, be presenced by, such a weltanschauung as National-Socialism? No.

No, for two simple reasons. (1) Because such a weltanschauung has its very being in immoral abstractions, be they termed 'race', nation, volk, ethnicity, folk, or whatever; is defined by the principle of inclusion/exclusion, by the separation and prejudgement of human beings by abstract criteria. (2) Because such a weltanschauung by its very nature is supra-personal, organized, authoritative, dogmatic, and numinosity only lives, dwells, is manifest – in the personal sense – by individuals leading or inclining toward leading an empathic, compassionate, honourable, life where there is no need of any authority, any judgement, any criteria, other than their own, deriving from their empathy and their unique *πάθει μάθος*.

There is thus, based on applying the moral criteria of The Numinous Way, a complete rejection by me of National-Socialism – of whatever kind – and an understanding of Hitler as a flawed individual who caused great suffering and whose actions and policies were dishonourable and immoral.

Conclusion

The Numinous Way is, and can only ever be, an individual way; a non-political, non-religious, choice of individuals desirous of developing and using empathy and hopeful of leading honourable lives that do not cause or contribute to the suffering of living beings. Lives where one of the greatest virtues – a manifestation of our humanity – is considered to be a loyal and personal love between two human beings, regardless of the perceived or assumed ethnicity, nationality, social status, or ‘sexual orientation’, of the individuals concerned. As Sappho wrote, over two and half thousand years ago:

μνάσασθαί τινά φαιμι [καὶ ἕτερον] ἀμμέων...

στᾷθι [κᾶντα] φίλος
καὶ τὰν ἐπ’ ὅσσοισ’ ὀμπέτασον χάριν [1]

As for me, my journey of learning, of self-discovery, of making mistakes, of trying to acknowledge and correct my errors, of interior change via *πάθει μάθος*, does not yet seem to be ended.

David Myatt
January 30th 2012 ce

[1] Sappho, Fragments 147/138 [Lobel and Page].

My translation is:

Believe me, in the future someone
Will remember us ...

Because you love me
Stand with me face to face
And unveil the softness in your eyes ...



In Explanation Of Humility and The Need for Tolerance With Reference to Islam

- Prefatory Note
- Of Learning Humility and Tolerance
- Of Respect for Islam
- Terror and Al-Quran
- Of Islam and Violence
- Conclusion

Prefatory Note

The following text is from a reply sent, in November of 2012, to a personal correspondent living in America who enquired about my peregrinations among various religions; about why - as mentioned in previous correspondence - I still respected the Muslim way of life; and about my response to the particular criticism that 'Islam encourages terrorism'. I have corrected a few typos, clarified the sense in one or two places, and added sub-headings.

David Myatt
2012

Of Learning Humility and Tolerance

As someone who has lived an unusual and somewhat itinerant (but far from unique) life, I have a certain practical experience, over nearly fifty years, of various living religions and spiritual Ways of Life. An experience from which I

have acquired the habit of respecting all those living religions and spiritual Ways: Christianity (especially Catholicism and monasticism); Buddhism; Islam; Taoism; Hinduism; Judaism; and the paganism manifest in an empathic appreciation of and a regard for Nature.

Due to this respect, there is a sadness within me because of the ignorance, intolerance, prejudice - and often the hatred - of the apparently increasing number of people, in modern Western societies, who disparage Islam, Muslims, and the Muslim way of life, and who thus seem to me to reflect and to display that hubris, that certitude-of-knowing, that lack of appreciation of the numinous, that at least in my fallible opinion and from my experience militates against the learning, the culture, the civility, that make us more than, or can make us more than, talking beings in thrall to their instincts who happen to walk upright.

My personal practical experience of, for example, Christianity, is of being raised a Catholic, and being a Catholic monk. Of Buddhism, of spending several years meditating and striving to follow the Noble Eightfold Path, including in a Buddhist monastery and with groups of Buddhists. Of Islam, of a decade living as a Muslim, performing daily Namaz (including attending Jumma Namaz in a Mosque), fasting in Ramadan, and travelling in Muslim lands. Of Taoism, of experience - in the Far East - a Taoist Martial Art and learning from a Taoist priest. Of Hinduism, of learning - in the Far East - from a Hindu lady and of over a year on my return to England continuing my learning and undertaking daily practice of Hatha Yoga according to the *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā*. Of paganism, of developing an empathic reverence and respect for Nature by time spent as a rural 'gentleman of the road', as a gardener, and by years doing outdoor manual labour on farms...

Following a personal tragedy which suffused me with sadness and remorse and which - via pathei-mathos - ended my life-long desire for and enjoyment of practical Faustian peregrinations, there arose a years-long period of intense interior reflexion, and which reflexion included not only discovering and knowing the moral error of my immoral extremist pasts but also questions concerning the nature of faith, of God, and our desire, in times of personal grief and tragedy and remorse, and otherwise, to seek and often to need the guidance, the catharsis, of a religion or a spiritual Way.

Importantly, as I wrote in *Pathei-Mathos, Genesis of My Unknowing*,

"...what exposed my hubris - what for me broke down that certitude-of-knowing which extremism breeds and re-presents - was not something I did; not something I achieved; not something related to my character, my nature, at all. Instead, it was a gift offered to me by

two others - the legacy left by their tragic early dying. That it took not one but two personal tragedies - some thirteen years apart - for me to accept and appreciate the gift of their love, their living, most surely reveals my failure, the hubris that for so long suffused me, and the strength and depth of my so lamentable extremism."

Forced by grief - by *pathei-mathos* - to admit my mistakes, the suffering I had because of my extremism and my selfishness caused, I discovered I did not like myself, my character, and felt I needed to reform myself. But how? Through the guidance and acceptance of a living religion or some spiritual Way of Life? By holding fast onto Islam? By returning to my Catholic roots, or to Buddhism or Taoism? Or by, and perhaps unhumly, trying to find some solutions of my own? Suffice to say it took me over five years [2006-2011], and culminated this year in my philosophy of *pathei-mathos*, my fallible answers to certain questions concerning morality, expiation, reformation, the numinous, and the nature of Being and of beings.

In the process, I came to appreciate humility; to admit its importance in trying to live a moral life where there is an appreciation of the numinous, a desire to be gentle, compassionate, to value love, and where there is the feeling that one needs to avoid causing suffering. To admit that we do not have or know all or even many of the answers; that we are fallible and thus that our own answers or conclusions or opinions may be wrong, and that we need therefore to be tolerant and respect the choice, the views, of others and the religions and the spiritual ways that offer and which have offered them answers to questions regarding meaning, morality, and love, and possibly also given them catharsis, purpose, an appreciation of the numinous, and happiness.

For one of my answers was that I felt, in common with many others, that

"...there is, to paraphrase an expression of George Fox used by The Religious Society of Friends, 'that of the numinous' in every person, and that answering to 'that of the numinous' can take and has taken various manifestations over millennia with all such manifestations deserving of respect since there is an underlying unity, a similar spiritual essence - a similar discovery and knowing and appreciation of the numinous, a similar understanding of the error of hubris - beyond those different outer manifestations and the different terms and expressions and allegories used to elucidate that of the numinous." [1]

In addition, I began during those five years to fully appreciate Islam, beyond the rather harsh interpretation of it which I as a Muslim had for many years

accepted and followed. An appreciation which took me on further travels; involved days of discussions; much further study, personal and with others; and enabled me to place my years of living the Muslim way of life in the context of not only my life in general but also in relation to my experience of other religions and spiritual ways of living.

Of Respect For Islam

In respect of this appreciation of Islam:

" I felt really at home with, among, devout Muslims - those trying to follow the guidelines of Quran and Sunnah (or in the case of the Shia, being Taqlid of a Mujtahid). There was, and is, so much to admire about the Muslim way of life, from the modesty of women, the reverence for the Prophet, the cultivation of humility, the necessity of Wudhu, praying five times a day, the reliance on only Allah, fasting in Ramadan, the real feeling of belonging to the Ummah, the avoidance of intoxicating substances...

Of all the religions I have personal experience of, I found Islam to be perhaps the most human. In the Quran and Sunnah our weaknesses are laid bare, and in Shariah there is a guide to living in a balanced, a human, and a numinous, way." [2]

Thus my personal view of Islam, of the Muslim way of life, and which view I have expressed in recent correspondence with others, is a very positive and tolerant one; of respect born from experience, a scholarly study, and a comparative assessment with other religions and spiritual ways also personally experienced.

Perhaps the bad opinion many people in the West have of Islam would be changed if they spent time with Muslim families in places as diverse as Egypt, Somalia, Turkey, Morocco, Pakistan, Senegal, Malaysia, and Birmingham. Until they have, who are they to pass judgement on the Muslim way of life, and on the Quran, the Sunnah, and the Shariah, that inspire and inform that way of life?

Terror and Al-Quran

An ayah [verse] often (mis)quoted by those ignorant of, intolerant toward, or prejudiced against, Islam, Muslims and the Muslim way of life, is Ayah 151 of Surah Al 'Imran, which is usually interpreted as "Soon shall we cast terror into the hearts of the unbelievers." Indeed, some self-proclaimed enemies of Islam

have even produced images of the World Trade Center in flames, following the attack in 2001, overlaid with that interpretation of that Ayah as one of their 'proofs' that Islam incites 'terrorism'.

However, a reasoned consideration of the interpretations of the Ayat [verses] such people use in their propaganda reveals their error and their ignorance. For instance, the Arabic of Ayah 151 of Surah Al 'Imran is:

سَلِّقِي فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الرُّعْبَ بِمَا أَشْرَكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَمَأْوَاهُمُ النَّارُ وَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الظَّالِمِينَ

[Transliteration: sanulqi fee qulubi allazeena kafaroo l-ruba bima ashらく bil-lahi ma lam yunazzil bihi sultanana wamawhumu l-naru wabisa mathwa l-zalimeena]

Importantly, does الرُّعْبُ imply 'terror' as the aforementioned interpretation suggests, along with all that the modern English word terror implies, as in the difficult to define term terrorism? No, it does not; rather, the Arabic implies *the fear/the dread* and 'the astonishment/awe' - that is, that human feeling inspired by apprehending or experiencing some-thing supernaturally or extraordinarily powerful and numinous; for example, an Ayah (Sign) of Allah, Al-Khaliq, Al-Azim, Al-Jalil. The fear/trembling/awe/astonishment felt, for instance, by the Apostles when, as recounted in Luke 24.37, they witnessed Jesus alive after the crucifixion.

That is, I suggest that what is referred to in Ayah 151 of Surah Al 'Imran - as in the other four Ayat where الرُّعْبُ / رُعْبًا occur - is similar to the 'suffusion with fear' and the 'being scared' that occurs and has occurred, as recounted in both Christian scripture and the Quran, when a mortal is (a) confronted by God/Allah or some-thing divine/numinous/awe-inspiring, and/or (b) has such fear, and such a being scared, thrust into their hearts by God/Allah, as a Sign, a warning, or as mention of their fate.

In respect of Luke 24.37, for instance, the Greek text is: πτοηθέντες δὲ καὶ ἔμφοβοι γενόμενοι ἐδόκουν πνεῦμα θεωρεῖν. The term ἔμφοβος means 'suffused with/by phobos' - held/gripped by fear; timorous - and occurs in Sirach 19.24 and Luke 24.5, the latter of which is very interesting: ἐμφόβων δὲ γενομένων αὐτῶν καὶ κλινουσῶν τὰ πρόσωπα εἰς τὴν γῆν εἶπαν πρὸς αὐτάς Τί ζητεῖτε τὸν ζῶντα μετὰ τῶν νεκρῶν. That is, suffused with phobos, they assumed a posture of submission/reverence/respect by bowing their heads; in effect prostrating themselves in the presence of some-thing divine/numinous/awe-inspiring. Since πνεῦμα - pneuma - implies apparition or ghost, and πτοηθέντες suggests they

were 'scared' (cf. Odyssey 22.298 - τῶν δὲ φόβος ἐπτοίηθεν) then Luke 24.37 could be translated as "But they, suffused with fear and scared, felt that they saw an apparition." [3]

My, admittedly fallible, view now - after some years of reflexion and study - is that, in an English interpretation of the meaning of a work as revered, and misunderstood, as the Quran, English words in common usage must be carefully chosen, with many common words avoided, and that it would sometimes be better to choose an unusual or even archaic word in order to try and convey something of the sense of the Arabic. Thus, with a careful interpretation common misunderstandings of the text - by non-Muslims unversed in Arabic - can possibly be avoided, especially if - as might be the case with unusual words - the reader has to pause to consider the meaning or make the effort to find the meaning, if only in a glossary appended to the interpretation. A pause and/or an effort that is suited to reading a work revered by millions of people around the world.

In the matter of Ayah 151 of Surah Al 'Imran, a possible interpretation of meaning is:

Into the hearts of they who disbelieve We shall hurl redurre because they, without any authority revealed about such things, associate others with Allah; and for their home: The Fire, that harrowing resting place of the unjust.

Here, I have used the unusual English word redurre, with a meaning of 'awe combined with a trembling fear'. A word suggested by its occurrence in religious works by Richard Rolle and John Gower, and also by texts such as *Morte Arthure* [4].

Of Islam and Violence

It is easy to misinterpret texts; easy to form an opinion based on reading such misinterpretations; easy to generalize from a few misinterpreted texts - or from texts taken out of context - and produce propaganda that incites prejudice, intolerance, and even hatred.

For example, it is possible for a reader of translations to find more talk of 'terror', retribution, destruction, killing, and violence, in the Old Testament than in the Quran. Consider, for example, a commonly available translation of Deuteronomy 32. 25:

"The sword without, and terror within, shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also with the man of gray hairs."

Do the plethora of such quotations from readily available translations of the Old Testament make Christianity and Judaism barbarous religions of hatred, violence, and terrorism? Are such translations of LXX accurate, to be relied upon in the matter of forming an opinion about what is meant?

Few people today would claim - based on some quotations from a translation of the Greek Old Testament - that Christianity and Judaism are barbarous religions of hatred and terrorism, and if they did so claim, there is over a thousand years of Jewish and Christian scholarship to contradict it, as well as the contribution adherents of both those religions have made, over thousands of years, to culture, science, and to doing works which have benefited humanity. Not to mention the millions of adherents who, following the precepts and guidelines of their faith, live or try to live moral lives and who thus make and have made the world a better place.

Similarly, there is the contribution Muslims have made, over more than a thousand years, to culture, science [5], and to doing works which have benefited humanity. Just as there are millions of Muslims who, following the precepts and guidelines of their faith, live or try to live moral lives and who thus make and have made the world a better place; and just as there is over a thousand years of Muslim scholarship to contradict the claims made by the 'Islam is a savage, evil, religion' brigade, a treasure of scholarship that the members and supporters of the anti-Muslim brigade are, of course, either ignorant about or which they, in their bigotry, scorn.

Similarly, who today - other than the ignorant or the bigoted - commits the logical fallacy of distribution in respect of Christianity by condemning that faith based on the actions of a few individuals or fanatics who claim they are Christians, or who, for instance, in the name of defending 'Western Christian culture' murder seventy-seven, mostly young, innocent people? Who, other than the ignorant or the bigoted, condemns Catholicism because a few priests commit crimes against children? Who draws attention to the professed Christian faith or the Christian baptism of murderers and rapists in order to defame Christianity?

Yet the anti-Muslim brigade repeatedly commit the logical fallacy of distribution, and the fallacy of incomplete evidence, arguing as they do from the particular to the general, and selecting and presenting as they do - in support of their prejudice - material which appears to support their claims about Islam and Muslims, while ignoring or dismissing the much larger body of material which

does not support their claims about Islam and Muslims.

Thus do the ignorant, the bigoted, the intolerant, anti-Muslim brigade draw attention to the beliefs and the acts of the small numbers of Muslims - out of billions - who follow a harsh interpretation of Islam, while ignoring the diversity within Islam, ignoring the scholarship which militates against such a harsh interpretation and such acts, and ignoring the millions upon millions of Muslims, world-wide who, by following the precepts and guidelines of Islam as manifest in Quran, Sunnah, Ijmah and Qiyas, live or try to live moral lives, who appreciate the numinous, strive to avoid the error of hubris, and who thus make and have made the world a better place.

Conclusion

In this matter of division, divide, tolerance, and prejudice, I am rather reminded of George Washington's 1796 Farewell Address. Such eloquent, reasoned, words expressive of a man of good intentions and discernment who not only appreciated the virtue of tolerance but knew the nature of we oft-times dishonourable, sometimes honourable, human beings:

"...designing men may endeavor to excite a belief that there is a real difference of local interests and views. One of the expedients of party to acquire influence within particular districts is to misrepresent the opinions and aims of other districts. You cannot shield yourselves too much against the jealousies and heartburnings which spring from these misrepresentations; they tend to render alien to each other those who ought to be bound together by fraternal affection...

It is substantially true that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government... Promote then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge...

Observe good faith and justice towards all nations; cultivate peace and harmony with all. Religion and morality enjoin this conduct; and can it be, that good policy does not equally enjoin it...

In the execution of such a plan, nothing is more essential than that permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular nations, and passionate attachments for others, should be excluded; and that, in place of them, just and amicable feelings towards all should be cultivated. The nation which indulges towards another a habitual hatred or a habitual fondness is in some degree a slave.

It is a slave to its animosity or to its affection, either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interest. Antipathy in one nation against another disposes each more readily to offer insult and injury, to lay hold of slight causes of umbrage, and to be haughty and intractable, when accidental or trifling occasions of dispute occur. Hence, frequent collisions, obstinate, envenomed, and bloody contests. The nation, prompted by ill-will and resentment, sometimes impels to war the government, contrary to the best calculations of policy."

Did his words prevent designing men from causing a civil war between North and South? No. Did his words in support of virtue and the diffusion of knowledge prevent the racism that prevailed in the South from lasting over a hundred years? No. Did his words prevent the disharmony between nations that led to the First and the Second World Wars? No.

But his words did inspire generation after generation of individuals who, each in their own personal way - sometimes small, and local, sometimes larger - did make a moral difference, and who all in their own personal way promoted and diffused knowledge, fostered fraternal affection, who championed good faith and justice towards all nations, and who strove to cultivate peace and harmony.

Who all, in summary and gradually, made America, and the world, a better place.

Notes

[1] *Pathei-Mathos - A Path To Humility*. 2012.

[2] *Just My Fallible Views, Again*. 2012.

[3] On a pedantic note, I understand δοκέω as meaning here not the conventional unemotional 'suppose/thought' nor (worse) 'opinion' but rather as 'felt' in the sense of experiencing (as they do) an intense and personal feeling. Hence my rendering that they "felt that they saw..."

[4] John Gower, *Confessio Amantis*

That thogh thi love more drawe
And peise in the balance more,
Thou miht noght axe ayein therfore
Of duete, bot al of grace.
For love is lord in every place,
Ther mai no lawe him justefie
Be reddour ne be compaignie,
That he ne wole after his wille
Whom that him liketh spede or spille

(Book 5, v. 4558) *The Complete Works of John Gower*.
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899-1902

Morte Arthure

That thow ne schall rowte ne ryste vndyr the heuene ryche,
Dofe thow for reddour of Rome ryne to þe erthe [108-109]

[5] In terms of culture one might mention just a few, such as the preservation of important Greek manuscripts; Bayt Ul-Hikma; the first universities (in Al-Andalus) and pleasures such as coffee. In terms of science, one might mention Arabic numerals and the decimal system, algebra, early research in chemistry and medicine, pharmacology, observational astronomy, navigation, the inventions of Abbas ibn Firnas; and so on.

cc David Myatt 2012

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Toward A Balanced View

A Personal View Concerning Islam, The West, Prejudice, and Islamophobia



Contents

- Prefatory Note
- Prejudice, Extremism, Islamophobia, and Culture
- Toward A Balanced View Of Islam and The West
- Concerning Islamophobia

Prefatory Note

The three articles included here developed from - and in a many places summarize and/or quote from - replies I sent to various correspondents between February and November of 2012 and which correspondence concerned topics such as prejudice, my views concerning Islam and anti-Muslim groups, the use of the terms culture and civilization, and whether or not those opposed to immigration and/or 'Islamification' are prejudiced and, if so, whether they should be reproved. Given this diversity of topics, and the individual nature of my replies over a period of some nine months, there is inevitably some slight overlap of topics in the three essays.

These articles present only my personal, fallible, opinion about such matters,

and which opinion reflects the weltanschauung and the morality of my philosophy of pathei-mathos (formerly 'the numinous way'), as outlined in *Recuyle of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos* and texts such as *Pathei-Mathos - A Path To Humility*.

As I wrote in one such reply in respect of my criticism of certain political groups and their beliefs:

Reluctant as I am and have been for some time to give my personal opinion about such political organizations - given my own lamentable history of extremism and my many errors of experience spanning some four decades - I cannot quite escape the feeling that perhaps by not criticizing such groups, when directly asked and on the basis of my personal experience and knowledge of extremism, I am somehow not doing something I morally should do.

My criticism of such groups and the anti-Muslim views they expound, and which views form the *raison d'etat* of such groups, derives from my four decades of experience of extremists and my decade of study and personal experience of, and involvement with, Islam; and this experience, involvement, and study has led me to conclude that the majority of people involved with such groups are prejudiced and that the views they expound are unbalanced and extreme revealing as such views do not only a profound ignorance of Islam, of the Muslim way of life, and of Shariah, but also that hubriatic certitude-of-knowing, that impersonal harshness and lack of a personal humility, which are the essence of all extremism and which inspires extremists to violent dishonourable deeds in the name of their prejudice, their cause or their ideology.

Thus, and for example, I draw attention to the fact that such people have the temerity to write, speak, and demonstrate about, what they are ignorant about and prejudiced against, and that one of their propaganda ploys they use, redolent of their ignorance, of their lack of knowledge about Islam and their lack of practical in-depth experience of the Muslim way of life,

"...is to quote English interpretations of a particular hadith and English interpretations of ayat from the Quran, thus ignoring (i) that a particular hadith or ayat (and Ahadith and Ayah in general) should be studied in Arabic and must be considered in the context of the whole Quran and the Sunnah and Ijmah combined; and (ii) the truth that to know, fully understand, and appreciate, the religion of Islam - the Muslim way of life - one must have extensive practical experience of how those texts, the Quran, the Sunnah, and Ijmah, are manifested by and in the daily and the social lives of those who use them as guides to living and as guides to the sacred, the divine. And a practical

experience that is diverse: not of only one locale, but of many. In the case of Islam, this means understanding Adab, and appreciating, from experience, the diversity within Islam - for example, the Sufism of North Africa; the way of life of the fellaheen of Egypt, Turkey, Morocco; the way of life of Punjabi Muslims in places like Leicester, and of Muslims in Somali and Dar-es-Salaam. And it is such diverse practical experience that will enable a person to appreciate just what Shariah is, what it means, and what it does not mean nor imply. Anything other than this is, in my view, ignorance of Islam."

In addition, many such anti-Muslim groups and the people involved with or supportive of them - and who say things like "Islam is one of the great evils of the world" - also profess to be defending 'Western Christian culture/civilization' even though their attitude, behaviour, and words, reveal a profound ignorance of Christianity.

It is my belief that such extremism, prejudice and ignorance, should be rejected and exposed; that the ways of Western societies and the Muslim way of life are both - when understood and appreciated - a force for good, and that,

"...both ways of living, that of West and that of the Muslims, can profitably learn from the other, because reasoned dialogue, an acceptance, celebration, and tolerance, of diversity, is the moral, the virtuous, thing to do. From Islam we in the societies of the West might, for instance, re-learn the virtue of a personal humility, dignity, and respect for the sacred over and above the material and the profane, things which the way of Jesus of Nazareth, and the prophets before him, taught us - or sought to teach us - but which many of us somehow and for some reason seem to have forgotten."

I am thus reminded of words such as the following:

"For what purpose then was [the scroll of Ruth] written? To teach how great is the reward of those who do deeds of kindness." Midrash Ruth Rabbah 2, 13

"Let us then try what love can do." William Penn, *Some Fruits of Solitude*

David Myatt
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Prejudice, Extremism, Islamophobia, and Culture

Over the past decade or so there has been a significant increase, in Britain and in Europe in general, in the number of people who claim, believe, or feel, that immigration in general and Islam in particular pose a threat. There is and has been rhetoric, from politicians and agitators, opposing 'multiculturalism' and about 'the threat immigration/Islam pose to French/British/Dutch/German /European/(whatever)' values, civilization, and identity, as there are regular protests about the building of new mosques, and laws in some European nations prohibiting the building of minarets and the wearing in public of hijab and/or the burkha. Organizations opposed to Shariah and what they term 'Islamification' regularly hold demonstrations and protests, many of which are violent or which end in violence, and which organizations directly or indirectly lead to and have led to, or who have members and supporters who commit, Islamophobic [1] incidents such as the harassment of women wearing hijab [2], the desecration of the Quran, the desecration of Muslim graves, and attacks on Mosques and the homes of Muslim families, and many of which incidents are similar to or reminiscent of some anti-Semitic ones.

The question thus arises as to whether such claims, beliefs, or feelings about Islam, Muslims, the Muslim way of life, and Islam, are prejudiced and/or extremist, and, if they are prejudiced, whether such prejudice should be reprobated.

A Modern Yet Old Concern

An increasing number of people in Western countries seem to feel or are concerned that Islam, and the Muslims who have migrated to or were born in Western countries, are in some way undermining or destroying the indigenous culture/civilization or way of life that such concerned ones - the concernées - identify with. The following comments, although made in respect of Britain, are somewhat typical of this European-wide attitude and concern:

"Here I was, in the heart of a city in the middle of my own country, a complete outcast and pariah." [3]

"Far from merging with local communities, many seem to have decided as an act of defiance to live and dress as if still in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Somalia or the Middle East," and that Islam should be 're-branded' for modern Britain. [4]

Islam is "one of the great evils of the world" [5]

"The problems posed by the large-scale immigration of people who do not enter into our European way of life [and] the right of indigenous communities to refuse admission to people who cannot or will not assimilate." [6]

"When we were growing up, Islam wasn't even a word in everyday usage. Now it is an visible part of daily life in most cities. The character of Britain has changed tremendously. Personally, I like that but I think people have a perfect right not to like it and it doesn't make them bad people." [7]

As these and many similar comments indicate, there are common themes to such concerns and attitudes, some of which themes are often unspoken but nevertheless implied. Among these themes are the following: (i) that there is a particular British identity/character, with 'native Britons' regarding Britain as 'their country' and by extension not really the country, the land, of these new 'foreigners'; (ii) that immigrants and those of other cultures and faiths should or must adopt this assumed British identity/character - 'fully integrate', be assimilated - in order to be considered British, with the underlying assumption or prejudice that such a posited British/European identity/character is better than or superior to or more advanced than those other cultures and faiths; (iii) that 'native Britons' are more entitled to the advantages and the opportunities that British society offers than recent (post Second World War) arrivals, especially if these 'new arrivals' belong to a different faith or culture and do not wish to abandon that 'alien' faith or culture or manner of dress, and even if such people of an 'alien' faith or culture are second or third generations citizens, and work and have paid taxes; and (iv) that the indigenous "people have a perfect right not to like [these changes] and it doesn't make them bad people" or extremists.

Among the interesting questions that such concerns and attitudes raise are: why do such people not like such changes, and what is 'bad'. It seems to me that such dislike is often or mostly the result of several factors; for example, a certain instinctive wariness of change and of those who are different; a certain lack of knowledge and lack of understanding of the way of life, the culture, of the newcomers; a certain sense of belonging to their own area or community; and a particular feeling of what it means 'to be British' or English or Scots or Welsh. There is thus, or there develops, an instinctive prejudice, that is a bias - in favour of this posited 'British/Scottish/Welsh way of life' (usually an idealized/romanticised version of it) and not in favour of the newcomers and their ways.

Is this bias bad? I venture to say yes, for two reasons. First (and philosophically) because life itself is and always has been both a flow of change and, beyond the artificial divisions/categories we project upon it, a unity [8]. To try and prevent this natural change by holding onto and dividing human beings into temporal ideated categories based on median assumptions - such as some 'race' or some idealized static national community or static culture said to have arisen during some historical period - is hubris [9]. Second, because I consider the good to be "what is fair; what alleviates or does not cause suffering; what is compassionate; what empathy by its revealing inclines us to do, what inclines us to appreciate the numinous". Thus the bad is what is unfair, what causes suffering, and what is biased, prejudiced, since prejudice [10] in many ways is the opposite of the muliebral virtue of empathy, causing as such prejudice does the impersonal judgemental assessment of a person or persons who are personally unknown, and thence often predisposing an individual or a group to treat those so impersonally judged in a harsh manner. And such prejudice is bad - unfair, morally wrong, deserving of reproof - even if the prejudice that is felt does not lead a particular individual to commit harsh practical violent and/or hateful (and thus by definition extremist) deeds [11].

In my view we should be gently and personally moving away from - and gently and personally encouraging, in others, a moving away from - prejudice (whatever its genesis) toward empathy and the personal, individual, non-judgemental knowing that empathy engenders; away from the artificial (abstract) divisions and categories we have manufactured (and often judge people by) toward an appreciation of the numinous and thus toward a feeling and a knowing of 'that of the numinous in every person' (to again paraphrase George Fox).

Culture, Civilization, and Identity

In the increasing rhetoric about, and the fears concerning, 'the threat Islam poses to European/Western civilization' and 'to French/British/Dutch/German/European/(whatever) values and identity', there are both assumptions and prejudice.

The very usage of the term civilization, for instance, implies a bias; a qualitative often pejorative, prejudiced, assessment and thence a division between something judged 'better than' - or 'superior to' or 'more advanced than' - something else, so that 'to civilize' denotes "the action or process of being made civilized" by something or someone believed or considered to be more distinguished, or better than, or superior to, or more advanced.

Thus - and in common with some other writers [12] - my view is that a clear

distinction should be made between the terms culture, society, and civilization, for the terms culture and society - when, for example, applied to describe and distinguish between the customs and way of life of a group or people, and the codes of behaviour and the administrative organization and governance of those residing in a particular geographical area - are quantitative and descriptive rather than qualitative and judgemental. It is therefore in my view inappropriate to write and talk about a European or a Western 'civilization'.

Given that culture is often understood as the way of life characteristic of a community of people, as their distinctive beliefs, customs, language, and social behaviour, is there a European or a Western culture of which, and for example, a 'British culture' might be a part? Or a unique 'British culture' (and thus identity) which might or might not have some affinity with some European culture? And, if it exists, who or what defines this British culture, and whence did it arise or is assumed to have arisen? For are cultures static, unchangeable entities, or are they, as peoples and languages are and have been, in flux - absorbing, assimilating, developing, and making obsolete. And if cultures are as I incline to believe - and like languages - in flux, is it reasonable to try and make them static, a fixed ideation, by zealously striving to limit them to what they were perceived to be, once, or to what they are understood to be or assumed to be now, and demanding that everyone must adopt this limited and fixed ideation with little or no variation, and certainly no (or only a strictly defined) diversity of change, allowed? [13]

However, insofar as I am concerned, such postulations and theories in respect of cultural identity are the chimæras of our times, and derive from a fundamental misunderstanding of culture. For the essence, the nature, of all cultures is the same: to refine, and develop, the individual; to provide a moral guidance; to cultivate such skills as that of reasoning and learning and civility; to be a repository of the recorded/aural *pathei-mathos*, experiences, and empathic understanding of others (such as our ancestors) over decades, centuries, millennia, as manifest for example in literature, music, memoirs, poetry, history, Art, and often in the past in myths and legends and religious allegories. A recorded/aural *pathei-mathos* and empathic understanding - a human learning - which teach the same lessons, whatever the culture, whatever the people, whatever the time and whatever the place. The lesson of the importance of a loyal love between two people; the lesson of the importance of virtues such as *εὐταξία* [14] and honour; the lesson of the need to avoid committing the error of hubris [15]. The lesson of hope, redemption, and change. And the lesson concerning our own nature:

" From Aeschylus to Sophocles to Siddhārtha Gautama, from the mythos of the *Μοῖραι* to the postulate of *samsara*, from the notion of Fate to the Sermon on the Mount, and beyond, we have had available

to us an understanding [of] how we human beings are often balanced between honour and dishonour; balanced between ὕβρις and ἀρετή; between our animalistic desires, our passions, and our human ability to be noble, to achieve excellence; a balance manifest in our known ability to be able to control, to restrain, ourselves, and thus find and follow a middle way, of ἀμυνή." *In Pursuit of Wisdom* (2011)

Ultimately, the assumed or the perceived, the outer, differences do not matter, since what matters for us as human beings capable of reason and civility is our shared humanity and the wisdom that all cultures guide us toward: which wisdom is that it is what is moral - it is what keeps us as mortals balanced, aware of and respective of the numinous - that should guide us, determine our choices and be the basis of our deeds, for our interaction with other human beings, with society, and with the life with which we share this planet.

As outlined in my philosophy of pathei-mathos, my personal view is that the criteria of assessment and judgement are the individual ones of empathy, reason, and the presumption of innocence; which means that abstractions, ideations, theories, and categories, of whatever kind - and whether deemed to be political, religious, or social - are considered unimportant. That what matters, what is moral, is a very personal knowing in the immediacy-of-the-moment so that what is beyond the purview of our empathy, of our personal knowing, knowledge, and experience, is something we rationally accept we do not know and so cannot judge or form a reasonable, a fair, a balanced, opinion about. Hence, and for example, individuals and people we do not know, of whatever faith, of whatever perceived ethnicity, sexual orientation, or perceived or assumed or proclaimed culture - whom we have no personal experience of and have had no interaction with over a period of causal time - are unjudged by us and thus given the benefit of the doubt; that is, regarded as innocent, assumed to be good, unless or until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, as individuals, proves otherwise.

"This acceptance of the empathic - of the human, the personal - scale of things and of our limitations as human beings is part of wu-wei. Of not-striving, and of not-interfering, beyond the purview of our empathy and our pathei-mathos. Of personally and for ourselves discovering the nature, the physis, of beings; of personally working with and not against that physis, and of personally accepting that certain matters or many matters, because of our lack of personal knowledge and lack of personal experience of them, are unknown to us and therefore it is unwise, unbalanced, for us to have and express views or opinions concerning them, and hubris for us to adhere to and strive to implement some ideology which harshly deals with and manifests

harsh views and harsh opinions concerning such personally unknown matters.

Thus what and who are beyond the purview of empathy and beyond pathos is or should be of no urgent concern, of no passionate relevance, to the individual seeking balance, harmony, and wisdom, and in truth can be detrimental to finding wisdom and living in accord with the knowledge and understanding so discovered." *Some Personal Musings On Empathy - In relation to the philosophy of πάθει μάθος*

Considered thus, what matters are our own moral character, our interior life, our appreciation of the numinous, and the individual human beings we interact with on the personal level; so that our horizon is to refine ourselves into cultured beings who are civil, reasoned, empathic, non-judgemental, unbiased, and who will, in the words of one guide to what is moral, Ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ [16].

Notes

[1] Islamophobia has been defined, by Professor Erik Bleich, as "indiscriminate negative attitudes or emotions directed at Islam or Muslims," and thus, "as with parallel concepts like homophobia or xenophobia, Islamophobia connotes a broader set of negative attitudes or emotions directed at individuals or groups because of their perceived membership in a category."

See my 2012 article *Concerning Islamophobia* [included below].

[2] In respect of Hijab and some of the myths surrounding it, see, for example, Leila Ahmed: *A Quiet Revolution - The Veil's Resurgence, from the Middle East to America*. Yale University Press, 2012. Leila Ahmed is Professor of Divinity at Harvard.

[3] The quotation is from a book by Clarissa Dickson Wright, published in 2012, the author having been a presenter of several mainstream television cookery programmes.

[4] Trevor Kavanagh, a journalist writing in the British newspaper, The Sun, dated November 20, 2012.

[5] Richard Dawkins, speaking in Stornoway, as reported in The Scotsman

newspaper, dated November 2, 2012.

[6] Roger Scruton, speech at Antwerp, June 23, 2006.

[7] Private communication from an e-mail correspondent, November 2012.

[8] qv. *The Nature of Being and of Beings* section of my *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary*.

[9] qv. (i) *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*; (ii) *Concerning Some Abstractions - Extremism and Race*; (iii) *Recuyle of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*.

It is personal empathy and pathei-mathos which enable us to appreciate the unity beyond the appearance of posited, manufactured, categories and opposites, and which thus inclines us toward knowing and trying to do what is right. As explained in *Recuyle of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*:

"Empathy - and the knowing that derives from it - thus transcends 'race', politics, religion, gender, sexual orientation, occupation, wealth (or lack of it), 'status', and all the other things and concepts often used to describe, to denote, to prejudge, to classify, a person; so that to judge someone - for example - by and because of their political views (real or assumed) or by their religion or by their sexual orientation is an act of hubris."

As I mentioned to one correspondent:

"My admittedly fallible view of empathy is that it is natural human faculty which most humans could possibly develop and use. A faculty that can provide a type of knowing of another living being sans words, ideas, abstractions/constructs; and which results in sympatheia - benignity - with and for that living being.

I have described it a 'translocation of ourselves' where we experience a loss of that 'separation-of-otherness' which usually defines us as an individual human being, resulting in an intuition or intuitions concerning the feelings of another. Thus and for instance we can sense someone's sadness, or grief, or pain, or joy. Which, in practical terms, naturally predisposes us toward treating that person as we ourselves would wish to be treated: with compassion, understanding, honour, and dignity.

In a sense, we make an 'acausal connexion' to and with another living

being, and which connexion is entirely independent of those forms, categories, and classifications we normally use to describe, and to try to 'understand', and/or which we use to judge (consciously or otherwise), another person. A process I have described as a wordless intuition concerning the physis - the being or character - of a person.

Sometimes this 'translocation of ourselves' and sympatheia with another is of a sufficiency to cause us to actually physically feel the pain of another. Which sufficiency of empathy can quite naturally make the everyday life of such an 'empath' somewhat challenging if not difficult.

As to how this faculty might be developed, I only have tentative suggestions, based on my (limited) understanding and the patheimathos of my rather outré life. Which suggestions concern such matters as developing an appreciation of the numinous, cultivating wu-wei, and fostering an attitude of personal humility part of which is understanding 'the cosmic perspective', of the reality of ourselves as one microcosmic fallible fragile mortal rather insignificant living being on one planet orbiting one star in one galaxy in a cosmos of billions of galaxies, and which short-lived mortal also happens to be a connexion to all life, human and otherwise, on this planet we mortals call Earth."

[10] Prejudice is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as "preconceived opinion not based on reason or actual experience; bias".

[11] I outline my particular usage of - and sometimes particular definition of - certain terms, such as 'the good', extremism, society, innocence, and so on, in Appendix I (A Glossary of Terms) of my *Recuyle of the Philosophy of Patheimathos*.

[12] A useful overview of the usage of the terms culture and civilization is given in *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* by Raymond Williams, Oxford University Press, 1976.

[13] One correspondent of mine went so far as to jest that the 'save British culture from Islamification' brigade are kindred in spirit to those who would have us remove all 'foreign' words from the English language, with in-fighting occurring and new grouplets formed because they cannot agree what constitutes a foreign word and how far, historically, they should go back in their crusade to remove such 'non-British' things and so keep 'their language pure'.

[14] As I mentioned in *The Way of Patheimathos - A Philosophical Compendiary*:

εὐταξία [is] that quality of self-restraint, of a balanced, well-mannered conduct especially under adversity or duress, of which Cicero wrote:

Haec autem scientia continentur ea, quam Graeci εὐταξίαν nominant, non hanc, quam interpretamur modestiam, quo in verbo modus inest, sed illa est εὐταξία, in qua intellegitur ordinis conservatio

Those two qualities are evident in that way described by the Greeks as εὐταξίαν although what is meant by εὐταξία is not what we mean by the moderation of the moderate, but rather what we consider is restrained behaviour... *De Officiis*, Liber Primus, 142

[15] In respect of avoidance of hubris, refer to my *Recuyle Of The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos*.

[16] Matthew 22:21. Reddite ergo, quae sunt Caesaris, Caesari et, quae sunt Dei, Deo. Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God, the things that are God's.

Toward A Balanced View Of Islam and The West

The 'save our civilization from Islamification' - and 'no surrender to Shariah' - brigade often proudly speak and write about the societies of the West in glowing terms, and contrast their own 'advanced', 'civilized', societies and way of life with Islam, and which religion of the Muslims they describe as "one of the great evils of the world" [1], as 'barbaric, bloodthirsty, primitive, murderous', and which they claim 'subjugates women'.

This attitude reveals several things. That those who so pontificate are - instinctively or willfully - extremely biased against Islam, Muslims, and the Muslim way of life [2]; and/or that they have an extremely romanticized view of the societies of the West (and especially of their own society); and/or that they are hatefully speaking/writing propaganda, and inciting prejudice and hate and demonizing Islam and Muslims, in order to promote their views/cause /organization/ideology. And demonizing Islam and Muslims in much the same way as those minority of Muslims who adhere to or believe in a harsh interpretation of Islam demonize the societies of the West and some (or all) of the kuffar.

For such an attitude is unbalanced, irrational, ignorant; ignoring as it does the reality - the truth - of the societies of the West and the reality - the truth - about

the varied societies, past and present, of Muslims. [3]

A Balanced View

The balanced view is that both types of societies - the Western and the Muslim - have, and have had, problems and divisions, and governments and individuals who have sanctioned and done barbaric deeds. And people of good, honourable, intentions and people of bad, dishonourable, intentions. And people aware of the misdeeds of the past and the problems of the present - of what is morally necessary in order to offset or solve such problems - and who are trying in their own ways to make their societies better, more moral, in accord with the principles they believe in, whether those principles be described as political, religious, or social.

The anti-Muslim brigade, for instance, claim that 'Islam subjugates women' and treats them unfairly, while ignoring - or being in ignorance about - the misogyny that is rife in the West, with nearly 100,000 women per year seeking treatment in the British city of London alone for violent injuries received in their own homes, with, on average, in Britain, two women per week being killed by a male partner or former partner - that is over 100 women a year. Also, in England and Wales alone, in one year, there are around 600,000 recorded incidents of domestic violence, and every minute of every day the British Police are called by a woman who has been subject to violent domestic abuse. [4]

The anti-Muslim brigade, for instance, claim that 'Islam is barbaric, bloodthirsty, murderous', while ignoring the fact in the past hundred years Western countries have, through conflict and war, caused or contributed to far more deaths than Muslim societies: well over one hundred million human beings. Over sixty million people in the Second World War - the most brutal and bloody war in human history. Over sixteen million in the First World War. Over twenty million in the Soviet Union. Many millions killed in colonial wars; and in just two days, nearly a quarter of a million people in Japan killed by the dropping of atomic bombs. In the past three years alone, the drone strikes authorized by the Obama administration have killed between 282 and 535 civilians, of which 60 were children [5]. Such attacks have been described, by Western commentators with a legal background, as "violations of international law" [6], as "terrorizing men, women, and children" [7] and as "extra-judicial assassination - accompanied by the wanton killing of whatever civilians happen to be near the target, often including children" [8].

The anti-Muslim brigade, for instance, make claims about the 'violence and inhumanity of Jihad' while (i) ignoring the fact that no Muslim society, in the last hundred years, has invaded and occupied another land, Muslim or kuffar; and (ii) ignoring the recent colonialism of the West, and wars such as those fought in

Vietnam, and recent invasions in Iraq and Afghanistan, which have resulted in hundreds of thousands of deaths, many civilian.

Also ignored by those who pontificate about "the great evil that is Islam" are the many the social problems in Western societies which make the lives of millions of people despairing, and grim; a life which many escape from by turning to drugs or alcohol [9].

But do all the above things - and other things such the torture of Muslims in Abu Ghraib and Bagram, the rendition and torture of Muslims suspected of being terrorists, the death of 290 people on Flight 655 shot down by US missiles - make Western societies barbaric, bloodthirsty, murderous, terrorist, violent, uncaring, full of hate? Do they show that the principles underlying Western society are wrong, evil, immoral, barbaric, oppressive of women?

Or do they show that the peoples and governments of the West have done some bad things, made mistakes, but have admitted (or are beginning to admit) their errors, have learnt from them - and are still learning - and thus are not perfect and should not be idealized? Do they also show that claims of perfection, that such idealizations of the West as the anti-Muslim brigade make, are themselves wrong, mistakes worthy of reproof just as the demonization of the West by those Muslims who adhere to or believe in a harsh interpretation of Islam is wrong?

A Force For Good

My personal view now of Western societies - based on experience, a life of extremisms and subversions, and deriving from much reflexion, an acknowledgement of my own mistakes, and much pathos - is that they are a force for good, and that, for all their problems and flaws,

"...there is, within them, a certain tolerance; a certain respect for the individual; a certain duty of care; and certainly still a freedom of life, of expression, as well as a standard of living which, for perhaps the majority, is better than elsewhere in the world and most certainly better than existed there and elsewhere in the past.

In addition, there are within their structures - such as their police forces, their governments, their social and governmental institutions - people of good will, of humanity, of fairness, who strive to do what is

good, right. Indeed, far more good people in such places than bad people, so that a certain balance, the balance of goodness, is maintained even though occasionally (but not for long) that balance may seem to waver somewhat.

Furthermore, many or most of the flaws, the problems, within such societies are recognized and openly discussed, with a multitude of people of good will, of humanity, of fairness, dedicating themselves to helping those affected by such flaws, such problems. In addition, there are many others trying to improve those societies, and to trying find or implement solutions to such problems, in tolerant ways which do not cause conflict or involve the harshness, the violence, the hatred, of extremism." [10]

Furthermore, also based on experience and much reflexion, my personal view of diverse Muslim societies (Sunni and Shia, and from North Africa, to Egypt, the Sudan, the Middle East, to Asia), is that - on balance - they are also a force for good, full of people of good will, of humanity, of fairness, who strive to do what is good and avoid what is dishonourable - Amr bil Maroof wa Nahi anil Munkar.

Thus both ways of living, that of West and that of the Muslims, can profitably learn from the other, because reasoned dialogue, an acceptance, celebration, and tolerance, of diversity, is the moral, the virtuous, thing to do. From Islam we in the societies of the West might, for instance, re-learn the virtue of a personal humility, dignity, and respect for the sacred over and above the material and the profane, things which the way of Jesus of Nazareth, and the prophets before him, taught us - or saught to teach us - but which many of us somehow and for some reason seem to have forgotten (I know I forget them for decades).

Furthermore, claims of perfection about, and idealizations of, one's own society/nation/country/religion - and the demonization of others - are not only irresponsible, unwise, but also hubris, perpetuating as such hubris does the reprehensible suffering that has so blighted and which still blights this one small planet orbiting one ordinary star in one galaxy among a cosmos of billions of such star-filled galaxies.

The solution to such suffering, such mistakes, is simple, for it begins with each one of us, internally. With a rejection of extremism, and a discovery and an appreciation of (or a rediscovery of) the numinous and of our shared humanity; an appreciation that predisposes us feel and know our limitations and faults, as fallible mortals, and which feeling and knowing forms the essence of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism, Hinduism, Taoism, and of the humanism that has motivated and inspired so many in the West for two

centuries or more.

Notes

[1] Richard Dawkins, speaking in Stornoway, as reported in The Scotsman newspaper, dated November 2, 2012.

[2] In *Concerning Islamophobia*, I wrote:

"The 'indiscriminate negative attitudes or emotions' that Islamophobics have for Islam and Muslims is the result, in my fallible view and in my experience, of a lack of knowledge - an ignorance - about both Islam and the Muslim way of life, and of the propensity we humans seem to have to express opinions about, or pass judgement on something we have little or no personal experience of, and/ or on someone or some many we do not personally know. This personal ignorance concerning something, or someone or some many, we express an opinion or views about is also something we seldom admit to others, and often do not admit even to ourselves."

One propaganda ploy used by the 'save our civilization from Islamification' brigade - redolent of their ignorance, of their lack of knowledge about Islam and their lack of practical in-depth experience of the Muslim way of life - is to quote English interpretations of a particular hadith and English interpretations of ayat from the Quran, thus ignoring (i) that a particular hadith or ayat (and Ahadith and Ayah in general) should be studied in Arabic and must be considered in the context of the whole Quran and the Sunnah and Ijmah combined; and (ii) the truth that to know, fully understand, and appreciate, the religion of Islam - the Muslim way of life - one must have extensive practical experience of how those texts, the Quran, the Sunnah, and Ijmah, are manifested by and in the daily and the social lives of those who use them as guides to living and as guides to the sacred, the divine. And a practical experience that is diverse: not of only one locale, but of many. In the case of Islam, this means understanding Adab, and appreciating, from experience, the diversity within Islam - for example, the Sufism of North Africa; the way of life of the fellaheen of Egypt, Turkey, Morocco; the way of life of Punjabi Muslims in places like Leicester, and of Muslims in Somali and Dar-es-Salaam. And it is such diverse practical experience that will enable a person to appreciate just what Shariah is, what it means, and what it does not mean nor imply. Anything other than this is, in my view, ignorance of Islam.

[3] Among the ignoble propaganda ploys used by the 'save our civilization from

Islamification' brigade is to report some crime or ignoble deed if and only if the religion (or the presumed religion) of the perpetrator is Muslim, or if the perceived ethnicity of the perpetrator is Asian/Arab/African, to thus 'prove/show' how horrid, bad, brutal, barbaric, those 'muzzies'/Arabs/Asians/foreigners are. These propagandists thus ignore similar deeds done by Europeans/Whites/Christians.

Another ignoble propaganda ploy they use is to report some crime or ignoble deed done by, or words spoken by, some Muslim or Muslims who adhere to or believe in a harsh interpretation of Islam and then claim that that deed or those words 'prove how horrid, bad, brutal, barbaric, terroristic, Islam is'. These propagandists thus ignore similar extremist deeds done, or similar harsh words spoken, by Europeans/Whites/Christians, past and present.

[4] Sources: (a) *Punching Judy*, BBC TV Documentary; (b) Crime in England and Wales (Home Office annual publication); (c) Women's Aid Federation of England.

[5] Bureau of Investigative Journalism. *Covert Strikes in Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia*, 2012

[6] *Living Under Drones*, Report by New York University School of Law and Stanford University Law School, 2012

[7] Glenn Greenwald. The Guardian, September 25, 2012

[8] Glenn Greenwald. The Guardian, November 15, 2012.

[9] For instance, cocaine use in England and Wales is the highest in Europe, indulged in by over four million people – and Scotland's rate of cocaine use is among the highest in the whole world. [Source: European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction]

For instance, America has the highest number of people in prison, per capita, in the whole world – over 1.7 million people, with well over half of all prisoners in America there for drug related offences [Source: (a) Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse (White House Office of National Drug Control Policy); (b) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (The Department of Health and Human Services).]. In addition nearly 22 million Americans aged 12 or older are illicit drug users [Source: (a) Foundation for Social Improvement; (b) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, The Department of Health and Human Services].

In respect of alcohol, an estimated 15 to 20 million Americans are addicted to alcohol or regularly abuse alcohol for personal or social reasons. Furthermore,

in America, alcohol use is involved in: (a) one-half of all murders, accidental deaths, and suicides; (b) one-third of all drowning, boating and aviation deaths; (c) one-half of all crimes; and (d) almost half of all fatal automobile accidents. [Source: (a) National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism; (b) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, The Department of Health and Human Services]

[10] David Myatt, *Notes on The Politics and Ideology of Hate*, April 2012

Concerning Islamophobia

Some Personal Comments from Experience and Pathei-Mathos

Introduction

Islamophobia has been defined as "indiscriminate negative attitudes or emotions directed at Islam or Muslims" [1] and thus, "as with parallel concepts like homophobia or xenophobia, Islamophobia connotes a broader set of negative attitudes or emotions directed at individuals or groups because of their perceived membership in a category."

An essential feature of Islamophobia is therefore an acceptance of there being a division between 'us' and 'them', with both 'us' and 'them' represented by abstract concepts/categories such as national culture, national or religious identity, and/or perceived (or assumed) ethnic identity. In addition - as invariably occurs and has throughout history occurred - this division into 'them' and 'us' includes or comes to include a conscious or an unconscious belief in 'us' being better than, or more 'civilized' than, 'them'.

Hence, those afflicted by Islamophobia are prejudiced against - or develop a prejudice against - Muslims and against the religion of Islam, and which prejudice often leads them to treat Muslims in a bigoted way. And prejudiced because Islamophobics feel - and need to believe - that Islam and/or Muslims are somehow 'inferior' or 'uncivilized' or 'barbaric'.

Over the past decade Islamophobia has markedly increased, and has become an integral part of most 'extreme right-wing', racist, and self-styled nationalist, political organizations in Europe, with many such groups making their self-proclaimed 'crusade' against Islam, Sharia, and Muslim 'immigrants', their main focus. A self-proclaimed 'crusade' evident, for example, in the actions and the diatribal writings of the person who, in July of 2011, left a bomb near a government building in Oslo, Norway, that killed eight people, and who then

proceeded to - on the nearby island of Utøya - shoot dead sixty-nine others, the majority of whom were young innocent [2] people.

A Lack of Knowledge, A Surfeit of Ignorance

The "indiscriminate negative attitudes or emotions" that Islamophobics have for Islam and Muslims is the result, in my fallible view and in my experience, of a lack of knowledge - an ignorance - about both Islam and the Muslim way of life, and of the propensity we humans seem to have to express opinions about, or pass judgement on something we have little or no personal experience of, and/or on someone or some many we do not personally know. This personal ignorance concerning something, or someone or some many, we express an opinion or views about is also something we seldom admit to others, and often do not admit even to ourselves.

In general, Islamophobics have an emotive, indiscriminate, and therefore unreasonable, reaction to - a dislike of, or a fear of, or an aversion to, or a hatred of, and/or an instinctive prejudice against - what they do not know and have no personal experience of; what they are ignorant of. An emotive, unreasonable, response and reaction - an attitude, an ignorance - which certain political groups take advantage of and encourage, and/or which emotive attitude and ignorance is or has been the genesis for the formation of some groups with a particular anti-Muslim agenda.

For instance, how many of the leaders, organizers, members and supporters, of groups with an anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic agenda and policies - and who glibly talk, write, and demonstrate, about Shariah - have read the Quran in Arabic? How many have studied the Sunnah - at the very least the collections of Bukhari and Muslim? How many have studied Al-Adab Al-Mufrad? How many have studied Islamic jurisprudence and discussed Shariah with a Qadi or three? How many conversations about Islam have they had with learned Imaams? Have they lived in a land where the majority of people are Muslim and so have practical experience of the Muslim way of life? Have they, from personal experience, compared the way of life of Muslims in that land to the lives of Muslims in other lands? How many times have they been guests of Muslim families and so shared meals and personal conversations and thus empathised with Muslims? How many Muslim women have they interviewed or asked about Hijab - about why they wear it and how it makes them feel? How many have read the maxims of Islamic jurisprudence contained in Al-Majallah al-Ahkam al-Adaliyyah?

If they have not done all these things then they are uneducated and ill-informed about Shariah, about Islam, about Muslims, and about the Muslim way of life. That is, the views and the opinions about Islam, about Shariah, about Muslims,

about the Muslim way of life, expressed by such groups - and expressed by those who are active members or active supporters of such groups - are both prejudiced and extremist. And extremist because unbalanced, intemperate, impersonal, and harsh [3].

For my experience - my forty years as a practical extremist, my decade long experience and study of Islam and the Muslim way of life, and the pathei-mathos that resulted from these decades and from my experience of Islam, and thence led to me rejecting extremism - inclines me to conclude several things about extremists, extremism, Islam, and religions in general.

First, that the essence of all extremism, whether manifesting in a political, a religious, a social, or a personal way, is an ill-informed and prejudiced certitude; a hubriatic certitude-of-knowing. That is, an arrogant belief that one is - or the cause/faith/ideology/group/party/movement/leader is - 'right', combined with an unwillingness or an inability to admit one 'does not know' or may be wrong, combined with an adherence to or a belief in a particular 'abstraction of belonging' and which abstraction of belonging provides an intense sense of pride and identity sufficient to engender and provoke not only a dislike and often a hatred of 'those not like us' but also bigotry and violence.

Second, that the antithesis of extremism is that humility and appreciation of the numinous that, in my view [4] forms - or formed - the basis of all conventional religions (from Judaism to Christianity to Islam to Hinduism to Sikhism) and all Ways of Life [5] (such as Taoism and Buddhism) with it being necessary, in order that a person properly understands and appreciates such religions and Ways, for that person to have a personal experience and a personal knowing over a period of time of the daily lives of many of those who believe in, who profess, or who practice that religion or Way.

Third, that I have developed a great respect for not only the Muslim way of life, but also for the ways of life engendered by Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism, Taoism, and Buddhism.

This respect of diversity and difference, this humility and appreciation of the numinous - and the need for personal experience, a personal knowing, and knowledge, in order to truthfully know about some thing, about some one or some people - are manifestly absent in extremists. For extremism thrives on, and has its genesis in, ignorance and arrogance. An ignorance and an arrogance exemplified whenever an extremist fanatically acts in the name of their needed Islamophobia.

For example, what did the person who - in his self-professed 'crusade against the

Islamisation of Western Europe ' - murdered seventy-seven people in Norway in July 2011 know - personally and from study and travels - about Islam, Muslims, and the Muslim way of life? What did this person really know and understand about the Western culture he professed needed defending from Islam, Muslims, and the 'multiculturalists' he hated?

Rumpledhatevik - as I prefer to call him [6] - knew very little, and understood even less, as his 'manifesto' and his life prior to his murders clearly reveal. His sources in respect of Islam - in his turgid 'manifesto' - include magazine and newspaper articles (many by fellow Islamophobes), a novel by Leon Uris, and websites such as the Islamophobic 'jihad-watch' from which he cuts-and-pastes their inaccurate and propagandistic article 'Islam 101' [7]. Other cut-and-pastes about Islam include schoolboy howlers, as when an author claims that Ibn Taymiyya is considered a "lighthouse for today's Khomeini's". [That author really should have read *Minhaj as-Sunnah an-Nabawiyyah* first.] That Rumpledhatevik considered such prejudiced, ignorant, material about Islam merited inclusion is evidential of his own ignorance about such matters.

His sources and his words in respect of the Western Christian culture he professed to be defending are equally revealing, indicating a person who (i) has no personal knowledge and experience of, and/or no empathy with - and certainly no understanding of the importance of - a Christian humility and compassion, chivalry and manners, humanism, freedom of religion, and of equal and impartial justice under the law; and who (ii) is lacking a scholarly knowledge of - and thence a balanced, reasoned, cultured understanding of - Homer, Sappho, Sophocles, Aeschylus, Cicero, Livy, Hillel the Elder, Abelard, Thomas Aquinas, Dante Alighieri, and many many others. Perhaps Rumpledhatevik had also never heard of, or never studied the lives of, people such as George Fox, Mother Teresa, and Martin Luther King,

For he, and the extremists, the Islamophobes, he exemplifies, are ignorant about those whom and that which they hate; ignorant about what they profess to care about and believe they are defending; and arrogantly talk, write, about, and fight - and are prepared to kill others - for what they do not understand and have little or no personal experience of.

Notes

[1] Professor Erik Bleich: *What Is Islamophobia?* American Behavioral Scientist, vol. 55 no. 12, December 2011. pp. 1581-1600

[2] As I wrote in *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary*, I regard innocence as,

...an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us, are therefore unjudged by us and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence of others – until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise – is the fair, the reasoned, the numinous, the human, thing to do.

Empathy and *πάθει μάθος* incline us toward treating other human beings as we ourselves would wish to be treated; that is they incline us toward fairness, toward self-restraint, toward being well-mannered, and toward an appreciation and understanding of innocence.

[3] My definition of an extremist is,

"a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious nature. Here, *harsh* is: rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic. Hence *extremism* is considered to be: (a) the result of such harshness, and (b) the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists."

It should be noted that in this essay I am critical of (i) political groups or organizations or parties of a particular prejudiced ilk; and (ii) the attitude, actions, and beliefs, of those who have an emotive (and intemperate, indiscriminate) reaction to Muslims, to the Muslim way of life, and to the religion of Islam, and who therefore are prejudiced against - or who develop a prejudice against - Muslims, the Muslim way of life, and the religion of Islam. To be so personally prejudiced, to so have such an indiscriminate negative attitude toward Muslims and their way of life, is a harsh, an unempathic, an intemperate, thing to do; and someone who in some manner translates - or is motivated to translate - this negative attitude and prejudice into practical deeds, or who incites others to do so, or who actively promotes such harsh attitudes and prejudice, is an extremist, just as a group or organization or political party which supports or incites or which is founded on such harsh attitudes and prejudice, is an extremist group/organization/party. And extremist even if some of its members or supporters are not, themselves, extremists: are not prejudiced, and/or not ignorant about those who or that which such an extremist entity opposes.

[4] *qv. Pathei-Mathos, A Way To Humility*. As I wrote in that work:

It seems to me there is, to paraphrase an expression of George Fox used by The Religious Society of Friends, 'that of the numinous' in every person, and that answering to 'that of the numinous' can take and has taken various manifestations over millennia with all such manifestations deserving of respect since there is an underlying unity, a similar spiritual essence - a similar discovery and knowing and appreciation of the numinous, a similar understanding of the error of hubris - beyond those different outer manifestations and the different terms and expressions and allegories used to elucidate 'that of the numinous'.

In respect of humility, I use the term here and elsewhere,

"...in a spiritual context, to refer to that gentleness, that modest demeanour, that understanding, which derives from an appreciation of the numinous and also from one's own admitted uncertainty of knowing and one's acknowledgement of past mistakes. An uncertainty of knowing, an acknowledgement of mistakes, that often derive from *πάθει μάθος*.

Humility is thus the natural human balance that offsets the unbalance of hubris (ὑβρις) - the balance that offsets the unbalance of pride and arrogance, and the balance that offsets the unbalance of that certainty of knowing which is one basis for extremism, for extremist beliefs, for fanaticism and intolerance. That is, humility is a manifestation of the natural balance of Life; a restoration of *ἀρμονίη*, of *δίκη*, of *σωφρονεῖν* - of those qualities and virtues - that hubris and extremism, that *ἔρις* and *πόλεμος*, undermine, distance us from, and replace." *Pathei-Mathos, A Way To Humility*

[5] qv. *Pathei-Mathos, A Way To Humility* where I make a (rather pedantic) distinction between a Way and a religion.

[6] qv. *Concerning the 2011 Massacre in Norway - A Personal Analysis of an Extremist*

[7] Sometimes the prejudice that the author of this '101' item has for Islam - and his obvious lack of knowledge and lack of personal experience regarding Islam and the Muslims - can be faintly amusing, as when he invokes an imaginary apostate after claiming that "while Muslims who present their religion as peaceful abound throughout dar al-harb, they are nearly non-existent in dar al-Islam" and that "a litmus test for Westerners who believe that Islam is a

religion of peace and tolerance [is] try making that point on a street corner in Ramallah, or Riyadh, or Islamabad, or anywhere in the Muslim world. He assured me you wouldn't live five minutes." Well, I have asked such questions in such and similar places, and had some very interesting and informative and above all rational and courteous discussions (some of which continued over a shared meal), and which discussions in such diverse places - from Egypt, the Sudan, North Africa, to the Middle East to Asia - revealed that, yes, Islam is considered by Muslims in Muslim lands to be a way of tolerance and of both outer and inner peace. Perhaps if the author - instead of conjuring up an imaginary friend - had made the effort to learn by travelling to such places and talking to ordinary Muslims, to Ulaamah, to members of the Muslim Brotherhood, and to Sufi teachers, a little of his ignorance and prejudice and arrogance may have been dispelled.

cc David Myatt 2012

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Extremism And Reformation

David Myatt

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ΕΡΜΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΤΡΙΣΜΕΓ.

πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν Τὰτ ἐν ὁρῇ λόγος ἀπόκρυφος
πρὸς παλιγενεσίας, καὶ σιγῆς ἐπαγγελίας.



Ν Τεῖς ἡνικοῖς ὦ πάτερ, ἀνιγμα-
τωδῶς, καὶ οὐ τηλαυγῶς ἐφρασας
πρὸς θεότηλος ἀφελεγρόμυθος· καὶ ὅκ
ἀπεκάλυψας, φάμυθος μηδένα
διυῖαοθαι φημιῶν πρὸ τῆς πα-
λιγενεσίας, ἐμοὶ τέ σου ἰκέτου ἡμομύθου ὅτι τῆς τῆ
ὁρις μεταβάσεως, μὲν δὲ σὲ ἐμοὶ ἀφελεγρῶναι, καὶ πυ-
θολόμου τὸν τῆς παλιγενεσίας λόγον μαθεῖν, ὅτι τῆς
πρὸς πᾶντα, μόνον ἀγνοῶ· καὶ ἔφης ὅτι μὲν μέλλης κόσμος
ἀπαλλοτριεῖσθαι, πρὸς διδόναι μοι ἔτιμος ἐγρόμυθος,
καὶ ἀπηλλοτριώσα δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ φρόνημα, καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς τῆς κό-
σμου ἀπάτης· σὺ δέ μοι καὶ ταῦτα ὑπερήματα ἀναπλήρω-
σον, οἷς ἔφης μοι παλιγενεσία πρὸς διδόναι πρὸς θε-
μενος, ὅκ φωνῆς ἢ κρυβίω· ἀγνοῶ ὦ τεισιμένε· εἴ

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Preface

The genesis of this compilation of essays was, as mentioned in the included essay *A Premature Grieving*, the publication in 2019, by a political advocacy group, of various unsubstantiated allegations and disinformation about me and the subsequent repetition of such allegations and disinformation by some mainstream newspapers and media outlets.

The unsubstantiated allegations and the disinformation concerned my supposed continuing involvement with extremism, specifically neo-nazism; it being apparent that neither the political advocacy group nor the newspapers and media which repeated the allegations and the disinformation had bothered to read my extensive post-2011 writings about rejecting extremism and about seeking expiation for my decades-long extremist past [1].

This compilation of essays is my reply to those unsubstantiated allegations and disinformation.

While two of the essays included in this compilation - both written in 2012 and respectively titled *Concerning Some Abstractions* and *Some Notes on The Politics and Ideology of Hate* - have been superseded by my 2013 book *Understanding And Rejecting Extremism* [2] and by subsequent writings concerning the 'philosophy of pathei-mathos' they nevertheless in my fallible view may have some relevance for those interested both in my rejection of extremism and how and why I developed my 'numinous way' into my post-2012 'philosophy of pathei-mathos'. [3]

For the writing of those two essays - with their assuredness, their many suppositions, their many generalizations and some rhetoric - helped me organize and then refine my thoughts about extremism in general and my own extremist past in particular. It also made me moderate both my thoughts and how I came to express those thoughts in writing; a moderation expressed by my *Understanding And Rejecting Extremism*.

In a similar way, my 2012 essay *Some Philosophical and Moral Problems of National-Socialism*, [4] also included in this compilation, helped me organize and then express in writing my thoughts about National Socialism and Hitler.

It should be noted that many of the texts referenced in the older essays included in this compilation - many referencing my now dated 'numinous way' - are available only in archived versions of my website and weblog, [5] having been replaced, post-2012, by my writings concerning the philosophy of pathei-mathos, about which philosophy I have included as an appendix here my recent text *Physis And Being: An Introduction To The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos*.

I have reproduced the essays as they were originally published even though

there is some repetition of content and/or of quotations between some of the included essays.

The illustration is the beginning of the Greek text of tractate XIII of the Corpus Hermeticum from the book *Mercvrii Trismegisti Pœmandres*, published in Paris in 1554.

My translation is:

When, father, you in the Exoterica conversed about divinity your language was enigmatic and obscure. There was, from you, no disclosure; instead, you said no one can be rescued before the Palingenesis. Now, following our discussion as we were passing over the mountain I became your suppliant, inquiring into learning the discourse on Palingenesis since that, out of all of them, is the only one unknown to me, with you saying it would be imparted to me when I became separated from the world.

Thus I prepared myself, distancing my ethos from the treachery in the world. [6]

David Myatt
September 2019
Third Edition

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[1] On the question of expiation, qv. my essay *Numinous Expiation* written in 2012 and included in *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos* (International Standard Book Number 978-1484097984).

As I wrote in *Some Questions For DWM* (March 2014),

"In a very personal sense, my philosophy of pathei-mathos is expiative, as are my writings concerning extremism, such as my *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism: A Very Strange Peregrination*.

[2] International Standard Book Number 978-1484854266.

[3] The essay *Concerning The Development Of The Numinous Way* outlines the change from 'the numinous way' to the philosophy of pathei-mathos. It is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/rejecting-extremism>

/development-of-the-numinous-way/

[4] An archive version of the essay is available at <https://web.archive.org/web/20130509183014/http://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/moral-problems-of-national-socialism/>

[5] See for example: (i) <https://web.archive.org/web/20130602171008/http://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/> and (ii) <https://web.archive.org/web/20130704131205/http://www.davidmyatt.info/>

[6] David Myatt, *Eight Tractates*, 2017, International Standard Book Number 978-1976452369

A Premature Grieving

A recent occurrence, although expected for some years, saddened me expressing as it seemed to do something about our human physis; about how for so many people our physis does not seem to have evolved that much, if at all, despite our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos.

The occurrence was the publication of a report, in two parts of which report I was repeatedly mentioned, with the author of those parts making various allegations about me for which he provided no evidence; who misattributed certain quotations to me; who made fundamental and multiple factual errors; who committed various logical fallacies; who was generally biased and dishonourable and who thus rather than promoting hope and fairness promoted old-world hostility toward and a stereotyping of particular individuals.

My resigned sadness was because for that author it was as if propaganda on behalf of some cause came before, was more important than, truth and empathy; as if there was for that author no personal belief in redemption, in the possibility of individuals changing for the better, except insofar – perchance – as such change was toward the cause he believed in; and thus as if the author was selective, judgemental, about those given the benefit of the doubt using the ideology of some cause, or their own prejudice, rather than humanity, as the criteria of judgement.

As I wrote in 2012:

"could my career as an extremist have been brought to an earlier end had one or some of my opponents taken the trouble to get to know me

personally and rationally revealed to me the error of my suffering-causing, unethical, extremist ways? Perhaps; perhaps not – I admit I do not know. I do know, however, how my personal interaction with, and the ethical behaviour of, the Police I interacted with from the time of my arrest by officers from SO12 in 1998, permanently changed (for the better) my attitude toward the Police." [1]

Instead of an empathic, a human, an honourable approach the author preferred propaganda, repeating the stereotyping he used almost two decades ago. Thus my extensive writings in the past eight years about rejecting all forms of extremism, my extensive and intensely personal writings regarding my struggle to reform myself as a result of pathei-mathos, were ignored. [2]

"Thus am I humbled, once more, by such knowing feeling of the burden made from my so heavy past; so many errors, mistakes. So many to humble me here, now, by such profusion as becomes prehension of centuries past and passing, bringing as such a passing does such gifts of they now long beyond life's ending who crafted from faith, feeling, experience, living, love, those so rich presents replete with meaning; presenting thus to us if only for a moment – fleeting as Thrush there feeding – that knowing of ourselves as beings who by empathy, life, gifts, and love, can cease to be some cause of suffering.

For no longer is there such a need – never was there such a need – to cause such suffering as we, especially I, have caused. For are not we thinking thoughtful beings – possessed of the numinous will to love?

But my words, my words – so unlike such musick [Dunstable: Preco preheminiencie] – fail: such finite insubstantial things; such a weak conduit for that flowing of wordless feeling that, as such musick, betakes us far out beyond our causal selves to where we are, can be, should be, must be, the non-interfering beauty of a moment; a sublime life seeking only to so gently express that so gentle love that so much faith has sometimes so vainly so tried to capture, express, and manifest; as when that boyish man as monk past Compline knelt in gentleness to feel to become such peace, such a human happiness, as so many others have felt centuries past and present, one moment flowing so numinously to another." [3]

Yet, as I wrote some years ago,

"I harbour no resentment against individuals, or organizations, or groups, who over the past forty or so years have publicly and/or privately made negative or derogatory comments about me or published items making claims about me.

Indeed, I now find myself in the rather curious situation of not only agreeing with some of my former political opponents on many

matters, but also (perhaps) of understanding (and empathizing with) their motivation; a situation which led and which leads me to appreciate even more just how lamentable my extremism was and just how arrogant, selfish, wrong, and reprehensible, I as a person was, and how in many ways many of those former opponents were and are (ex concessio) better people than I ever was or am.

Which is one reason why I have written what I have recently written about extremism and my extremist past: so that perchance someone or some many may understand extremism, and its causes, better and thus be able to avoid the mistakes I made, avoid causing the suffering I caused; or be able to in some way more effectively counter or prevent such extremism in the future. And one reason – only one – why I henceforward must live in reclusion and *in silencio*." [4]

That I have now broken such self-imposed silence is the result of my resigned sadness regarding how far we mortals still have to travel to be able to live, en masse, empathic and compassionate lives, and of how so many individuals still – from whatever personal motive or because of some cause or ideology – promote old-world hostility toward and a stereotyping of particular individuals.

Perhaps the goddess Δίκη will touch some of those so many hostile individuals, for as Aeschylus wrote,

Δίκη δὲ τοῖς μὲν παθοῦσιν μαθεῖν ἐπιρρέπει:
τὸ μέλλον δ', ἐπεὶ γένοιτ', ἂν κλύοις: πρὸ χαιρέτω:
ἴσον δὲ τῷ προστένειν.

"Δίκη favours someone learning from adversity:
But I shall hear of what will be, after it comes into being:
Before then, I leave it,
Otherwise, it is the same as a premature grieving." [5]

Which is yet one more reason why I am still learning and still have far to travel, for that recent occurrence brought a premature grieving.

Ash Wednesday 2019

[1] *A Matter of Honour*, 2012.

[2] These writings include (i) *Just My Fallible Views, Again*, (ii) *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism* (pdf), (iii) *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos* (pdf), and the letters and essays included in (iv) *Such Respectful Wordful Offerings* (pdf).

[3] *Bright Berries, One Winter*, written 22 December 2010.

[4] *Pathei-Mathos - Genesis of My Unknowing*, written in 2012.

[5] Agamemnon, 250-253.

A Perplexing Failure To Understand

Being a slightly revised extract from a letter to friend,
with some footnotes added post scriptum

One of the multitude of things that I have, for years, failed to understand – sans any belief in an all-powerful supra-personal deity – is why I am still alive while people like Sue and Fran – and the millions of others like them – died or were killed, too early. For they neither caused any deaths nor inflicted any suffering on another living being, human and otherwise, while I – and the millions like me, worldwide – continued to live despite having so caused, directly and/or indirectly, deaths and suffering. And in my case, directly and indirectly as my documented so lamentable extremist amoral decades – of violence, hatred, incitement, of being a "theoretician of revolution/terror" – so clearly reveal.

Yet – over twenty years after the death of Sue, and almost ten years since the death of Fran – here I am, still breathing, still pontificating. And all I have – despite years of interior reflexion – is a feeling, an intuition: of the how and why our thousand of years old human culture of pathei-mathos is important because – or so it seems to me – it might bring (at least to some others) a wordless intimation of one possible answer to such a perplexing question.

For it is a culture that includes, for example, such diverse artisements as the *Oresteia* of Aeschylus, the *Lamentations of Jeremiah* by Thomas Tallis, and the life – and death – of people such as Jesse James, Mohandas K Gandhi, and Edith Cavell; and which culture, enshrined as it is in *Studia Humanitatis*, can perchance teach some of each new generation that valuable lesson about our human physis, jumelle as our physis is [1] and thus paradoxical as we honourable/dishonourable (often hubriatic) mortals are:

ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, μοῦσα, πολύτροπον, ὃς μάλα πολλὰ
πλάγχθη, ἐπεὶ Τροίης ἱερὸν πτολίεθρον ἔπερσεν:
πολλῶν δ' ἄνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄστεα καὶ νόον ἔγνω,
πολλὰ δ' ὃ γ' ἐν πόντῳ πάθεν ἄλγεα ὃν κατὰ θυμόν,
ἀρνύμενος ἥν τε ψυχὴν καὶ νόστον ἐταίρων.
ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὥς ἐτάρους ἐρρύσατο, ἰέμενός περ:
αὐτῶν γὰρ σφετέρῃσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὄλοντο,
νήπιοι, οἳ κατὰ βοῦς Ὑπερίονος Ἡελίοιο
ἦσθιον: αὐτὰρ ὁ τοῖσιν ἀφείλετο νόστιμον ἦμαρ

The Muse shall tell of the many adventures of that man
Of the many stratagems
Who, after the pillage of that hallowed citadel at Troy,
Saw the towns of many a people and experienced their ways:
He whose vigour, at sea, was weakened by many afflictions
As he strove to win life for himself and return his comrades to their
homes.
But not even he, for all this yearning, could save those comrades
For they were destroyed by their own immature foolishness
Having devoured the cattle of Helios, that son of Hyperion,
Who plucked from them the day of their returning [2]

A lesson about ourselves which so many others have attempted to communicate
to us, as recounted in a certain tragedy:

οὕτω δ' Ἀτρέως παῖδας ὁ κρείσσων
ἐπ' Ἀλεξάνδρῳ πέμπει ξένιος
Ζεὺς πολυάνορος ἀμφὶ γυναικὸς
πολλὰ παλαίσματα καὶ γυιοβαρῇ
γόνατος κονίαισιν ἐρειδομένου
διακναιομένης τ' ἐν προτελείοις
κάμακος θήσων Δαναοῖσι
Τρωσί θ' ὁμοίως. ἔστι δ' ὅπη νῦν
ἔστι: τελεῖται δ' ἐς τὸ πεπρωμένον

Thus were those sons of Atreus sent forth
By mighty Zeus, guardian of hospitality, against Alexander
On account of that woman who has had many men.
And many would be the limb-wearying combats
With knees pushed into the dirt
And spears worn-out in the initial sacrifice
Of Trojans and Danaans alike.
What is now, came to be
As it came to be. And its ending has been ordained [3]

and as described – millennia ago – by a certain poetess:

φαίνεται μοι κῆνος ἴσος θεοῖσιν
ἔμμεν' ὦνηρ, ὅττις ἐνάντιός τοι
ἰσδάνει καὶ πλάσιον ἄδυ φωνεί-
σας ὑπακούει
καὶ γελαίσας ἱμέροεν, τό μ' ἦ μὰν
καρδίαν ἐν στήθεσιν ἐπτόαισεν
ὥς γὰρ ἔς σ' ἶδω βρόχε', ὥς με φώναι-
σ' οὐδ' ἐν ἔτ' εἴκει,
ἀλλ' ἄκαν μὲν γλῶσσα <ἔαγε>, λέπτον
δ' αὐτικά χρωῖ πῦρ ὑπαδεδρόμηκεν,

ὀππάτεσσι δ' οὐδ' ἐν ὄρημ', ἐπιρρόμ-
βεισι δ' ἄκουαι,
<έκαδε μ' ἴδρωσ ψῦχος κακχέεται / καδ' δέ ἴδρωσ κακχέεται>
τρόμος δὲ
παῖσαν ἄγρει, χλωροτέρα δὲ ποίας
ἔμμι, τεθνάκην δ' ὀλίγω 'πιδεύης
φαίνομ' ἔμ' αὖται

I see he who sits near you as an equal of the gods
For he can closely listen to your delightful voice
And that seductive laugh
That makes the heart behind my breasts to tremble.
Even when I glimpse you for a moment
My tongue is stilled as speech deserts me
While a delicate fire is beneath my skin -
My eyes cannot see, then,
When I hear only a whirling sound
As I shivering, sweat
Because all of me trembles;
I become paler than drought-grass
And nearer to death [4]

and as, for example, described by the scribe of an ancient Hermetic MS:

Solum enim animal homo duplex est; et eius una pars simplex, quae,
ut Graeci aiunt οὐσιώδης, quam vocamus divinae similitudinis
formam; est autem quadruplex quod ὑλικὸν Graeci, nos mundanum
dicimus, e quo factum est corpus, quo circumtegitur illud quod in
homine divinum esse iam diximus, in quo mentis divinitas tecta sola
cum cognatis suis, id est mentis purae sensibus, secum ipsa
conquiescat tamquam muro corporis saepta.

Humans are the only species that is jumelle, with one aspect that
foundation which the Greeks termed οὐσιώδης and we describe as
being akin in appearance to divinity, and yet also being quadruplex,
termed by the Greeks ὑλικός and which we describe as worldly;
whereby from such is the corporeal [body] that, as mentioned, is of -
in humans - the divinity, and in which is that divine disposition, to
which it is solely related, that is in character a singular perceivration
and untoiling since enclosed within the corporeal. [5]

But will we - can we - mortals, en masse, read, listen, reflect, experience, and
so learn? Or will we, as our tragic history of the past three millennia so seems
to indicate, continue to be divided - individually, and en masse - between the
masculous and the muliebral; between honour and dishonour; between war and
peace; between empathy and ipseity?

I do so wish I knew. But all I have to offer, now in the fading twilight of my own

mortal life, is an appreciation (perhaps contrary, these days, to οἱ πλείονες) of what some schools, independent ('private') or otherwise, still fortunately do understand is the importance of a 'classical education', and of what may possibly be apprehended by such poor words of mine as these:

Here, sea, Skylark and such a breeze as rushes reeds
Where sandy beach meets
To meld with sky
And a tumbling cumuli of cloud
Briefly cool our Sun.

I am no one, while ageing memory flows:
For was there ever such a bliss as this
While the short night lasted
And we touched kissed meshed ourselves together
To sweat, sweating, humid,
Fearing so many times to fully open our eyes
Lest it all really was
A dream

But Dawn arrived as it then arrived bringing with its light
Loose limbs and such a reminder
As would could should did
Make us late that day for work.

So, here: a tiredness of age
Brightened by such a June as this
When sandy beach meets
To meld with sky
And that tumbling cumuli of cloud
Briefly cools a Sun

For there are so many recollections of centuries of a so human love, so many memories of years – centuries – of hubris and dishonour, that I can now only live each slowly passing daylight hour *modus vivendi*:

And the lost heart stiffens and rejoices
In the lost lilac and the lost sea voices
And the weak spirit quickens to rebel [6]

David Myatt
January 2015

[1] *Poemandres* (*Corpus Hermeticum*), 15:

καὶ διὰ τοῦτο παρὰ πάντα τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς ζῶα διπλοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ ἄνθρωπος,
θυνητὸς μὲν διὰ τὸ σῶμα, ἀθάνατος δὲ διὰ τὸν οὐσιώδη ἄνθρωπον.

ἄθάνατος γὰρ ὦν καὶ πάντων τὴν ἐξουσίαν ἔχων τὰ θνητὰ πάσχει
ὑποκείμενος τῇ εἰμαρμένῃ

Which is why, distinct among all other beings on Earth, mortals are
jumelle; deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal. Yet, although
deathless and possessing full authority, the human is still subject to
wyrd

See also Sophocles, Antigone, v. 334 & vv. 365-36:

πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ κούδ' ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ δεινότερον πέλει...
σοφὸν τι τὸ μηχανόεν τέχνας ὑπὲρ ἐλπίδ' ἔχων
τοτὲ μὲν κακόν, ἄλλοτ' ἐπ' ἐσθλὸν ἔρπει

There exists much that is strange, yet nothing
Has more strangeness than a human being...
Beyond his own hopes, his cunning
In inventive arts – he who arrives
Now with dishonour, then with chivalry

[2] Homer, Odyssey, Book 1, v. 1-9

[3] Aeschylus, Agamemnon, v. 60-68

[4] Sappho, Fragment 31

[5] Asclepius, VII, 13-20

[6] TS Eliot, Ash Wednesday

Concerning The Abstractions of Extremism and Race

In essence, I consider an abstraction to be:

"a manifestation, possibly the primary manifestation, of
the-separation-of-otherness: of a lack of empathy, and which lack
results in some distinction being made between 'them' and 'us', and
thus with some living being (human or otherwise) being assigned to
some abstract category, or group, and/or regarded as the genesis of or
some representation of some posited existing or future ideal. Often,
some abstraction – some category or some group or some ideal – is
imputed to have some value, higher/lower, in relation to some other
abstraction, with the result that some abstractions are considered to

be 'worth fighting/killing/dying for', and/or regarded as 'morally superior' to or better than other different, or vaguely different, abstractions, even if such difference is illusory and thus only 'in the eye of the believer'." *Rejecting Abstractions - A Personal Lesson From Extremism*

There is thus a difference between an abstraction and a descriptor. A descriptor is just a word used to describe something which already exists and which is personally observed or is discovered, whereas an abstraction by its nature is: a generalization; a hypothesis; a posited thing; an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing; or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalizations based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed.

Or expressed simply, a descriptor describes what-is as 'it' already is, according to its *φύσις* (physis: its nature, its being) and in accordance with wu-wei; whereas an abstraction denotes what is presumed/assumed/idealized, past or present or future. A descriptor relies on, is derived from, describes, individual knowing and individual judgement; an abstraction relies on something abstract, impersonal, such as some opinion/known/judgement of others or some assumptions, theory, or hypothesis made by others.

In relation to human beings, abstraction involves an assigning of individuals to some abstract category or group, and then interpreting or judging or describing those individuals according to the criteria posited for that category or group. This results in an impersonal, fallacious, presumptuous, 'knowledge' concerning those individuals, and amounts to a dehumanizing of those individuals, for a genuine knowing of them requires a personal interaction with them over a period of time and of necessity the use of the very individual faculty of empathy in the immediacy-of-the-living-moment.

Thus, as a result of such a personal knowing, an individual might be described as kind, with 'kind' being a descriptor, and neutral. As a result of using abstractions, an individual might be described as Caucasian, or as Muslim, with the abstraction, the category, Caucasian or Muslim by its nature as an abstraction imputing or conveying to others certain attributes and characteristics (of appearance, life, personality, and so on) which may or may not apply to the individual so described.

Also, and most importantly, all human manufactured abstractions ignore The Cosmic Perspective - our place in the Cosmos - and thus are a manifestation of hubris, of our arrogance, our insolence. For we human beings are simply one fragile mortal biological life-form on one planet orbiting one star in one galaxy in a Cosmos of billions of galaxies; our abstractions merely the opinionated product of our limited fallible earth-bound so-called 'intelligence', an 'intelligence', an understanding, we foolishly, arrogantly, pridefully have a

tendency to believe in, have faith in, and exalt.

Extremist and Extremism

Are 'extremism' and 'extremist' abstractions? Personally I do not believe that they are, since I regard those terms as but useful descriptions of the character, the nature, of certain individuals and of their deeds; with such character and such deeds already having been revealed by the actions, by the life, of such individuals.

In effect, 'extremist' and 'extremism' are not ideals, but descriptors of what is known or revealed through observation and a personal knowing. A function of the empathic-knowing of an individual as that individual is.

As a result of some forty years of practical experience as an activist, I consider that an 'extremist' is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of an objective that is usually considered to be of a political or of a religious nature. Hence, for me, *extremism* is the result of such harshness as well as the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists.

Thus, and I believe quite correctly, I have described myself - categorized myself - as an extremist, as a promoter of extremism, both during my neo-nazi years and during my years propagating a harsh interpretation of Islam, an interpretation which included supporting bin Laden and the Taliban, supporting and promoting 'martyrdom operations' ('suicide attacks' by Muslims) and thus supporting and promoting attacks on, and the killing of, non-combatants.

Relevant questions here include the following: (1) Are racism and the promotion of impersonal hatred immoral, bad, harsh? (2) Is the targeting and killing of non-combatants (including women and children) immoral, harsh? According to my criteria - the criteria of my weltanschauung, The Numinous Way - the answer is that they are immoral, bad; they are divisive, impersonal (unempathic), a harsh (an extreme) manifestation of the error, the hubris, that is the-separation-of-otherness. For what is moral is compassion, the peace - the gentleness - of a personal shared love; what is fair, honourable, kind; what manifests the gentility of wu-wei, what manifests the empathic knowing of individuals in the immediacy-of-the-moment.

In the simple sense, all individuals we do not personally know - whom we have not interacted with personally and who thus are unknown to us via, who are inaccessible to, our faculty of empathy - are or should be presumed to be 'innocent', unjudged. Given the benefit of the doubt. For that is the fair, the honourable, the empathic, the humane, thing to do. Thus to promote impersonal goals and objectives - abstractions such as 'suicide attacks' or the hatred and prejudice of racism - which badly affect, harshly impinge upon, which hurt, injure, or kill people we do not know, is assuredly wrong.

My character during my extremist years - or at least the dominant part of my character at the time - was certainly harsh or tended toward being harsh, since my motivation was to harshly pursue, if necessary by violent means, some harsh impersonal goal, some harsh impersonal objective, to engage in activities, with the aim of trying to bring that goal, that objective into-being; with the attainment of that goal, that objective, having immoral priority over virtues such as personal love, personal happiness, compassion, empathy, peace, kindness, and honour. In effect, my life - my deeds, my behaviour, my words (spoken and written) - revealed, proved, that I was indeed an extremist promoting extremism; that I was immoral; that I acted unethically and that I promoted and championed and violently strived for what was wrong.

There is thus in my case - and in the case of others like me - only an acknowledgement of the facts and a recognition of what is moral and what is immoral. For the criteria used are proven deeds, a character directly revealed - individual to individual - by such deeds, and a knowing, an acceptance, by us of what is immoral, bad, wrong.

Race

As mentioned in *FAQ About The Numinous Way* dated 9/March/2012 -

" Race is a manifestation of the causal separation-of-otherness, and thus contradicts empathy and the intuitive knowing of and sympathy with *the living other* that individual empathy provides or can make us aware of.

The notion of race separates, divides, human beings into manufactured lifeless categories which nullify the empathic knowing of individual human beings. Such assignment of individuals to a posited abstract category - some assumed 'race' or sub-race - is irrelevant, since individual human beings are or have the potential to be unique individual human beings, so that such an assignment, whatever the alleged reason, is a dehumanizing of those individuals. For our humanity is expressed by an individual and personal knowing of individuals, by a personal interaction with others on the basis of respect, tolerance, reason, and honour, and which personal knowledge of them renders their alleged or assumed ethnicity or ancestry irrelevant."

A human being is an individual person who is unique or who has the capacity to be unique, the capacity to develop their uniqueness. Those human beings, those unique individuals, who are not personally known to us, are because they are unknown to us - being thus unseen, unfelt, by our sense, our faculty, of

empathy - cannot, should not, be judged by us, or be the subject of or assessed using the assumptions made by us or presented to us by others whether in spoken or in written form. Such is the foundation of The Numinous Way, of the personal weltanschauung I have developed by means of pathei-mathos, where empathy via a direct and extended personal knowing is regarded as the only moral way to really know, to assess, an individual, to discover their physis, their character.

Thus the alleged or assumed 'race' of a person is irrelevant; unimportant. To assume things about someone on the basis of their alleged or assumed 'race' is wrong, contrary to the ethic of empathy and to the honour, the fairness, the compassion, that manifest the knowing that empathy teaches and reveals to us. For 'race' is a supra-personal categorization, an impersonal large-scale grouping, in which the human faculty of empathy, and thus a direct personal knowing of individuals, play no part.

Furthermore, 'race' - however defined - is an abstraction. An ideal and/or a generalization, and a generalization which even taxonomically has no relevance. Thus, even the observed physical, physiological, genetic - the biological - characteristics which have been said to or are alleged to differentiate one human race from another and thus to possibly define separate human races are irrelevant because such differentiation or definitions are by their very nature medians, or assumptions extrapolated from limited data, or an interpretation of data according to a hypothesis, and all of which data are static, time-dependant, relating as they do to a perceived or an assumed commonality existing or alleged to exist 'now' or at some static moment in time but which perceived or assumed commonality did not necessarily exist in the past and will probably, almost certainly, not exist in the future.

For in reality humans change, through social interaction and migration, over millennia so that, for example, some posited so-called 'race' said to exist now in some specific geographic location did not exist twenty thousand years ago (probably not even ten thousand years ago) and the peoples allegedly said to be of this race are and always have been in flux, changing, adapting, assimilating, being assimilated, migrating.

To define such a static 'race' there has to be assumptions made about 'when' it allegedly came into being and about what median values are used to determine if a specific individual 'belongs to' such a race.

But all life - human and otherwise - changes, is subject to change, is in flux. Life changes as it changes [1] and has changed as it has been changed. This is the wisdom of wu-wei; of the physis of things: of beings, of life. To make some posited category the 'ideal' and thus to impute an importance to, and try to preserve, such a static impermanent human-manufactured impersonal 'thing' over and above the flux of life, over and above the wu-wei of individuals, over and above the morality of empathy, compassion, fairness, and over and above

the wu-wei of love, is wrong, inhuman, immoral, contrary to the physis of life itself. It is hubris, an ignorance of, or an arrogant disregarding of, The Cosmic Perspective, and thus is a cause of suffering because it upsets the natural balance, the natural harmony, of life.

March 2012

Notes

[1]

ἔστι δ' ὅπη νῦν
ἔστι: τελεῖται δ' ἐς τὸ πεπρωμένον:
οὔθ' ὑποκαίων οὔθ' ὑπολείβων
οὔτε δακρύων ἀπύρων ἱερῶν
ὀργὰς ἀτενεῖς παραθέλξει

Aesch. Ag. 67-71

What is now, came to be
As it came to be. And its ending has been ordained.
No concealed laments, no concealed libations,
No unburnt offering
Can charm away that firm resolve

Acknowledgement: This text summarizes my replies to questions submitted to me in - or which arose during - recent correspondence with several individuals, some of whom raised various objections to my Numinous Way, especially in relation to the concept of 'race' and my use of terms such as 'extremist' and 'extremism'.

Some Notes on The Politics and Ideology of Hate

Part One: According to the Philosophy of The Numinous Way

Introduction

The ethical criteria of The Numinous Way will be used to consider the politics ^[1] and the ideology ^[2] of hate - that is, to consider: (i) those beliefs and/or ideas which produce or which engender or which incite ^[3] in people an intense dislike of or an extreme or violent aversion to some other people or group and/or of or toward opposing beliefs and/or toward opposing ideas; and (ii) the actions and the political activities of those motivated by or pursuing some ideology that inclines them toward hatred or which produces hatred.

Specific examples will be restricted to two sets of beliefs/ideas, firstly that conventionally termed 'extreme right-wing'/fascist/neo-nazi, and secondly that conventionally termed radical Islam^[4], and so restricted for the simple reason that I have personal practical experience of such beliefs/ideas and have also studied them in detail. In the former case, my experience and study amounts to some thirty years; in the latter case, to around nine years.

The Criteria of The Numinous Way

The criteria of The Numinous Way is the revealing - the insight, the knowing, the understanding, the feeling - that the faculty of empathy provides when we, as an individual, personally interact with another living being over a certain period of time. What is thus discovered by means of empathy is *sympatheia* - a numinous sympathy with the-living-other - and how, as an individual, we are an affecting connexion to all life, and thus how our assumed separation, as an individual, is an illusion, a manifestation of hubris. We therefore become aware of how we affect or can affect others; how they affect or can affect us; and of how their suffering, their pain, their joy, their grief, is ours beyond the barrier of our inner and our outer egoist.

This discovery, this revealing, thus inclines us toward compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, love, tolerance, peace, fairness, wu-wei ^[5], and toward being non-judgemental in respect of those we do not personally know and thus have no experience of, have had no empathic contact with. For it is empathy - the close and the extended personal interaction with individuals, on an individual basis, that empathy requires - that is the natural and the moral way of assessing, of really knowing, another human being.

This means two important things. First, that we treat human beings in a human way - that is, as individuals, recognizing that they are unique or have the potential to become unique; that they, like us, can and do suffer pain, grief, sadness, joy; that they, like us, have hopes, dreams. Second, that all individuals we do not personally know are or should be presumed to be 'innocent', unjudged, and so are to be given the benefit of the doubt; for this presumption of innocence - until personal experience and empathic individual knowing of them prove otherwise - is the fair, the honourable, the moral thing to do.

The Ideology and Politics of Hate

For an ideology to cause, provoke, or incite hatred - or which inclines people toward hatred or which of itself embodies hate - it is logical to assume that there has to be two components at work given that hatred is an intense personal emotion which can predispose a person or persons toward or cause anger and thence violence, and given that an ideology by its nature is supra-personal, that is, a coherent, organized, and distinctive set of beliefs and/or ideas or ideals.

My experience leads me to suggest that the first component is prideful identity, and that the second component is the ideal, the goal, of the ideology. For this given and accepted identity is always supra-personal and always imparts a needed sense of belonging, a meaning to life, just as the goal, the ideal, involves individuals committing themselves in a manner which vivifies, removes doubt, and imparts a sense of purpose, with the result that individuality becomes subsumed with duty and loyalty to the goal, the ideal, given a high priority in the life of the individual.

Ideologies such as National-Socialism - new or old - and radical Islam are predicated on identity, a pride in that identity, and on the need to affirm that identity through practical deeds. In the case of National-Socialism, there is a personal identification with one's assumed race, a pride in what is believed to be the achievements and the potential of this race, and a desire to aid one's race and its 'destiny' by opposing 'race-mixing'. In the case of radical Islam, there is the sense of belonging to the Ummah, a 'comradeship', a certain pride in Islam and its superiority; a feeling of the need to undertake or at least support Jihad, and a desire to counter the kuffar in practical ways, all deriving from the belief that this is what Allah has commanded we do.

The identity so assumed or presumed produces or can produce resentment, anger - caused by a perceived or a felt disparity between *the now* and *the assumed ideal*, past or future.

For an essential part of such ideologies is that it is believed that in the past some posited ideal community or society or people or way of life existed and that the present is a deviation from or a loss of the 'perfection' that then existed; a deviation or a loss that the ideology explains by the assumption of a simple cause and effect, or several simple causes and effects, a simple linearity between *the now* and *the goal* (future) and/or the idealized past. Thus the problems or the conditions of the present are assumed to have certain identifiable supra-personal causes, just as the path to the goal is regarded as requiring that those causes be dealt with. In addition, these causes are often or mostly the work of 'others'; not our fault, but instead the result of 'our enemies', and/or of some opposing ideology. That is, someone, or some many, or some 'thing', is or are to blame.

Hence in order to return to this past perfection - or in order to create a new form of this past perfection, this past ideal, or in order to create a new perfection inspired by some past ideal - our enemies, and/or opposing ideologies and those adhering to them, must be dealt with. There must therefore be struggle; the notion of future victory; and at the very least political activity and propaganda directed toward political goals - a moving toward regaining the authority, the power, the influence which supporters of an ideology believe or assume they and their kind have lost and which they almost invariably believe are now 'in the hands of their enemies' and/or of traitors and 'heretics'.

In effect, perceived enemies, those having authority/power, and those perceived as adhering to opposing or detrimental ideologies/beliefs or living in a manner seen as detrimental, become dehumanized, are judged en masse in a prejudiced manner, and become disliked, with this dislike naturally - because of the struggle for 'victory' - becoming intolerance, harshness, and thence, almost invariably at some time, turning to anger thence to hatred with such hatred often resulting in violence against individual 'enemies'. ^[6]

Such hatred and intolerance are the natural, the inevitable, consequence of all ideologies founded on notions of identity which glorify past glories or assumed past perfections, which posit some abstract goal or some future ideal and which involve a struggle against enemies to achieve such a goal or such an ideal.

For there is symbiosis, an empowering of the individual, with the very notion of identity and meaning being dependant on notions about past glories, on inclusion/exclusion, on notions of superiority/inferiority, on posited enemies, on obstacles, and of a striving, a struggle, for an ideal, for some posited goal. And vice versa. This is the intoxicating elixir of extremism, a symbiosis born of, which engenders and which flourishes on division, divide, intolerance, pride, struggle, goals, and hate; a division, divide, an intolerance, a hatred, that possibly are at their worst, their most vitriolic, when based on ethnicity, or involve religions, or involve perceived or assumed 'heretical' divisions within a religion.

In terms of nazi and neo-nazi ideology for example, Aryans are and have been 'the light-bearers of civilization'; the enemies are the Jews and their machinations, inferior non-Aryan races, and ideologies such as 'multi-culturalism' and liberalism; while the goal is a racially pure Aryan nation, and/or a strong and militarized National-Socialist State with a mission, a destiny, to 'civilize' the world through kampf.

In terms of modern right-wing extremism, as manifest for example by certain nationalist political groups in European countries, the 'civilization of the West' - in which many such groups now include Israel ^[7] - is the ideal because it is morally superior; the enemies (the hated inferiors) are Muslims and other 'immigrants'; with an idealized and resurgent 'European culture and identity' (manifest in strong nation-States of 'native Europeans' and/or in a return to communities based on 'European traditions') having replaced the nazi/fascist ideal of a National-Socialist/Fascist State and with 'past glories' celebrated and idealized and used to motivate and inspire pride and develop a sense of urgency about the 'threat' posed by enemies and by the loss of national/cultural 'identity'.

In terms of radical Islam, the enemies (the hated inferiors) are Amerika, Israel, Muslim collaborators, and decadent kuffar, with the goal being a resurgent Khilafah or at least the implementation of Shariah as the only law at first in

Muslim lands and then elsewhere.

A Numinous Approach

Activists and even many supporters of such ideologies find meaning, worth, identity, empowerment, in the inclusion, in the collectivity, the belonging, that such ideologies assert or assume, and thus their knowing of themselves and of others, and thence their 'ethics' (or lack of ethics) are or become determined by the boundaries set by such ideologies. The boundaries of enemies; of traitors; of those 'different from us/inferior to us'; of obstacles to be overcome in the struggle toward victory; of sacrifice for the cause; of conformity to guidelines for living laid down by a leader or leaders or ideologues or 'the party' or set out in some political programme, or book, or tract, or speech, or manifesto.

What therefore is lost or tends to become lost because of such boundaries, such collectivity, is empathy; wu-wei; notions of the innocence - the non-judgement - of those we do not personally know; *sympatheia* with others on an individual basis; and a desire to treat every human being as an individual sans all ideological boundaries, sans all prejudice, sans abstractions of inclusion/exclusion, sans all notions of 'them' and 'us', and sans all rhetoric and propaganda about a struggle for victory, and about the 'urgency of the situation'.

For such ideologies manifest *the-separation-of-otherness* and which error of hubris is the foundation, the essence, of all abstractions^[8], and which *separation-of-otherness* is the genesis of supra-personal, ideological, hatred and intolerance, usurping as such ideologies do with their collective empowerment and their supra-personal authority the empathy of the individual, the unique individual judgement that arises from such empathy, the necessity of interior personal spiritual (numinous) development, and the wu-wei, the compassion, the fairness, the tolerance, the humanity, that empathy by its revealing inclines us toward.

As such, those ideologies, born of and manifesting hubris, ignoring or disrespectful as they are of the numinous, and attempting as they do to redefine the ethical, are therefore - it seems to me - immoral, and lamentable.

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Notes

[1] Politics, as used here, means both of the following, according to context. (i) The theory and practice of governance, with governance itself founded on two fundamental assumptions; that of some minority - a government (elected or unelected), some military authority, some oligarchy, some ruling elite, some tyrannos, or some leader - having or assuming authority (and thus power and influence) over others, and with that authority being exercised over a specific

geographic area or territory. (ii) The activities of those individuals or groups whose aim or whose intent is to obtain and exercise some authority or some control over - or to influence - a society or sections of a society by means which are organized and directed toward changing/reforming that society or sections of a society in accordance with a particular ideology.

Ideology, as used here, means a coherent, organized, and distinctive set of beliefs and/or ideas or ideals, and which beliefs and/or ideas and/or ideals pertain to governance, and/or to society, and/or to matters of a philosophical or a spiritual nature.

The term society, as used here, means a collection of people who live in a specific geographic area or areas and whose association or interaction is mostly determined by a shared set of guidelines or principles or beliefs, irrespective of whether these are written or unwritten, and irrespective of whether such guidelines/principles/beliefs are willingly accepted or accepted on the basis of acquiescence.

[2] For the usage, here, of the term ideology see footnote 1.

[3] Incitement is used here in the sense of 'to instigate' or to provoke or to cause or to 'urge others to'.

[4] By radical Islam is meant the belief that practical Jihad against 'the enemies of Islam' and the occupiers of Muslim lands is an individual duty incumbent upon every able-bodied Muslim; that Muslims should live among Muslims under the guidance of Shariah; that Muslims should return to the pure guidance of Quran and Sunnah and distance themselves from the ways and the influence of the kuffar. Many radical Muslims also support the restoration of the Khilafah and are intolerant of those Muslims they consider have allied themselves with the kuffar.

[5] Wu-wei is an important part of The Numinous Way, with the term being used to mean a personal 'letting-be' deriving from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive - that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous.

In practice, wu-wei is the cultivation of a certain (empathic, numinous) perspective - that life, things/beings, change, flow, exist, in certain natural ways which we human beings cannot change however hard we might try; that such a hardness of human trying, a belief in such hardness, is unwise, un-natural, upsets the natural balance and can cause misfortune/suffering for us and/or for others, now or in the future. Thus success lies in discovering the inner nature

(the physis) of things/beings/ourselves and gently, naturally, slowly, working with this inner nature, not striving against it.

[6] One aspect of all extremist ideologies, of the politics and ideologies of hate, that has intrigued me for some time is their explicit or their implicit patriarchal ethos; their masculine bias; their stridency, their lack of not only empathy but also of those qualities that are ineluctably feminine, caring, nurturing, and thus which tend toward balancing the hubriatic male qualities such as harshness, fanaticism, *kampf*, and militarism, which such ideologies laud.

This bias toward overt masculinity, toward machismo, possibly explains why such harsh, such extremist ideologies - and often the supporters of such ideologies - dislike, are intolerant of, or even hate, pacifists, Sapphic ladies, gay men, and even sensitive artistic men who are not gay.

[7] The support for Israel by such groups has led to some political commentators regarding such support by such extremists as either cynical opportunism or as some attempt to gain political credibility and thus an attempt to distance themselves from nazism and fascism even though their whole agenda, their trumpeting of 'European civilization and culture', their nationalism, their dislike of 'immigrants' and especially of Muslims, seems to place them within the sphere of those ideologies. For instance, these extremists seem to have simply made Muslims, and 'immigrants' in general, the 'new Jews'.

[8] The Numinous Way understands an abstraction as the manufacture, and use of, some idea, ideal, 'image', form, or category, and thus some generalization about, and/or some assignment of an individual or individuals - and/or some being, some 'thing' - to some group or category with the implicit acceptance of the separateness, in causal Space-Time, of such a being/beings/things /individuals. This assignment of human beings to some abstraction (some abstract category) - such as Negro or Jew or 'traitor' or 'heretic' or 'prostitute' - always involves either some pejorative judgement being made about an individual on the basis of the qualities or the attributes that are believed or assumed to belong to that abstraction, or some idealization/glorification of those so assigned (such as some idealized 'Aryan race').

The positing of some 'perfect' or 'ideal' form, category, or thing, is part of abstraction.

Thus understood, abstraction encompasses terms such as ideology, idea, dogmatic/harsh beliefs, and ideals.

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Part Two

A Personal Perspective - My Uncertainty of Knowing

The Bad of Extremists

For some forty years, from 1968 to around 2008, I as a fanatical idealist placed some ideal - some illusory, some believed in perfection - before people, hubristically believing (as fanatics and extremists always seem to do) that some ideology ^[1] and its attempted implementation was more important than personal love, than fairness, than compassion, than kindness, than tolerance, than empathy, than peace, than wu-wei.

Thus, as a fanatical idealist, I was so dissatisfied, so discontented, with the societies of the West - especially with the society I regarded as my homeland, the United Kingdom - that I actively sought to undermine and change them by political and revolutionary means, by incitement to disaffection and even by terror.

For the first thirty years of this discontent (1968-1998) my desire was to establish, in Britain, a neo-nazi - a racist - society, believing as I did in the superiority of 'the Aryan race' and enamoured as I was of National-Socialist Germany and of Hitler's struggle for power between 1919 and 1933. Thus the idealized, the romanticized, National-Socialism I believed in and the historically-inaccurate NS Germany I admired were my inspiration, and with the dedication and the hardness and harshness of a fanatic, an extremist, I joined several racist, fascist, neo-nazi, and paramilitary organizations; engaged in street brawls, wrote and distributed propaganda, gave vitriolic speeches; organized demonstrations, incited hatred and violence; founded two new neo-nazi groups; was imprisoned for violence and arrested nearly a dozen times for a variety of other criminal offences.

Between 1998 and 2008 - following my conversion to Islam - my activities were directed toward undermining the societies of the West (and especially those of Britain and America) and toward aiding Muslims fighting elsewhere - undertaking Jihad - for the establishment, in their lands, of Shariah as the only law.

During these forty extremist years I ranted and I railed against what I believed were 'the problems of the West', the 'decadence of the West', and propagandistically trumpeted the ideal type of society I believed in and thus considered was better than all existing societies. During my neo-nazi years, this ideal, this idealized, society was a new National-Socialist one, an ideal that I in perhaps some small way helped create through voluminous writings written during the 1990's with titles such as *The Meaning of National-Socialism*, *Why National-Socialism Is Not Racist*, and *The Complete Guide to the Aryan Way of*

Life. During my Jihadi-supporting years, this ideal, this idealized, society was one inspired by the Khilafah and was to be established in some Muslim land or lands by a return to the pure guidance of Quran and Sunnah, and by Jihad 'against apostates, and the kuffar and their collaborators'.

The error here - the error I persisted in for some forty years - is the error of faulty, unbalanced, judgement, deriving from extremism and hubris; an error that leads to, that develops, that nurtures, bad individuals and thus leads to inhumanity, to violence, prejudice, anger, discontent, hatred, brutality, terrorism. An error caused both by the distorted view of people and of existing societies that extremist ideologies cause or at least encourage, and by some ideal, some ideology, being cherished more than human beings.

For the personal fault of extremists seems to be that of being unable and/or unwilling to view, to consider, the good that exists in people, in society, and/or of ignoring the potential for good, or change toward the good, which is within people, within society, within what-is. To prefer the dream in their head to reality; and/or to prefer the struggle, the strife, the conflict, to stability and peace; and/or to need or to desire repeated stimulation/excitement. One cause of such things could, in my view - from my experience - be the inability or the unwillingness of a person, an extremist, to develop and use their own individual judgement, as well as the inability or the unwillingness to take individual, moral, responsibility for their actions and for the effects those actions personally have upon people. Thus violence, prejudice, hatred, brutality, killing, and terror, are not judged by the moral criteria of how they affect and harm people but instead by whether they aid the goal - the implementation of the cherished ideal - or, worst of all, by whether they provide excitement and/or provide the individual with a sense of purpose, a 'destiny', a sense of being special, a 'hero' to their kindred extremists, or at least of being remembered.

In my own case, I justified what I did - my extremism - by appeals to the goal I ardently believed in and ardently desired, and thus ignored or overlooked or dismissed as unimportant the many benefits that Western societies provide and have provided, concentrating instead on the faults, the problems, of such societies, or on assumed faults and problems. In addition, and most importantly, I arrogantly felt I 'knew', that I 'understood' - that I, or my cherished beliefs, my ideology, were right; correct, *the* solution to all problems, personal and of society, and that these problems urgently needed to be dealt with. There was, therefore, a desire in me to interfere, to act, based on this arrogant misplaced feeling of having 'the right answers', of being right; of having 'seen the flaws' in society and/or in people.

In addition, my judgement derived from, was based on, was dependant upon, The Cause, the ideology; and so was unbalanced, bad, flawed. For The Cause, the ideology, gave meaning and set the boundaries, the limits, of knowing, of doing. For example, in the case of National-Socialism, there was the boundary of duty, which was "to promote National-Socialism [and] to strive to act in

accord with Nature's will by preserving, defending and evolving one's own folk."^[2] There was the meaning of 'pursuing idealism/excellence/the will of Nature' over and above 'personal happiness' as well as the need to 'overthrow the existing System based on materialism'^[3]. There was the knowing that 'race and Nature' defined us as human beings so that our most essential knowledge was to know our kind, our 'destiny', and the 'will of Nature', a will manifest, for example, in *kampf* and idealized in such abstractions as 'a new Reich', *Homo Galactica*, a Galactic Imperium, and so on and so forth.

The flawed judgement, the lack of critical balance - the lack of humanity - that resulted meant that I did not take individual responsibility for the harm I caused, I inflicted, I incited. Instead, I shifted the responsibility onto the ideology, thus justifying or trying to justify the consequences of my deeds, of my incitement, by appeals to the ideology ('the end justifies the means') and by the belief that the ideology needed to be urgently implemented 'for the good of the people', with 'the people' of course always being viewed abstractly (as a race or folk), being idealized or romanticized and divorced from, or more usually considered as being built from, the harsh consequences of striving to implement such a harsh ideology.

Therefore, it seems to me now that a reasonable illustration of extremism might be to liken it to some contagious disease, some sickness, or some ailment. One that alters not only the behaviour of individuals but also their perception, their thinking; how they perceive the world; and one that inclines them toward being bad and toward ignoring the good that already exists in society and the credit due to society for aiding such good. A disease or an ailment or a sickness that inclines them toward acting in an unbalanced and unethical manner, disruptive to other people and disruptive to society, and careless of, or indifferent to, the harm they do, the suffering they cause.

The Good of Society

The simple truth of the present and so evident to me now - in respect of the societies of the West, and especially of societies such as those currently existing in America and Britain - is that for all their problems and all their flaws they seem to be much better than those elsewhere, and certainly better than what existed in the past. That is, that there is, within them, a certain tolerance; a certain respect for the individual; a certain duty of care; and certainly still a freedom of life, of expression, as well as a standard of living which, for perhaps the majority, is better than elsewhere in the world and most certainly better than existed there and elsewhere in the past.

In addition, there are within their structures - such as their police forces, their governments, their social and governmental institutions - people of good will, of humanity, of fairness, who strive to do what is good, right. Indeed, far more good people in such places than bad people, so that a certain balance, the balance of goodness, is maintained even though occasionally (but not for long)

that balance may seem to waver somewhat.

Furthermore, many or most of the flaws, the problems, within such societies are recognized and openly discussed, with a multitude of people of good will, of humanity, of fairness, dedicating themselves to helping those affected by such flaws, such problems. In addition, there are many others trying to improve those societies, and to trying find or implement solutions to such problems, in tolerant ways which do not cause conflict or involve the harshness, the violence, the hatred, of extremism. ^[4]

This truth about the good ^[5] in our current societies, so evident now, leads me to ask how could I not have seen it before? How can extremists, in general, not see, understand, appreciate, this truth? How can they - as I once did - seek to destroy that balance; destroy all that such societies, despite their flaws and their problems, have achieved? How can they ignore the good work of the plethora of individuals seeking to change those societies for the better in a reasoned and tolerant manner?

I can only, in truth, answer for myself, based on some years of introspection. As an extremist in thrall to an ideology and thus seeking to disrupt, change, to overthrow an existing society - to incite disaffection - I had no reason, no incentive, to emphasize the good that had and has been wrought by successive governments, by the introduction of laws, and by the people, such as the police and the security services, who in their majority tried from the best of motives to do and to uphold what was good by striving to counter and bring to justice those who were bad, those who in some way harmed or sought to harm others from whatever motive and for whatever reason.

Indeed, I was for the most part wilfully ignorant of this good, and when mention or experience of it could not be ignored for some reason, or might prove useful for propaganda purposes, what was good was almost always attributed to something which the parameters of the ideology allowed for. For instance, the good actions of an heroic policeman would be judged by the parameters of whether he was 'Aryan' - in which case 'the good' resulted from him being Aryan, having an Aryan nature - or whether those actions in some way, however small, helped 'us' and our Cause, as for example if the person in question had dealt with and caught 'black people' rioting or committing crimes. There was thus a biased, a blinkered, a prejudiced, a bigoted view of both events and people.

In my own case, and for example, I have some forty years experience of interaction with the police, from ordinary constables and detectives, to custody sergeants, to officers from specialist branches such as SO12, SO13, and crime squads. During that time, I have known far more good police officers than bad - corrupt - ones. Furthermore, I realized that most of those I came into contact with were good individuals, motivated by the best of intentions, who were trying to do their best, often under difficult circumstances, and often to help victims of

dishonourable deeds, catch those responsible for such deeds, and/or prevent such deeds.

But what did I during my extremist years attribute their honourable motivation, their good character, to? Yes, of course - to them being 'Aryans' who just happened to be in the police force. Or, on one occasion, to having an 'Aryan nature' (accorded honorary Aryan status) even though the officer in question was 'of mixed race'... Thus the ideology I adhered to, I believed in, set the parameters of my judgement; prompted the correct ideological response ^[6].

But in truth they, those officers, as one of them once said to me, were guided by what 'was laid down' and did not presume to or tried hard not to overstep their authority; guided as they were by the law, that accumulated received wisdom of what was and is good in society; a law which (at least in Britain and so far as I know) sought to embody a respect for what was fair and which concept of fairness was and always has been (again, at least in Britain and so far as I know) untainted, uncorrupted, by any political ideology.

Now I know, I understand, I appreciate, that for that reason - of so being mindful of the limits of their authority, of being guided by what had been laid down over decades - those people, those police officers, were far better individuals than the arrogant, the hubristic, extremist I was; an arrogant extremist who by and for himself presumed 'to know' what was right, who presumed to understand, who presumed he possessed the ability, the authority, and the right to judge everyone and everything, and who because of such arrogance, such hubris, most certainly continued to contribute to the cycle of suffering, ignoring thus for so long as he in his unbalance did the wisdom that Aeschylus gave to us in *The Oresteia*.

Balance and The Uncertainty of Knowing

One error of unbalance and of hubris - and an error which is one of the foundations of extremism - is that of allowing or of encouraging some imagined, idealized, or posited, future to affect one's judgement, and/or to determine one's actions, and behaviour in the present.

Thus one becomes not only dissatisfied with what-is, but concerned with - if not to some extent obsessed with - what *should-be* or what *might-be* if what should-be (the goal or ideal of the extremist ideology) is not realized or not fought for. Furthermore, this assumed *what-might-be* is often the result of someone making some generalization or some prediction based on some ideology and which ideology, being an ideology - an abstraction - is founded on the simplicity of linear cause-and-effect and of problems/enemies having to be dealt with in order for some perfect future or some ideal or some victory to be achieved or brought-into-being. That is, *what-might-be* - and extremist action and incitement based upon it - requires a certainty of knowing.

This is one error I persisted in even after - as a result of pathei-mathos - I began to fully develop my philosophy of The Numinous Way with its emphasis on empathy, compassion, humility, and personal honour. An error which, for example, led to me, for some two or more years, to eviscerate the abstraction of 'the clan' as some sort of embodiment of 'the numinous' and of honour and as an idealized means of manufacturing a new type of society as if such a future, such an assumed, hypothesized, society might offset some of the suffering in the world.

An error which the uncertainty of empathic knowing most certainly reveals. For empathy - the living, the numinous, way to know another living being - is a sympathia, sans all ideations, with a living being in the immediacy-of-the-moment and involves an individualized proximity, and thus discovers only the knowing of that one living being as that living being is in that one moment, or those moments, of empathy. A discovery applicable to only that specific being and a knowing which some future empathic discovery in respect of that same being might change. For living beings are subject to change; their life is a flow, possessed of an a-causal living nature; and thus another encounter with that same living being may reveal it changed, altered - perhaps better, or matured - in some manner. Certainly, in respect of human beings, pathei-mathos is or can be a vector of interior change.

Thus, the faculty of empathy - over a succession of moments linked in causal time by a duration of days, weeks, or months - may intimate to us something about the character, the nature, the physis, of another person. A subsequent meeting with that individual - months, years, later - may intimate a change in that nature, possibly as a result of pathei-mathos.

There thus arises the knowing of the wu-wei, the humanity, of empathy; a knowing of the transient, the a-causal, nature of the living-knowing, the revealing, the a-causal knowledge, that empathy may provide, and hence the need not to judge, not to prejudge, some past or future living being (or even the same being once known) unknown to, or as yet untouched by, such empathy or by another empathic encounter. For certitude of knowing - presumed, assumed, or otherwise - is causal, fixed, or the result of some posited linear extrapolation of such a static causal knowing into the future or back into some past.

Extremism - of whatever type - depends on this certitude of knowing, past and future, and which certitude amounts to a tyranny against the flow of life; certainly there is a lack of empathy, as well as the imposition of and thence the cultivation of a rigid harshness within the psyche of the individual which at best displaces, or which can displace, the human capacity for pathei-mathos, and which at worst may remove the capacity for pathei-mathos.

The future certitude of this hubristic knowing is the given and fixed goal or ideal; and the certitude of struggle being necessary to reach that future goal or

make real that ideal. The past certitude is of a given idealized past and/or of past glories (if indeed they were glories). And the present certitude is that of identity - of 'we' being different from and better than 'them'. A certitude of identity and of assumed difference that gives rise to prejudice, hatred, intolerance, and all the other characteristics of the extremist.

Thus, for a neo-nazi or a racist, 'Aryans' (or 'Whites') are regarded as superior to 'blacks' and Jews, and the 'separation of the races' is regarded as the ideal goal. This superiority is a given, an affirmed, certitude, and regarded as fixed, past, present, future, and applicable to most if not all of the 'inferior' group or groups. There is thus no uncertainty of knowing in the individual; no interior balance; no wu-wei; no empathic discovery of the character, the nature, the physis, of other individuals as individuals in the immediacy-of-the moment; no allowance made for change, even by *pathei-mathos*. There is only harshness; generalization, supposition, assumption; a rigid adherence; the arrogance of certainty, of 'knowing' some are superior/inferior, that there is black/white, Aryan/Jew; that separation is 'necessary' and desirable. A need for stasis, and/or the desire to inhumanly try to make living, changing, individual, human beings fit some static category and thence the prejudice and intolerance and hatred based on or resulting from such an assumed or idealized static category.

As I know from my own experience, the certitude of knowing and the certitude of identity that an ideology provides displaces personal love, fairness, compassion, kindness, tolerance, empathy, peace, and wu-wei; or at least assigns to them a far lower importance than hate, injustice, harshness, intolerance, prejudice, strife, and disaffection to society, to what-is. Such certitude, such a lack of the humanity of empathy, also provides us with a fixed, an - according to my *pathei-mathos*, my experience - incorrect, answer to an important question attributed to Aeschylus and asked over two thousand years ago, and which fixed incorrect answer encourages, breeds, plants, the *τύραννος* within us ^[7] - our hubris, our inner egoist - and which wrong answer encourages, which breeds, which plants, tyrannical societies as well as allowing such a *τύραννος* as Hitler to gain an abundance of followers obedient to his hubriatic will.

The important question is *τίς οὖν ἀνάγκης ἐστὶν οἰακοστροφός* ^[8]. And the fixed and the incorrect answer is always the same: some leader, some *τύραννος*, some sovereign, some ideology, some goal, some rigid identity, is there to guide us, to provide us with meaning, to justify our actions. To explain away or justify our lack of empathy, our lack of compassion, our intolerance, our suspicion, our hatred; our lack of wu-wei; and our lack of respect of the numinous, our lack of respect for other life, for human beings different from us. A wrong answer to explain our amnesia, our forgetting or ignorance of the wisdom of the past; a wisdom embodied in what - at least according to my admittedly fallible judgement, born from my *pathei-mathos* - is the correct answer given to that question asked thousands of years ago and which correct answer is in my view an excellent reply to extremism. An answer which embodies that uncertainty of

knowing that is the essence of balance and which uncertainty the faculty of empathy makes us aware of. For the answer to preventing the extremism of hubris, to who guides us, who steers us, to whom we should look, and whom respect, is: *Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες* ^[9].

April 2012

Notes

[1] I have outlined, in part one, what I mean by terms such as ideology, society, politics, and wu-wei. As explained in several other essays - such as *Ethos of Extremism* - by extreme I mean *to be harsh*, so that an *extremist* is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious nature; where *harsh* is understood as rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic.

[2] *The Meaning of National-Socialism* (dated 108yf, i.e. 1997)

[3] *ibid.*

[4] In my essay *Society, Social Reform, and The Numinous Way* (dated February 2012) I briefly touched upon 'a numinous approach' to social change and reform. Which was the apolitical, non-violent one of personal example, and of fostering, encouraging, the natural, slow, interior and personal change of individuals.

[5] The good is what is fair; what alleviates or does not cause suffering; what is compassionate; what empathy by its revealing inclines us to do.

[6] It was such experiences - personal and political - which eventually, after two and half decades, prompted me in the late 1990's to modify my ideology and thus develop what I termed non-racist 'ethical National-Socialism'. But even that did not alter my commitment to extremism, my extremist activities, and my desire to undermine and overthrow British society.

[7] *ὑβρις φυτεύει τύραννον*. 'Hubris plants the tyrant.' Sophocles: *Oedipus Tyrannus*, v. 872.

[8] "Who then compels to steer us?" *Aeschylus* [attributed], *Prometheus Bound*, 515

[9] "Trimorphed Moirai with their ever-heedful Furies!" *Aeschylus* [attributed], *Prometheus Bound*, 516.

Some Philosophical and Moral Problems of National-Socialism

Introduction

This essay is a brief analysis of the National-Socialist weltanschauung, as manifested in National-Socialist Germany, and according to the philosophical and ethical criteria of my Numinous Way, and which criteria derive from the principles of empathy, compassion, and personal honour.

Empathy, as understood by my philosophy of The Numen [1], establishes a particular ontology and epistemology; Being, the source of beings, as both causal and acausal, and of an acausal knowing distinct from the causal knowing of conventional philosophy and empirical science [2]. The ethical criteria are manifest in both compassion and honour [3], so that:

"the morality of The Numinous Way is therefore defined by a personal honour, a personal compassion, and the personal virtue of justice. For justice is not some abstract concept, but rather a personal virtue, as *εὐταξία* is a personal virtue. For justice is the personal virtue of fairness; the quality of balance." *War and Violence in the Philosophy of The Numinous Way*

The National-Socialism evident in NS Germany was a way of life centred around concepts such as duty, *kampf*, nation, and race. Thus, the individual was judged by, and expected to judge others by, the criteria of race, with particular races assigned a certain value (high or low), as individuals were judged by how well they adhered to the duty they were expected to do in respect of their nation (their land, their people) and the race they were said to belong to or believed they belonged to. In addition, *kampf* between individuals, races, and nations was considered healthy and necessary, with such struggle revealing the worth of individuals and thus those considered fit to lead and assume positions of authority.

Collectivism, Nationalism, and Race

The National-Socialist way of life was – given such concepts as *kampf*, nation and race – a collective one, with one of the highest virtues being the willingness of individuals, if necessary, to sacrifice their own happiness and welfare, and even their lives, for the good of their people, their land, their race. The necessity of this virtue was explained, in part, by the belief that the German *volk* had an historic mission, a particular destiny, so that – coupled with the ideas of race and *kampf* – the individual was expected to define themselves, to

understand themselves, as Germans and as having particular duties and obligations; in effect, to replace their own self-identity with the collective identity of the *volk*.

In order to establish, maintain, and expand this collectivism, certain measures were regarded as necessary, as morally correct, with such measures including military conscription, laws designed to criminalize certain activities, both political and personal, and harsh punishment of those contravening such laws.

In addition, the *führerprinzip* was applied to most aspects of life, with individuals expected to accept and obey the authority so established, since such authority was considered to manifest the will, the ethos, of the *volk*. Hence the loyalty individuals gave, as an expression of their recognized duty as Germans, was personal; not to 'the State' nor even to 'the nation', and certainly not to some government, but rather to individuals who were regarded as embodying the will, the identity, of the *volk*. In practice, this meant Adolf Hitler and those appointed by him or by his representatives, and it was this collectivism, this binding of the *volk* by the *führerprinzip*, that Heidegger tried to philosophically express in his now controversial remarks regarding the *Volksgemeinschaft* and by quoting some words attributed to Aeschylus [4].

There are thus six elements that, from the philosophical and ethical viewpoint of The Numinous Way, may be said to define the National-Socialism of Adolf Hitler. These are: (i) a collective identity and its acceptance; (ii) authority and its acceptance manifest in specific individuals and expected obedience to such authority; (iii) mandatory enforceable punishment of those contravening or not accepting such authority and the laws made by such authority; (iv) the use of particular abstractions (for example nation and race) as a criteria for judgement and for evaluating individual worth; (v) the use of particular abstractions as a criteria for identity; and (vi) the use and acceptance of a particular abstraction - *kampf* - as an embodiment and expression of human nature.

Contra The National-Socialism of Adolf Hitler

In purely practical terms, the acceptance and use of the principle of *kampf* together with the acceptance of Hitler as embodying the collective will of the *volk*, inevitably led to the military defeat of NS Germany. For all mortals are fallible and military defeat is always inevitable, given time and even if such a defeat has internal, not external, causes. For tyrants and monarchs die, are overthrown, or are killed; Empires flourish for a while - a few centuries perhaps, at most - and then invariably decline and fade away; oligarchies come and go with monotonous regularity, lasting a decade or perhaps somewhat longer; rebellions and revolutions will break out, given sufficient time, and will often succeed given even more time - decades, centuries - and even following repeated and brutal repression.

Thus, philosophically, the general error here by Hitler and his followers was the obvious one of ὕβρις. A lack of understanding, an unknowing, of the natural

balance - of *δίκη* - as well as a lack of empathy, manifest as this unknowing, this lack, was in the arrogant belief of a personal and a volkish 'destiny' combined with a belief in *kampf* as a natural and necessary expression of human nature. And *ὑβρις φυτεύει τύραννον* - that is, *ὑβρις* plants, is the seed of, the *τύραννον*. Thus, symbolically, we might justifiably say that the *Ἐρινύες* took their revenge, for Hitler and his followers had forgotten, scorned, or never known the wisdom, the truth, that their fallible mortal lives are subject to, guided by, *Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες* [5]. Thus their fate was destined, a fate that Sophocles expressed so well in respect of Oedipus, *tyrannus*:

ὦ πάτρας Θήβης ἔνοικοι, λεύσσετ', Οἰδίπους ὄδε,
ὃς τὰ κλείν' αἰνίγματ' ἤδει καὶ κράτιστος ἦν ἀνὴρ,
οὐ τίς οὐ ζήλω πολιτῶν ἦν τύχαις ἐπιβλέπων,
εἰς ὅσον κλύδωνα δεινῆς συμφορᾶς ἐλήλυθεν.
ὥστε θνητὸν ὄντα κείνην τὴν τελευταίαν ἰδεῖν
ἡμέραν ἐπισκοποῦντα μηδέν' ὀλβίζειν, πρὶν ἂν
τέρμα τοῦ βίου περάσῃ μηδὲν ἀλγεῖνδον παθών. [6]

In effect, therefore, and in general terms, the National-Socialism of Adolf Hitler was un-wise; based on a mis-understanding of human nature, and he himself shown, despite his remarkable achievement of gaining power, as lacking a reasoned, a well-balanced, judgement [*σωφρονεῖν*] - since such a balanced judgement would, as Aeschylus explained in the *Oresteia*, reveal that *πόλεμος* [7] always accompanies *ὑβρις* and that only by acceptance of the numinous authority of *πάθει μάθος* (the new law presented to mortals by immortal Zeus) could the tragic cycle of *ἔρις* be ended.

A Numinous View of The National-Socialism of Adolf Hitler

Let us now consider the six points enumerated above, in respect of the philosophical and ethical viewpoint of The Numinous Way.

As mentioned in my essay *A Brief Numinous View of Religion, Politics, and The State*:

"The essence of the numinous view - of the ethical way posited by the Philosophy of The Numen - is empathy and thus the acausal (the affective and effecting) connexion we, as individuals, are to all life, sentient and otherwise, with empathy being the foundation of our conscious humanity.

The practical criteria which empathy implies is essentially two-fold: the criteria of the cessation of suffering, and the criteria of the individual, personal, judgement in the immediacy of the moment. For the Philosophy of The Numen, these two criteria manifest the natural character of rational, conscious, empathic, human beings and thus express the nature of our humanity and of human culture, and which nature is manifest in a practical way in compassion and in personal

honour.

Hence these two criteria are used, by The Numinous Way – by the Philosophy of The Numen – to judge our actions, our personal behaviour, and also all the abstractions we manufacture or may manufacture and which thus affect us, as individuals."

(i) A collective identity and its acceptance.

Empathy, as a natural if still under-used and under-developed human faculty, is only and ever individual and of the immediacy of the living moment. [8] It is always personal, individual, and cannot be abstracted out from an individual living being – that is, it cannot have any causal ideation or be represented by or expressed by someone else.

There is the personal, individual, freedom that the knowing that empathy uniquely presents to the individual, and therefore no need of, no sense of, belonging to other than one's immediate surroundings, and no sense of identity beyond the personally known, for all human beings encountered are encountered and empathically known as they uniquely are: as individuals with their own lives, feelings, hopes, and with their own potential and their own past.

Which in essence means The Numinous Way is the way of individuals, and an individual manner of living to be accepted or rejected according to the individual. Thus such a collective identity – and a desire for and acceptance of such an identity – is contrary to this very individual numinous way.

What matters for The Numinous Way is the individual; their empathy, their honour; their personal judgement. What does not matter are supra-personal manufactured abstractions such as a 'nation'. Consequently, the empathic, honourable, individual only has a duty to themselves, to their immediate kin, and to those personally given a pledge of loyalty: not a duty or obligations to some manufactured collective identity however such identity be expressed.

(ii) Authority and its acceptance manifest in specific individuals and expected obedience to such authority.

As I wrote in *Authority and Legitimacy in the Philosophy of The Numinous Way*:

" For The Numinous Way, it is the exercise of the judgement of the individual – arising from the use of empathy and the guidance that is personal honour – that is paramount, and which expresses our human nature.

That is, it is honour, the understanding that empathy provides, and the judgement of the individual, that are legitimate, moral, numinous, and thence the basis for authority. This means that authority resides in and extends only to individuals – by virtue of their honour, their

empathy, and manifest in their own personal judgement, and therefore this always personal individual authority cannot be abstracted out from such personal judgement of individuals. In practical terms, this is a new type of authority – that of the individual whose concern is not power over others but over themselves, and which type of power is manifest in a living by honour, and thence in their self-responsibility and in how they interact with others."

Thus, such non-individual authority, acceptance of and obedience to such authority, is contrary to The Numinous Way.

(iii) Mandatory enforceable punishment of those contravening or not accepting such authority and the laws made by such authority.

Given that, for The Numinous Way, authority and justice are individual and manifest in individual judgement and through personal honour, such mandatory punishment by some abstract authority is quite contrary to The Numinous Way.

(iv) The use of particular abstractions (for example nation and race) as a criteria for judgement and for evaluating individual worth.

According to both empathy and honour, such a judgement of others, such prejudice, on the basis of some abstraction such as perceived race or 'nationality' is immoral [9]. The only moral, honourable, criteria is to judge *individuals* as individuals, sans all abstractions, on the basis of a personal knowing of them extending over a duration of causal Time. To judge *en masse*, without such a direct, personal, extended, personal knowing of each and every individual is reprehensible.

In addition, it is immoral – unempathic, uncompassionate, dishonourable – to treat people on the basis of their assumed or alleged race or nationality. Thus, the enforced herding of people into 'concentration camps' on the basis of alleged, assumed, race or nationality is quite unjustifiable, inhuman.

(v) The use of particular abstractions as a criteria for identity.

Such abstractions included 'blood' and nationality, so that identity became a matter of individuals being classified – by themselves, others, and by the State – according to certain chosen abstract criteria based on 'race' and heritage. Thus there were distinct notions, distinct levels, of separateness.

Empathy, however, presents us with an acausal-knowing of life, human and otherwise, and this knowing is of ourselves as but one fallible, biologically fragile, mortal, microcosmic nexion, and thus of how our self, our perceived and singular separate self-identity, is appearance and not an expression of the true nature of our being [10], which nature is one of connexions, between living emanations, not one of separations.

Such a revealing of our nature reveals that we should act with empathy and honour in the knowledge that our actions affect others or can affect others, directly, indirectly, emotionally, and acausally. That their joy, their pain, their suffering, their fate is ours by virtue of us as a connexion to them – as a connexion to all life; as one emanation of *ψυχή* [11].

What abstractions do is that they conceal our true empathic, compassionate, honourable nature and, ultimately, sever the connexion we are to *ψυχή*, to The Numen.

As mentioned in *On The Nature of Abstractions*:

" The error of abstractionism – of using existing abstractions and manufacturing other abstractions and using these as the source of ethics, of judgement, and so ascribing a value to them – is the error of *ὑβρις* (hubris). That is, the error of unbalance: of neglecting or being unaware of empathy, and of neglecting or being unaware of or profaning the numinous. In the personal and social sense, *ὑβρις* is revealed in a lack of compassion, a lack of balanced reasoning, and not only ascribing to one's self (or some other abstraction, such as a nation-State) what is assumed to be the perfection of right and of good (or the best current approximation of it) but also acting on that presumption to the detriment, the harm, of others.

This is unethical – as all abstractions are inherently unethical – because what is ethical is determined by empathy, and thus cannot be abstracted out of that direct, immediate, and personal knowing which presences empathy in us, as human beings."

(vi) The use and acceptance of a particular abstraction – *kampf* – as an embodiment and expression of human nature.

As mentioned previously, in the *Contra The National-Socialism of Adolf Hitler* section, *kampf* as principle, as abstraction, is a manifestation of the error of *ὑβρις* and of a lack of empathy.

For empathy, and the cultivation of *σωφρονεῖν*, incline us toward – or should incline us, as individuals, toward – a letting-be; to wu-wei; to a living in the immediacy-of-the-moment. To being compassionate and honourable human beings, concerned only with our own affairs, that of our family, and that of our immediate locality where we dwell, work, and have-our-being.

In addition:

"In The Numinous Way, a distinction is made between war and *combat* in that combat refers to *gewin* – similar to the old Germanic *werra*, as distinct from the modern *krieg*. That is, combat refers to a more personal armed quarrel between much smaller factions (and often

between just two adversaries – as in single combat, and trial by combat) when there is, among those fighting, some personal matter at stake or some personal interest involved, with most if not all of those fighting doing so under the leadership of someone they personally know and respect and with the quarrel usually occurring in the locality or localities where the combatants live.

Thus, war is contrary to The Numinous Way – to the Cosmic Ethic – not only because of the impersonal suffering it causes, but also because it is inseparably bound up with individuals having to relinquish their own judgement, with them pursuing some lifeless un-numinous abstraction by violent means, and with the development of supra-personal abstract and thus un-numinous notions of 'justice' and law.

Hence, there is, for The Numinous Way, no such thing as a 'just war' – for war is inherently unjust and un-numinous. What is just and lawful are honourable individuals and their actions, and such combat as such individuals may honourably and personally undertake, and such violence as they may honourably and of necessity employ in pursuit of being fair and ensuring fairness." *War and Violence in the Philosophy of The Numinous Way*

Conclusion

It should thus be quite clear why The Numinous Way is contrary to and incompatible with the National-Socialism of Adolf Hitler that was manifest in National-Socialist Germany.

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Notes

[1] Refer, for example, to *Introduction to The Philosophy of The Numen* and also *The Natural Balance of Honour – Honour, Empathy, and Compassion in the Philosophy of The Numinous Way*, from which this is a quote:

"As used and defined by The Numinous Way, empathy – *ἐμπάθεια* – is a natural human faculty: that is, a noble intuition about another human being or another living being. When empathy is developed and used, as envisaged by The Numinous Way, it is a specific and extended type of *συμπάθεια*. That is, it is a type of and a means to knowing and understanding another human being and/or other living beings – and thus differs in nature from compassion."

[2] See: (i) *An Introduction To The Ontology of Being*; (ii) *Some Notes Concerning Causality, Ethics, and Acausal Knowing*; (iii) *Acausality, Phainómenon, and The Appearance of Causality*.

[3] qv. *The Natural Balance of Honour*.

[4] In his 1933 speech at the University of Freiburg, where he quoted the following verse (v.514) from *Prometheus Bound* [my translation] –

τέχνη δ' ἀνάγκης ἀσθενεστέρα μακρῶ.

How so very feeble Craft is before Compulsion!

[5]

τίς οὖν ἀνάγκης ἐστὶν οἰακοστροφός.
Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες

Who then compels to steer us?
Trimorphed Moirai with their ever-heedful Furies!

Aeschylus (attributed), *Prometheus Bound*, 515-6 [My translation]

[6]

You natives of Thebes: Observe – here is Oedipus,
He who understood that famous enigma and was a strong man:
What clansman did not behold that fortune without envy?
But what a tide of problems have come over him!
Therefore, look toward that ending which is for us mortals,
To observe that particular day – calling no one lucky until,
Without the pain of injury, they are conveyed beyond life's ending.

Oedipus Tyrannus, vv. 1524-1530 [My translation]

[7] In respect of πόλεμος see my *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic* where I suggest that as used by Heraclitus it implies neither Kampf nor conflict, but rather – as a quote from Diogenes Laërtius suggests – what lies behind or beyond Phainómenon; that is, non-temporal, non-causal, Being. πόλεμος is thus that which is or becomes the genesis of beings from Being, and also that which manifests as δίκη and accompanies ἔρις because it is the nature of Πόλεμος that beings, born because of and by ἔρις, can be returned to Being (become bound together – be whole – again) by enantiodromia.

[8] Refer, for example, to *Introduction to The Philosophy of The Numen*

[9] See *Empathy and The Immoral Abstraction of Race* and also *On The Nature of Abstractions*.

[10] Refer for example to *Acausality*, *Phainómenon*, and *The Appearance of Causality* and also *An Introduction To The Ontology of Being*.

[11] Correctly understood – and as evident by the usage of Homer, Aeschylus, Aristotle, et al – *ψυχή* implies Life *qua* being.

Suffering And The Human Culture Of Pathei-Mathos

Extract From A Letter To A Personal Correspondent

In respect of the question whether I am optimistic about our future as a species, I vacillate between optimism and pessimism, knowing as I – and so many – do from experience that the world contains people who do good things [1], people who do bad things, and people who when influenced or led or swayed by some-thing or someone can veer either way; and given that it seems as if in each generation there are those – many – who have not learned or who cannot learn from the pathei-mathos of previous generations, from our collective human πάθει μάθος that has brought-into-being a culture of pathei-mathos thousands of years old. Historically – prior to, during, after the time of Cicero, and over a thousand years later during and after the European Renaissance – this culture was evident in Studia Humanitatis, and is now presenced in works inspired by or recollecting personal pathei-mathos and described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts; in particular works of literature, poetry, and drama; in non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and by art-forms such as films and documentaries.

This culture of pathei-mathos reveals to us the beauty, the numinosity, of personal love; the numinosity of humility, and compassion; and the tragic lamentable unnecessary suffering caused by hubris, dishonour, selfishness, inconsiderance, intolerance, prejudice, hatred, war, extremism, and ideologies [2]. A world-wide suffering so evident, today, for example in the treatment of and the violence (by men) toward women; in the continuing armed conflicts – regional and local, over some-thing – that displace tens of thousands of people and cause destruction, injury, and hundreds of thousands of deaths; and evident also in the killing of innocent people [3] by those who adhere to a harsh interpretation of some religion or some political ideology.

Do good people, world-wide, outweigh bad ones? My experiences and travels incline me to believe they may do, although it seems as if the damage the bad ones do, the suffering they cause, sometimes and for a while outweighs the good that others do. But does the good done, in societies world-wide, now outweigh the bad done, especially such large-scale suffering as is caused by

despots, corruption, armed conflict, and repressive regimes? Probably, at least in some societies. And yet even in such societies where, for example, education is widespread, there always seem to be selfish, dishonourable, inconsiderate, people; and also people such as the extremist I was with my hubriatic certitude-of-knowing inciting or causing hatred and violence and intolerance and glorifying war and kampf and trying to justify killing in the name of some abstraction or some belief or some cause or some ideology. People mostly, it seems, immune to and/or intolerant of the learning of the culture of pathei-mathos; a learning available to us in literature, music, Art, memoirs, in the aural and written recollections of those who endured or who witnessed hatred, violence, intolerance, conflict, war, and killing, and a learning also available in the spiritual message of those who taught humility, goodness, love, and tolerance. Immune or intolerant people who apparently can only change – or who could only possibly change for the better – only when they themselves are afflicted by such vicissitudes, such personal misfortune and suffering, as is the genesis of their own pathei-mathos.

Thus, and for example, in Europe there is the specific pathei-mathos that the First and the Second World Wars wrought. A collective learning regarding the destruction, the suffering, the brutality, the horror, of wars where wrakeful machines and mass manufactured weapons played a significant role.

All this, while sad, is perhaps the result of our basic human nature; for we are jumelle, and not only because we are "deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal" [4] but also because it seems to me that what is good and bad resides in us all [5], nascent or alive or as part of our personal past, and that it is just so easy, so tempting, so enjoyable, sometimes, to indulge in, to do, what is bad, and often harder for us to do what is right. Furthermore, we do seem to have a tendency – or perhaps a need – to ascribe what is bad to being 'out there', in something abstract or in others while neglecting or not perceiving our own faults and mistakes and while asserting or believing that we, and those similar to us or who we are in agreement with, are right and thus have the 'correct', the righteous, answers. Thus it is often easier to find what is bad 'out there' rather than within ourselves; easier to hate than to love, especially as a hatred of impersonal others sometimes affords us a reassuring sense of identity and a sense of being 'better' than those others.

Will it therefore require another thousand, or two thousand, or three thousand years – or more or less millennia – before we human beings en masse, world-wide, are empathic, tolerant, kind, and honourable? Is such a basic change in our nature even possible? Certainly there are some – and not only ideologues of one kind or another – who would argue and who have argued that such a change is not desirable. And is such a change in our nature contingent, as I incline to believe, upon the fair allocation of world resources and solving problems such as hunger and poverty and preventing preventable diseases? Furthermore, how can or could or should such a basic change be brought about – through an organized religion or religions, or through individual governments

and their laws and their social and political and economic and educational policies, or through a collocation of governments, world-wide; or through individuals reforming themselves and personally educating others by means of, for example, the common culture of pathei-mathos which all humans share and which all human societies have contributed to for thousands of years?

Which leads us on to questions regarding dogma, faith, and dissent; and to questions regarding government and compulsion and 'crime and punishment' and whether or not 'the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few'; and also to questions regarding the efficacy of the reforming, spiritual, personal way given that spiritual ways teaching love, tolerance, humility, and compassion – and virtuous as they are, and alleviating and preventing suffering as they surely have – have not after several thousand years effected such a change in humans en masse.

I have to admit that I have no definitive or satisfactory answers to all these, and similar, questions; although my own pathei-mathos – and my lamentable four-decade long experience as an extremist, an ideologue, and as a selfish opinionated inconsiderate person – incline me to prefer the reforming, spiritual, personal way since I feel that such an approach, involving as it does a personal study of, a personal transmission of, the culture of pathei-mathos – and a personal knowing and a living of the humility that the culture of pathei-mathos teaches – is a way that does not cause nor contribute to the suffering that still so blights this world. A personal preference for such a numinous way even though I am aware of three things: of my past propensity to be wrong and thus of the necessary fallible nature of my answers; of the limited nature and thus the long time-scale (of many millennia) that such a way implies; and that it is possible, albeit improbable except in Science Fiction, that good people of honourable intentions may some day find a non-suffering-causing way by which governments or society or perhaps some new form of governance may in some manner bring about that change, en masse, in our human nature required to evolve us into individuals of empathy, compassion, and honour, who thus have something akin to a 'prime directive' to guide them in their dealings with those who are different, in whatever way, from ourselves.

Were I to daydream about some future time when such a galactic 'prime directive' exists, directing we spacefaring humans not to interfere in the internal affairs of non-terrans who are different, in whatever way, from ourselves, then I would be inclined to speculate that unless we by then have fundamentally and irretrievably changed ourselves for the better then it would not be long before some human or some human authority, somewhere, manufactured some sly excuse to order to try and justify ignoring it. For that is what we have done, among ourselves, for thousands of years; making then breaking some treaty or other; making some excuse to plunder resources; having some legal institution change some existing law or make some new law to give us the 'right' to do what it is we want to do; or manufacture some new legislative or governing body in order to 'legalize' what we do or have already

done. Always using a plethora of words – and, latterly, legalese – to persuade others, and often ourselves, that what we do or are about to do or have already done is justified, justifiable, necessary, or right.

Perhaps the future excuse to so interfere contrary to a prime directive would be the familiar one of 'our security'; perhaps it would be an economic one of needing to exploit 'their' resources; perhaps it would be one regarding the threat of 'terrorism'; perhaps it would be the ancient human one, hallowed by so much blood, of 'our' assumed superiority, of 'their system' being 'repressive' or 'undemocratic' or of they – those 'others' – being 'backward' or 'uncivilized' and in need of being enlightened and 're-educated' by our 'progressive' ideas. Or, more probable, it would be some new standard or some new fashionable political or social or even religious dogma by which we commend ourselves on our progress and which we use, consciously or otherwise, to judge others by.

The current reality is that even if we had or soon established a terran 'prime directive' directing we humans not to interfere in the internal affairs of other humans here on Earth who are different, in whatever way, from ourselves, it is fairly certain it "would not be long before some human or some human authority, somewhere, manufactured some sly excuse to order to try and justify ignoring it..."

Which mention of a terran 'prime directive' leads to two of the other questions which cause me to vacillate between optimism and pessimism in regard to our future as a species. The question of increasing population, and the question of the finite resources of this Earth. Which suggests to me, as some others, that – especially as the majority of people now live in urban areas – a noble option is for us, as a species, to cooperate and betake ourselves to colonize our Moon, then Mars, and seek to develop such technology as would take us beyond our Solar System. For if we do not do this then the result would most probably be, at some future time, increasing conflict over land and resources, mass migrations (probably resulting in more conflict) and such governments or authorities as then exist forced by economic circumstance to adopt policies to reduce or limit their own population. Global problems probably exasperated still further by the detrimental changes that available evidence indicates could possibly result from what has been termed 'climate change' [6].

But is the beginning of this noble option of space colonization viable in the near future? Possibly not, given that the few countries that have the resources, the space expertise and the technology necessary – and the means to develop existing space technology – do not consider such exploration and colonization as a priority, existing as they seem to do in a world where nation-States still compete for influence and power and where conflict – armed, deadly, and otherwise – is still regarded as a viable solution to problems.

Which leads we human beings, with our jumelle character, confined to this small planet we call Earth, possibly continuing as we have, for millennia, continued: a

quarrelsome species, often engaged (like primates) in minor territorial disputes; in our majority unempathic; often inconsiderate, often prejudiced (even though we like to believe otherwise); often inclined to place our self-interest and our pleasure first; often prone to being manipulated or to manipulating others; often addicted to the slyness of words spoken and written and heard and read; often believing 'we' are better than 'them'; and fighting, raping, hating, killing, invading here, interfering there. And beset by the problems wrought by increasing population, by dwindling resources, by mass migrations, by continuing armed conflicts (regional, local, supranational, over some-thing) and possibly also affected by the effects of climate change.

Yet also, sometimes despite ourselves, we are beings capable of – and have shown over millennia – compassion, kindness, gentleness, tolerance, love, fairness, reason, and a valourous self-sacrifice that is and has been inspirational. But perhaps above all we have, in our majority, exuded and kept and replenished the virtue of hope; hoping, dreaming, of better times, a better future, sometime, somewhere – and not, as it happens, for ourselves but for our children and their children and the future generations yet to be born. And it is this hope that changes us, and has changed us, for the better, as our human culture of pathei-mathos so eloquently, so numinously, and so tragically, reveals.

Thus the question seems to be whether we still have hope enough, dreams enough, nobility enough, and can find some way to change ourselves, to thus bring a better – a more fairer, more just, more compassionate – future into-being without causing or contributing to the suffering which so blights, and which has so blighted, our existence on Earth.

Personally, I am inclined to wonder if the way we need – the hope, the dream, we need – is that of setting forth to explore and colonize our Moon, then Mars, and then the worlds beyond our Solar System, guided by a prime directive.

2013

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Notes

[1] I understand 'the good' as what alleviates or does not cause suffering; what is compassionate; what is honourable; what is reasoned and balanced. Honour being here, and elsewhere in my recent writings, understood as the instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous.

[2] I have expanded, a little, on what I mean by 'the culture of pathei-mathos' in my tract *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God*.

[3] As defined by my 'philosophy of pathei-mathos', I understand innocence as "an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us, are therefore unjudged us by and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this

presumption of innocence of others – until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise – is the fair, the reasoned, the numinous, the human, thing to do. Empathy and πάθει μάθος incline us toward treating other human beings as we ourselves would wish to be treated; that is they incline us toward fairness, toward self-restraint, toward being well-mannered, and toward an appreciation and understanding of innocence.”

[4] Pœmandres (Corpus Hermeticum), 15 – διὰ τοῦτο παρὰ πάντα τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς ζῶα διπλοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ ἄνθρωπος

As I noted in my translation of and commentary on the Pœmandres tract,

"Jumelle. For διπλοῦς. The much underused and descriptive English word jumelle – from the Latin gemellus – describes some-thing made in, or composed of, two parts, and is therefore most suitable here, more so than common words such as 'double' or twofold."

[5] qv. Sophocles, Antigone, v.334, vv.365-366

πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ κούδεν ἄνθρωπου δεινότερον πέλει...
σοφόν τι τὸ μηχανόεν τέχνας ὑπὲρ ἐλπίδ' ἔχων
τοτὲ μὲν κακόν, ἄλλοτ' ἐπ' ἐσθλὸν ἔρπει

There exists much that is strange, yet nothing
Has more strangeness than a human being...
Beyond his own hopes, his cunning
In inventive arts – he who arrives
Now with dishonour, then with chivalry

[6] Many people have a view about 'climate change' – for or against – for a variety of reasons. My own view is that the scientific evidence available at the moment seems to indicate that there is a change resulting from human activity and that this change could possibly be detrimental, in certain ways, to us and to the other life with which we share this planet. The expressions 'seems to indicate' and 'could possibly be' are necessary given that this view of mine might need to be, and should be, reassessed if and when new evidence or facts become available.

Persecution And War

A Remembering

Reared as a Roman Catholic, educated for a while at a Catholic preparatory school and then – again for a while – at a Catholic boarding school, I remember

the history taught by our teachers and Priests of the centuries-long persecution of English and Irish Catholics that began in the 16th century. There were stories of martyrs; of recusants; of secret Masses; of anti-Catholic polemics and propaganda; and of the monks who - after the suppression of the monasteries, the theft of monastic lands and wealth, begun by a tyrannos named Henry - escaped to France and founded monasteries such as the one at Dieulouard in Lorraine.

There thus was engendered in we Catholic children a feeling of difference, aided by the fact that our Mass was in Latin, by our sacrament of confession, by the practice of Gregorian chant, and by the singing of hymns such as Faith Of Our Fathers with its memorable verses

Faith of our Fathers living still
In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword [...]
We will be true to thee till death [...]

Our Fathers, chained in prisons dark,
Were still in heart and conscience free [...]
Faith of our Fathers, Mary's prayers
Shall win our country back to thee

This feeling of difference was forcefully remembered when I in the early 1970's - during The Troubles - ventured to visit Northern Ireland; when I in the mid-1970's and as a Catholic monk spent several weeks staying at a Presbytery in Dublin; and when I in the mid-1990's - before the Good Friday Agreement - visited Derry.

Forcefully remembered because I listened to accounts of the burning of Catholic homes by Protestant mobs in 1969 and the subsequent flight of hundreds of Catholic families to the Irish Republic where they were housed in refugee camps; listened to witness accounts of the killing of eleven Catholics, including a Priest, by the British Army in Ballymurphy in 1971; listened to witness accounts of the killing of fourteen Catholics, again by the British Army, in Derry in 1972; and listened to stories of the persecution of Irish Catholics under British rule.

Such a remembering, such a childhood feeling of difference, formed part of the years-long personal and philosophical reflexion that occupied me for several years as I, between 2006 and 2009, developed my 'numinous way' and then between 2011 and 2012 gradually refined it into the 'way of pathei-mathos', with the core of that reflexion concerning matters such as extremism, my own extremist past, war, prejudice, intolerance, and persecution.

War And Combat

Familiar as I was with ancient works by Thucydides, Herodotus, Livy, and others; with many works concerning more recent European history by modern

historians, as well as with personal accounts of those who had fought for both the Allies and the Axis during World War Two, I recalled some words of Cicero:

"Aliis ego te virtutibus, continentiae, gravitatis, iustitiae, fidei, ceteris omnibus."

"because of your other virtues of self-restraint, of dignity, of fairness, of honesty, and all other such qualities..." [1]

Which led me to consider making a distinction between war and a more personal combat, between a modern *krieg* and the Old Germanic *werra*, given that war, from my reading of and admittedly fallible understanding of history, seemed to me to involve – by its very nature of necessitating killing and causing injury – intolerance, hatred, a divisive sense of difference often involving "us" believing we were "better" (or more civilized) than them, our enemies, thus leading to a dehumanization of "the enemy". A divisive sense of difference and a dehumanization often aided (particularly in modern times) by polemics, rumour, and propaganda; and a divisive sense of difference, a dehumanization, together with polemics, rumour, and propaganda, which I knew from my own decades of political and religious activism formed a core part of all types of extremism.

The distinction I considered was that personal combat unlike war did not involve large armies fighting against each other because of some diktat or personal agenda by some tyrannos or because of some ideology or religion or policy of some State or government. Instead, combat involved small groups – such as clans or tribes or neighbours – fighting because of some personal quarrel or some wrong or some perceived grievance.

But the more I considered this supposed distinction between combat and war the more I realized that in practice there was no such distinction since both involved principles similar to those of the Ancient Roman *Leges Regiae* – qv. the *Jus Papirianum* attributed to Sextus Papirius – where someone or some many possess or have acquired (through for example force of arms) or have assumed authority over others, and who by the use of violence and/or by the threat of punishment and/or by oratory or propaganda, are able to force or persuade others to accept such authority and obey the commands of such authority.

This acceptance by individuals of a supra-personal authority – or, more often, the demand by some supra-personal authority that individuals accept such a supra-personal authority – was manifest in the Christian writings of Augustine (b.354 CE, d.430 CE), such as his *De Civitate Dei contra Paganos* where in Book XIX, chapter xiii, he wrote of the necessity of a hierarchy in which God is the supreme authority, with peace between human beings and God requiring obedience to that authority; with peace between human beings, and civil peace, also of necessity requiring obedience to an order in which each person has their allotted place, "Ordo est parium dispariumque rerum sua cuique loca tribuens dispositio."

Which hierarchy and acceptance of authority led Augustine to describe – in book XXII of *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* – the concept that war requires the authority of a person (such as a monarch) who has such "necessary" authority over others. This concept regarding war has remained a guiding principle of modern Western nations where the authority to inaugurate and prosecute a war against perceived enemies resides in the State, and thus in modern potentates who have seized power or in elected governments and their representatives such as Presidents and Prime Ministers.

Authority And Society

In the nations of the West, such a hierarchy of authority applies not only to war and its prosecution but also to changes, to reform, in society [2] for there is, as I mentioned in *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*,

"a hierarchy of judgement involved, whatever political 'flavour' the government is assigned to, is assumed to represent, or claims it represents; with this hierarchy of necessity requiring the individual in society to either (i) relinquish their own judgement, being accepting of or acquiescing in (from whatever reason or motive such as desire to avoid punishment) the judgement of these others, or (ii) to oppose this 'judgement of others' either actively through some group, association, or movement (political, social, religious) or individually, with there being the possibility that some so opposing this 'judgement of others' may resort to using violent means against the established order." [3]

In the way of pathei-mathos authority is personal, based on individual empathy and a personal pathei-mathos; both of which have a local horizon so that what is

"beyond our personal empathic knowing of others, beyond our knowledge and our experience [our pathei-mathos], beyond the limited (local) range of our empathy and that personal (local) knowledge of ourselves which pathei-mathos reveals – is something we rationally, we humbly, accept we do not know and so cannot judge or form a reasonable, a fair, a balanced, opinion about. For empathy, like pathei-mathos, lives within us; manifesting, as both empathy and pathei-mathos do, the always limited nature, the horizon, of our own knowledge and understanding." [4]

In practical terms this means trying to cultivate within ourselves the virtues mentioned by Cicero – self-restraint, dignity, fairness, honesty – and implies we have no concern for or we seek to cultivate no concern for supra-personal hierarchies and supra-personal authority – whether political, religious, or otherwise – and thus move away from, try to distance ourselves from, the consequences of such supra-personal hierarchies and supra-personal authority manifest as the consequences are and have been, throughout our history, in war, prejudice, intolerance, unfairness, extremism, and persecution in the name of some ideology, some religion, or because someone has commanded us to

persecute those that they and others have declared are "our" enemies, and which war and persecutions are often, especially in modern times, accompanied by propaganda and lies.

Thus in the case of my Catholic remembering, those soldiers in Ballymurphy and in Derry shot and killed civilians, women included, because those soldiers believed them to be "enemies", because propaganda had dehumanized those enemies; because those soldiers were part of and obeyed a hierarchical, supra-personal, chain-of-command by being there armed and prepared to use deadly force and violence against individuals they did not personally know; and because in the aftermath of those killings, and for years afterwards, they were not honest and hence did not contradict the propaganda stories, the lies, about those events which some of their superiors and others circulated in an attempt to justify such acts of inhumanity.

Yet for me the real tragedy is that events similar to those of my very personal remembering have occurred on a vaster scale millennia after millennia and are still occurring, again on a vaster scale and world-wide, despite us having access to the wisdom of the past, manifest as such wisdom is, for those reared in the West, in the Agamemnon of Aeschylus, in the Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles, in the mythos of Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμερές τ' Ἐρινύες [5], in many of the writings of Cicero, in Τὰ εἰς ἑαυτὸν by Marcus Aurelius, in the numinous beauty of Gregorian chant, in the music of JS Bach, and in so many, many, other writers and artists ancient and modern.

Da sceolde se hearpere weorðan swa sariġ
þæt he ne meahte ongemong oðrum mannum bion
(XXXV, 6)

9.ix.18

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[1] M. Tullius Cicero, *Pro Murena Oratio*, 23. My translation.

[2] By 'society' in the context of this essay and the way of pathei-mathos is meant a collection of individuals who dwell, who live, in a particular area and who are subject to the same laws and the same institutions of authority. Modern society is thus a manifestation of some State, and States are predicated on individuals actively or passively accepting some supra-personal authority, be it governmental (national) or regional (county), or more usually both.

[3] "Society, Politics, Social Reform, and Pathei-Mathos". *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. Fifth edition. Link: <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/numinous-way-v5c-print.pdf>

[4] "Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions." 2015. Link:

<https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2015/03/11/personal-reflexions-on-some-metaphysical-questions/>

[5] "Trimorphed Moirai with their ever-heedful Furies." Aeschylus (attributed), Prometheus Bound, 516

The Matter With Death

The matter with death is that the flow of Life goes on, and we are just gone; simply gone from one planet orbiting one star in one galaxy among a universe of galaxies.

No trains in the distant valley would stop...
Only the cold day in Winter
Might change
Just a little
When the sun shines into blue
And white wisps of cirrus
Gather to briefly signal the change

We just do not matter as much as we sometimes - often - believe or would like to believe, and all that we can hope for, perhaps, is that someone or some many may remember us, or that some compassionate deed of ours, some Presencing of The Numinous we had the fortune to presence in our life, may aid or help or have helped or aided some others in some way to live as we in the moments of our dying perhaps felt, remembered, we should have: born along by such nobility of personal love gently shared as made us reach out to where all our hopes and every Paradise, past-present-future, were born bringing such comfort and such beauty, such a wordless sense of goodness, that we in such moments became as happy children, again; there where no conflict touched us, no doubts assailed us, no hunger drained us, and no threats came to threaten or restrain.

There was only the warming Sun as that morning when two new lovers, newly-born, betook themselves out to where a white sandy beach met with sea and where they swam swam together until tiredness came to bring them back to shore: no world beyond their world, there. Footprints soon washed away, by waveful sea.

So Life as Nature so presenced, here, will flow on: past our passing. To smooth out with durations of centuries our mistakes, our worries, doubts and fears, and such interference as perhaps so kept us once suffused with a passion and

sometimes manipulation and lies, born from bloated self-importance and the delusive ideation of individual Change.

For there is no destiny that comes to shake, mould, preen and make us: only the flow that carries us while we with our illusion of self so lasts. All we are, are moments, passing: as the falling leaf of Autumn falls, having lost its Springful green, no one there to blame.

We just do not matter as we hope, believe, or would like to believe, we do: for there is no you or I or we to hold us here. Only one Life, presenced, here and growing, flowing - one Earth turning where one Sun lights one small part of our greater cosmic dark.

August 2011

Appendix I

Physis And Being An Introduction To The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos

The philosophy of pathei-mathos is based on four axioms: (i) that it is empathy and pathei-mathos which can wordlessly reveal the ontological reality both of our own physis [1] and of how we, as sentient beings, relate to other living beings and to Being itself; (ii) that it is denotatum [2] - and thus the abstractions deriving therefrom [3] - which, in respect of human beings, can and often do obscure our physis and our relation to other living beings and to Being; (iii) that denotatum and abstractions imply a dialectic of contradictory opposites and thus for we human beings a separation-of-otherness; and (iv) that this dialectic of opposites is, has been, and can be a cause of suffering for both ourselves, as sentient beings, and - as a causal human presenced effect - for the other life with which we share the planet named in English as Earth.

For, as mentioned in a previous essay,

"empathy and pathei-mathos incline us to suggest that ipseity is an illusion of perspective: that there is, fundamentally, no division between 'us' - as some individual sentient, mortal being - and what has hitherto been understood and named as the Unity, The One, God, The Eternal. That 'we' are not 'observers' but rather Being existing as Being exists and is presenced in the Cosmos. That thus all our striving, individually and collectively when based on some ideal or on some form - some abstraction and what is derived therefrom, such as ideology and dogma - always is or becomes sad/tragic, and which

recurrence of sadness/tragedy, generation following generation, is perhaps even inevitable unless and until we live according to the wordless knowing that empathy and *pathei-mathos* reveal." [4]

In essence, empathy and *pathei-mathos* lead us away from the abstractions we have constructed and manufactured and which abstractions we often tend to impose, or project, upon other human beings, upon ourselves, often in the belief that such abstractions can aid our understanding of others and of ourselves, with a feature of all abstractions being inclusion and exclusion; that is, certain individuals are considered as belonging to or as defined by a particular category while others are not.

Over millennia we have manufactured certain abstractions and their assumed opposites and classified many of them according to particular moral standards so that a particular abstraction is considered good and/or beneficial and/or as necessary and/or as healthy, while its assumed dialectical opposite is considered bad (or evil), or unnecessary, or unhealthy, and/or as unwarranted.

Thus in ancient Greece and Rome slavery was accepted by the majority, and considered by the ruling elite as natural and necessary, with human beings assigned to or included in the category 'slave' a commodity who could be traded with slaves regarded as necessary to the functioning of society. Over centuries, with the evolution of religions such as Christianity and with the development in Western societies of humanist *weltanschauungen*, the moral values of this particular abstraction, this particular category to which certain human beings assigned, changed such that for perhaps a majority slavery came to be regarded as morally repugnant. Similarly in respect of the abstraction designated in modern times by such terms as "the rôle of women in society" which rôle for millennia in the West was defined according to various masculous criteria - deriving from a ruling and an accepted patriarchy - but which rôle in the past century in Western societies has gradually been redefined.

Yet irrespective of such developments, such changes associated with certain abstractions, the abstractions themselves and the dialectic of moral opposites associated with them remain because, for perhaps a majority, abstractions and ipseity, as a criteria of judgment and/or as a human instinct, remain; as evident in the continuing violence against, the killing of, and the manipulation, of women by men, and in what has become described by terms such as "modern slavery" and "human trafficking".

In addition, we human beings have continued to manufacture abstractions and continue to assign individuals to them, a useful example being the abstraction denoted by the terms The State and The Nation-State [5] and which abstraction, with its government, its supra-personal authority, its laws, its economy, and its inclusion/exclusion (citizenship or lack of it) has come to dominate and influence the life of the majority of people in the West.

Ontologically, abstractions - ancient and modern - usurp our connexion to Being

and to other living beings so that instead of using wordless empathy and *pathei-mathos* as a guide to Reality [6] we tend to define ourselves or are defined by others according to an abstraction or according to various abstractions. In the matter of the abstraction that is The State there is a tendency to define or to try to understand our relation to Reality by for example whether we belong, are a citizen of a particular State; by whether or not we have an acceptable standard of living because of the opportunities and employment and/or the assistance afforded by the economy and the policies of the State; by whether or not we agree or disagree with the policies of the government in power, and often by whether or not we have transgressed some State-made law or laws. Similarly, in the matter of belief in a revealed religion such as Christianity or Islam we tend to define or understand our relation to Reality by means of such an abstraction: that is, according to the revelation (or a particular interpretation of it) and its eschatology, and thus by how the promise of Heaven/Jannah may be personally obtained.

Empathy and *pathei-mathos*, however, wordlessly – sans denotatum, sans abstractions, sans a dialectic of contradictory opposites – uncover physis: our physis, that of other mortals, that of other living beings, and that of Being/Reality itself. Which physis, howsoever presented – in ourselves, in other living beings, in Being – is fluxive, a balance between the being that it now is, that it was, and that it has the inherent (the acausal) quality to be. [7]

This uncovering, such a revealing, is of a knowing beyond ipseity and thus beyond the separation-of-otherness which denotatum, abstractions, and a dialectic of opposites manufacture and presence. A knowing of ourselves as an affective connexion [8] to other living beings and to Being itself, with Being revealed as fluxive (as a *meson* – μέσον [9] – with the potentiality to change, to develop) and thus which (i) is not – as in the theology of revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam – a God who is Eternal, Unchanging, Omnipotent [10], and (ii) is affected or can be affected (in terms of physis) by what we do or do not do.

This awareness, this knowing, of such an affective connexion – our past, our current, our potentiality, to adversely affect, to have adversely affected, to cause, to having caused, suffering or harm to other living beings – also inclines us or can incline us toward benignity and humility, and thus incline us to live in a non-suffering causing way, appreciate of our thousands of years old culture of *pathei-mathos*. [11]

In terms of understanding Being and the divine, it inclines us or can incline us, as sentient beings, to apprehend Being as not only presented in us but as capable of changing – unfolding, evolving – in a manner dependant on our physis and on how our physis is presented by us, and by others, in the future. Which seems to imply a new ontology and one distinct from past and current theologies with their anthropomorphic *θεός* (god) and *θεοί* (gods).

An ontology of physis: of mortals, of living beings, and of Being, as fluxive mesons. Of we mortals as a mortal microcosm of Being – the cosmic order, the κόσμος – itself [12] with the balance, the meson, that empathy and pathei-mathos incline us toward living presenced in the ancient Greek phrase καλὸς κἀγαθός,

"which means those who conduct themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner and who thus manifest – because of their innate physis or through pathei-mathos or through a certain type of education or learning – nobility of character." [13]

Which personal conduct, in the modern world, might suggest a Ciceronian-inspired but new type of *civitas*, and one

"not based on some abstractive law but on a spiritual and interior (and thus not political) understanding and appreciation of our own Ancestral Culture and that of others; on our 'civic' duty to personally presence καλὸς κἀγαθός and thus to act and to live in a noble way. For the virtues of personal honour and manners, with their responsibilities, presence the fairness, the avoidance of hubris, the natural harmonious balance, the gender equality, the awareness and appreciation of the divine, that is the numinous." [14]

With καλὸς κἀγαθός, such personal conduct, and such a new *civitas*, summarising how the philosophy of pathei-mathos might, in one way, be presenced in a practical manner in the world.

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Notes

[1] I use the term physis – φύσις – ontologically, in the Aristotelian sense, to refer to the 'natural' and the fluxive being (nature) of a being, which nature is often manifest, in we mortals, in our character (persona) and in our deeds. Qv. my essay *Towards Understanding Physis* (2015) and my translation of and commentary on the Poemandres tractate in *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates* (2017).

[2] As noted elsewhere, I use the term denotatum – from the Latin denotare – not only as meaning "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted," but also as an Anglicized term implying, depending on context, singular or plural instances. As an Anglicized term there is generally no need to use the inflected plural *denotata*.

[3] In the context of the philosophy of *pathei-mathos* the term abstraction signifies a particular named and defined category or form (ἰδέα, εἶδος) and which category or form is a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing.

In respect of denotatum, in *Kratylus* 389d Plato has Socrates talk about 'true, ideal' naming (denotatum) – βλέποντα πρὸς αὐτὸ ἐκεῖνο ὃ ἔστιν ὄνομα, qv. my essay *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*, 2015.

[4] *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*.

[5] Contrary to modern convention I tend to write The State instead of "the state" because I consider The State/The Nation-State a particular abstraction; as an existent, an entity, which has been manufactured, by human beings, and which entity, like many such manufactured 'things', has been, in its design and function, changed and which can still be changed, and which has associated with it a presumption of a supra-personal (and often moral) authority.

In addition, written The State (or the State) it suggests some-thing which endures or which may endure beyond the limited lifespan of a mortal human being.

[6] 'Reality' in the philosophical sense of what (in terms of *physis*) is distinguished or distinguishable from what is apparent or external. In terms of ancient Hellenic and Western Renaissance mysticism the distinction is between the esoteric and the exoteric; between the *physis* of a being and some outer form (or appearance) including the outer form that is a useful tool or implement which can be used to craft or to manufacture some-thing such as other categories/abstractions. With the important ontological proviso that what is esoteric is not the 'essence' of something – as for example Plato's ἰδέα/εἶδος – but instead the *physis* of the being itself as explicated for instance by Aristotle in *Metaphysics*, Book 5, 1015α,

ἐκ δὴ τῶν εἰρημένων ἡ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἡ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὅλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικῇ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐνυπάρχουσα πῶς ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ

Given the foregoing, then principally – and to be exact – *physis* denotes the quidditas of beings having changeament inherent within them; for *substantia* has been denoted by *physis* because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changeaments predicated on it. For *physis* is inherent changeament either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.

That is, as I noted in my essay *Towards Understanding Physis*, it is a meson (μέσον) balanced between the being that-it-was and the being it has the potentiality to unfold to become.

In respect of "what is real" - τῶν ὄντων - cf. the Poemandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum and especially section 3,

φημὶ ἐγὼ, Μαθεῖν θέλω τὰ ὄντα καὶ νοῆσαι τὴν τούτων φύσιν καὶ
γινῶναι τὸν θεόν

I answered that I seek to learn what is real, to apprehend the physis of beings, and to have knowledge of theos [qv. *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, 2017]

[7] Qv. *Towards Understanding Physis*, 2015.

[8] I use the term *affective* here, and in other writings, to mean "having the quality of affecting; tending to affect or influence."

[9] Qv. footnote [6]. In terms of ontology a meson is the balance, the median, existing between the being which-was and the being which-can-be.

[10] This understanding of Being as fluxive - as a changement - was prefigured in the mythos of Ancient Greece with the supreme deity - the chief of the gods - capable of being overthrown and replaced, as Zeus overthrew Kronos and as Kronos himself overthrew his own father.

[11] As explained in my 2014 essay *Education And The Culture of Pathei-Mathos*, the term describes "the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals, world-wide, over thousands of years, as (i) described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts; as (ii) have inspired particular works of literature or poetry or drama; as (iii) expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and as (iv) manifest in more recent times by 'art-forms' such as films and documentaries."

This culture remembers the suffering and the beauty and the killing and the hubris and the love and the compassion that we mortals have presenced and caused over millennia, and which culture

"thus includes not only traditional accounts of, or accounts inspired by, personal pathei-mathos, old and modern - such as the *With The Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa* by Eugene Sledge, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, and the poetry of people as diverse as Sappho and Sylvia Plath - but also works or art-forms inspired by such pathei-mathos, whether personal or otherwise, and whether factually presented or fictionalized. Hence films such as *Monsieur Lazhar* and *Etz Limon* may poignantly express something about our φύσις as human beings and thus form part of the

culture of pathei-mathos."

[12] κόσμον δὲ θείου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον, "a cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings." Tractate IV:2, Corpus Hermeticum.

Cf. Marsilii Ficini, *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda*, XXVI, published in 1489 CE,

Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona.

How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned.

Which is a philosophical restatement of the phrase "quod est inferius est sicut quod est superius" (what is above is as what is below) from the Latin version, published in 1541 CE, of the medieval Hermetic text known as *Tabula Smaragdina*.

[13] The quotation is from my *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*, 2017.

[14] The quotation is from my *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua: Christianity, The Johannine Weltanschauung, And Presencing The Numinous*, 2017.

Appendix II

Pathei-Mathos: Genesis of My Unknowing

There are no excuses for my extremist past, for the suffering I caused to loved ones, to family, to friends, to those many more, those far more, 'unknown others' who were or who became the 'enemies' posited by some extremist ideology. No excuses because the extremism, the intolerance, the hatred, the violence, the inhumanity, the prejudice were mine; my responsibility, born from and expressive of my character; and because the discovery of, the learning of, the need to live, to regain, my humanity arose because of and from others and not because of me.

Thus what exposed my hubris - what for me broke down that certitude-of-knowing which extremism breeds and re-presents - was not something I did; not something I achieved; not something related to my character, my nature, at

all. Instead, it was a gift offered to me by two others - the legacy left by their tragic early dying. That it took not one but two personal tragedies - some thirteen years apart - for me to accept and appreciate the gift of their love, their living, most surely reveals my failure, the hubris that for so long suffused me, and the strength and depth of my so lamentable extremism.

But the stark and uneasy truth is that I have no real, no definitive, answers for anyone, including myself. All I have now is a definite uncertainty of knowing, and certain feelings, some intuitions, some reflexions, a few certainly fallible suggestions arising mostly from reflexions concerning that, my lamentable, past, and thus - perhaps - just a scent, just a scent, of some understanding concerning some-things, perfumed as this understanding is with ineffable sadness.

For what I painfully, slowly, came to understand, via *pathei-mathos*, was the importance - the human necessity, the virtue - of love, and how love expresses or can express the numinous in the most sublime, the most human, way. Of how extremism (of whatever political or religious or ideological kind) places some abstraction, some ideation, some notion of duty to some ideation, before a personal love, before a knowing and an appreciation of the numinous. Thus does extremism - usurping such humanizing personal love - replace human love with an extreme, an unbalanced, an intemperate, passion for something abstract: some ideation, some ideal, some dogma, some 'victory', some-thing always supra-personal and always destructive of personal happiness, personal dreams, personal hopes; and always manifesting an impersonal harshness: the harshness of hatred, intolerance, certainty-of-knowing, unfairness, violence, prejudice.

Thus, instead of a natural and a human concern with what is local, personal and personally known, extremism breeds a desire to harshly interfere in the lives of others - personally unknown and personally distant - on the basis of such a hubriatic certainty-of-knowing that strife and suffering are inevitable. For there is in all extremists that stark lack of personal humility, that unbalance, that occurs when - as in all extremisms - what is masculine is emphasized and idealized and glorified to the detriment (internal, and external) of what is muliebral, and thus when some ideology or some dogma or some faith or some cause is given precedence over love and when loyalty to some manufactured abstraction is given precedence over loyalty to family, loved ones, friends.

For I have sensed that there are only changeable individual ways and individual fallible answers, born again and again via *pathei-mathos* and whose subtle scent - the wisdom - words can neither capture nor describe, even though we try and perhaps need to try, and try perhaps (as for me) as one hopeful needful act of a non-religious redemption.

Thus, and for instance, I sense - only sense - that peace (or the beginning thereof) might possibly just be not only the freedom from subsuming personal

desires but also the freedom from striving for some supra-personal, abstract, impersonal, goal or goals. That is, a just-being, a flowing and a being-flowed. No subsuming concern with what-might-be or what-was. No lust for ideations; no quest for the violation of difference. Instead - a calmful waiting; just a listening, a seeing, a feeling, of what-is as those, as our, emanations of Life flow and change as they naturally flow and change, in, with, and beyond us: human, animal, of sea, soil, sky, Cosmos, and of Nature... But I am only dreaming, here in pathei-mathos-empathy-land where there is no past-present-future passing each of us with our future-past: only the numen presenced in each one of our so individual timeless human stories.

Yet, in that - this - other world, the scent of having understood remains, which is why I feel I now quite understand why, in the past, certain individuals disliked - even hated - me, given my decades of extremism: my advocacy of racism, fascism, holocaust denial, and National-Socialism, followed (after my conversion to Islam) by my support of bin Laden, the Taliban, and advocacy of 'suicide attacks'.

I also understand why - given my subversive agenda and my amoral willingness to use any tactic, from Occult honeytraps to terrorism, to undermine the society of the time as prelude to revolution - certain people have sought to discredit me by distributing and publishing certain allegations.

Furthermore, given my somewhat Promethean peregrinations - which included being a Catholic monk, a vagabond, a fanatical violent neo-nazi, a theoretician of terror, running a gang of thieves, studying Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism; being a nurse, a farm worker, and supporter of Jihad - I expect many or most of those interested in or curious about my 'numinous way' and my recent mystical writings to be naturally suspicious of or doubtful about my reformation and my rejection of extremism.

Thus I harbour no resentment against individuals, or organizations, or groups, who over the past forty or so years have publicly and/or privately made negative or derogatory comments about me or published items making claims about me. Indeed, I now find myself in the rather curious situation of not only agreeing with some of my former political opponents on many matters, but also (perhaps) of understanding (and empathizing with) their motivation; a situation which led and which leads me to appreciate even more just how lamentable my extremism was and just how arrogant, selfish, wrong, and reprehensible, I as a person was, and how in many ways many of those former opponents were and are (*ex concessio*) better people than I ever was or am.

Which is one reason why I have written what I have recently written about extremism and my extremist past: so that perchance someone or some many may understand extremism, and its causes, better and thus be able to avoid the mistakes I made, avoid causing the suffering I caused; or be able to in some way

more effectively counter or prevent such extremism in the future. And one reason - only one - why I henceforward must live in seclusion and *in silencio*.

May 2012

In Loving Memory of Frances, died 29th May 2006

In Loving Memory of Sue, died 4th April 1993

Appendix III

A Matter of Honour

Given the persistence of unsubstantiated rumours and allegations regarding involvement with Occultism, I deemed it necessary to publicly comment, in some detail, about the matter and thus provide 'my side of the story' to compliment my autobiography *Myngath*.

However, as I note here in the conclusion, even though the matter is one of honour I do not expect the plethora of rumours and allegations to suddenly cease as a result of such comments by me, although I perhaps naively nurture a vague hope that what I write here may cause a few individuals to reconsider the veracity of such rumours and allegations.

March 5th, 2012

(Revised December 2012)

Journalists, Allegations, and Propaganda

For many years - in fact up to and including the present - rumours and allegations concerning my involvement with practical occultism and satanism have been in circulation, and regularly referred to and repeated by journalists, and others, in newspapers, magazines, articles and, latterly, on that new medium - greatly susceptible to the spreading of dishonourable allegations and rumours - that has been termed the Internet. One of these allegations is that I am a certain person known as Anton Long.

In the past thirty-seven years only four people, on hearing or learning about such rumours and allegations, have had the decency to ask me, in person, "for my side of the story". The first was Colin Jordan, the second was John Tyndall,

the third was Steve Sargent, and the fourth was a Muslim whom I came to greatly admire and to whom I gave a personal pledge of loyalty.

I have, when asked in person, or via impersonal means of communication such as letters, always denied such allegations of such involvement, as I have, on numerous occasions, challenged anyone to provide evidence to support such accusations. No such evidence has ever been forthcoming ^[1].

For instance, I was for several days, in early 2000, covertly filmed, photographed, and followed by an investigative team working for the BBC as part of their research for a Panorama programme about David Copeland and the London nail-bombings ^[2]. Prior to that surveillance, and for an ever longer period, I was also the subject of covert surveillance by a private investigator hired to undertake preliminary research for that BBC investigation. What did all this covert surveillance and investigation reveal? A satanist? No. Someone living an ordinary, rather boring, life with his wife and family in a small village near Malvern who went to work everyday on a bicycle to a nearby farm.

In addition, since at least 1997 I have no doubt been under regular covert surveillance by Special Branch and MI5 – and especially so since 9/11 given some statements I made while a Muslim – with all my communications (internet, telephonic) monitored via GCHQ. Indeed, following my conversion to Islam and during the time I seemed to be, for the security services and the Police, 'a significant person of interest', I recall many meetings and friendly conversations with one of the Special Branch officers on attachment to the city near where I was then living.

Given such surveillance and interest, no doubt there are records somewhere of my activities as a neo-nazi extremist; of my subsequent life as a radical Muslim supporting Jihad, and finally of my life as a reclusive philosopher, a friend of σοφόν who seeks, through λόγος, to uncover – to understand – Being and beings, and who thus suggests or proposes an ontology of Being. What there will not be, will be any records of 'Myatt as Satanist'.

As I mentioned in my article *Polemos Our Genesis* in respect of such surveillance:

"I have [since at least 1997] worked on the assumption that my communications are monitored, so I have restricted my internet and telephonic communications to friends, family, and to people I personally know or who are personally known to someone I trust. This means two things. That all I communicate is personal, open, transparent, and honest; and that if someone not belonging to this small circle of contacts claims to have had some communication from me – either sent with my name or sent using some pseudonym – then it is bogus."

In respect of rumours and allegations, I have, on a few occasions, challenged

some individuals to a duel with deadly weapons, according to the etiquette of duelling. Not one of the individuals so challenged to a duel had the honour to accept, or issue a public apology in lieu of fighting such a duel.

As I wrote some thirteen or more years ago:

" I have never bothered to have recourse to civil law, and established Courts, to sue those making libellous allegations about me quite simply because the only law I believe in and strive to uphold is the law of personal honour. Given that I have challenged two journalists, according to the law of personal honour, to a duel with deadly weapons for making such malicious allegations, and given that they did not have the honour to accept this challenge or issue an apology in lieu of fighting a duel, I consider my honour vindicated."

Such challenges, the lack of evidence to support the allegations and rumours, and the refusal of those so challenged to a duel of honour to either fight that duel of honour or issue an apology, reveals the truth of this particular matter - at least to those possessed of *arête*.

However, I quite understand why many people - journalists included - did in the past (and possibly still do) impersonally dislike or hate me, given my past and unethical support for, and my past propagation of neo-nazism, and my previous lamentable public incitement of hatred, intolerance, and violence. I was only reaping what I had sown. Thus I believe I also understand the motivation of those journalists and those authors who used rumours and allegations of involvement with Satanism to discredit me, for they were most probably only doing what they thought was necessary in the struggle against racism, extremism, and bigotry. But does that struggle - for what is ethical - justify their (in my view) unethical use of rumours and unproven allegations?

My own rather old-fashioned view is and was that a personal knowing of someone, extending over a period of many months if not a year or more, is the only honourable way to form a reasoned opinion about someone. For honour means the cultivation of traditional gentlemanly and ladylike virtues and one of which virtues is that we strive to treat other human beings in a fair way; ignoring what others have said or written about them; ignoring their past (real or alleged); and giving them the benefit of the doubt unless and until direct personal experience, direct knowledge of them, reveals them to be dishonourable.

Instead of penning material based on such a personal knowing, it occurs to me that some journalists who wrote and published stories about me might knowingly or unknowingly have or had a somewhat prejudiced view, having put some political or personal agenda before veracity, and thence use their position and/or their influence (use the power of the Media) to propagate their opinion, their version of events, and belittle or otherwise denigrate persons they disliked

or did not approve of because they viewed that person not in an empathic, non-judgemental way - as an individual human being whom they had taken the trouble to get to know - but in an impersonal abstract way according to some label or category they had assigned to that individual because of the alleged political or religious views of that individual. Thus, in my own case, they prejudged me - categorized me - as a 'fascist' or a 'nazi' or a 'satanist' - and since they disliked or hated fascists and nazis and considered satanists were immoral and 'evil', they adjudged me a reprehensible person whom they did not like.

Furthermore, in place of a personal knowing - and/or a scholarly research into the life and times of the person they intend to write about and lasting many months if not a year or more - they rely on certain journalistic practices in order to gather information. Practices such as: (1) bribing or persuading corrupt Police officers and government officials and others in order to obtain confidential information about individuals; (2) hacking/intercepting people's private telephonic/internet communications; (3) hiring private investigators to follow individuals and gather information about them; (4) hypocritically attempting to excuse such unethical conduct by making the spurious claim that what they write or say is 'in the public interest' when not only is this so-called 'public interest' an unethical abstraction but also when they as individuals would be offended if someone used such hack journalistic practices against them and their own family. Thus, and for example, a well-known anti-fascist organization could unethically obtain confidential information about its opponents by getting someone sympathetic to their cause in the civil service to obtain national insurance numbers, dates of birth, places of residence, and employment history; as they could employ the services of an unethical private investigator to obtain that and other information via corrupt officials and by covert surveillance.

The result of such journalistic practices, of such a lack of personal knowing, of such a lack of scholarly research, and of such prejudgement of a person, is a hasty piece of work that - to paraphrase what a friend of mine once wrote - possibly says more about the journalist, more about our society, and more about the modern Media, than it does about the person who is the subject of such a piece of work.

In addition, and importantly, are those who in the past have prejudged me - who have written about me as a violent extremist - accepting of individual change, of the virtues of reformation and pardonance? Are they aware of my voluminous recent writings regarding my philosophy of pathei-mathos and those regarding my extremist past and my rejection of extremism? ^[3] Are they open to the possibility of my change and reformation? Or will they continue with 'the party line' and thus continue to insist that I am some sinister person whose recent mystical writings are just some sort of diabolical ploy?

More interestingly (perhaps) could my career as an extremist have been

brought to an earlier end had one or some of my opponents taken the trouble to get to know me personally and rationally revealed to me the error of my suffering-causing, unethical, extremist ways? Perhaps; perhaps not - I admit I do not know. I do know, however, how my personal interaction with, and the ethical behaviour of, the Police I interacted with from the time of my arrest by officers from SO12 in 1998, permanently changed (for the better) my attitude toward the Police.

The Logical Fallacy of Incomplete Evidence - A Case Study

In a Master of Arts thesis entitled *Political Esotericism & the convergence of Radical Islam, Satanism and National Socialism in the Order of the Nine Angles* a post-graduate student named Senholt made certain claims, and drew certain conclusions, in respect of myself and alleged involvement with the Occult group the 'order of nine angles'. One of his claims is that "the role of David Myatt is paramount to the whole creation and existence of the ONA."

Given that this thesis ^[4] is often cited as having 'proved' my involvement, I believe a brief overview of the claims, and proofs offered, seems to be in order, especially as - to my knowledge - it has not so far been subjected to a critical analysis.

A reading of the thesis reveals two interesting things. First, the use of and reliance upon secondary and tertiary sources, many of which are anonymous and many of which are derived from 'the world wide web', that most unreliable source of information. For example, he relies on the book *Black Sun* by Goodrick-Clarke even after admitting it contains errors and that the author offers no proof for the assumptions made in respect of me and the ONA ^[5].

Second, that Senholt, undoubtedly inadvertently, commits the logical fallacy of incomplete evidence ^[6]. That is, the multitude of facts and circumstances which do not support his contention about me and the ONA are omitted.

Thus, and in my view, the Senholt thesis, while interesting, does not meet the requirement, the criteria, of scholarship.

This criteria is essentially two-fold: (i) of detailed, meticulous, unbiased research on and concerning a specific topic or topics or subject undertaken over a period of some considerable time, usually a year or more in duration, and of necessity involving primary source material; and (ii) a rational assessment of the knowledge acquired by such research, with such conclusions about the topic, topics, or subject therefore being not only the logical result of the cumulative scholarly learning so acquired but also possessing a certain gravitas, just like genuine scholars.

His lack of primary research is evident in several factual errors. A few examples:

(1) He repeats Searchlight's claim that their 'expose' of me in the April 1998 issue of their magazine caused internal strife in the National Socialist groups I was then involved with, whereas it had no effect at all, other than to make people laugh, since few if anyone of the extremists in such groups ever took seriously anything stated in *Searchlight*. Instead, as their name for it indicated - *Searchlies* - they regarded it as "just more Jewish propaganda" and indeed as something of a badge of honour to be mentioned in it, with the general feeling being that 'if you get mentioned in *Searchlies* you must be doing something right!'

(2) He asserts that in 1998 the Police raided my home and arrested me. Which is correct. He then asserts that I was arrested again two years later, after the London nailbomb attacks, together with some other Combat 18 members. Which is incorrect. The facts being that I was not arrested in 2000, and that the 1998 raids were the ones that also involved some C18 and NSM members.

(3) He writes that: "His conversion did not escape the mainstream media, and most English newspapers and media-outlets wrote about the incident, including the BBC." In fact, as a search of media archives would have revealed, my conversion in 1998 was never mentioned until two years after the fact, and most of the media publicity in 2000 linking me with Copeland made no mention of it. But perhaps Senholt just meant to write something along the lines of 'the fact that Myatt was, at the time of Copeland's trial, a Muslim did not escape some of the mainstream media...'

Moving on to his claims that there are several things which link me with the ONA. All of these alleged links can be shown not only to be unsupported by the facts but also that they do not even amount, as Senholt states, to circumstantial evidence in support of the claim made that I am Anton Long. The claims are:

(1) The use of alternative dating systems, such as yf, by both me and the ONA.

The fact that group A and group B use the same or a similar alternative dating system is not proof that B is a subset of A, only of borrowing, imitation, adaptation, and possibly of plagiarism.

(2) Some occult texts with my name on them.

See the first part of 'omitted facts and circumstances', below - regarding using the occult as a neo-nazi honeytrap.

(3) That ONA insight roles included supporting neo-nazi groups and terrorism (neo-nazi and Islamic), things which I was openly involved with.

As with alternative dating systems and some ideas (such as acausality - see item (5) below) there is only a possible borrowing, imitation, adaptation, plagiarism.

Also, what is not mentioned are the other ONA insight roles which do not fit in with my life. Such as a police officer, assassin, and joining an anarchist group.

(4) That there is linguistic evidence linking my writings and those of 'Anton Long'.

No evidence from forensic linguistics is presented, so that this claim is just claim about two people using similar concepts and ideas and sometimes the same words.

That is, there is no direct evidence of a link, so that once again this is probably just others borrowing, imitating and adapting already existing ideas and concepts, something that, like plagiarism, happens all the time.

(5) That my departure from Islam (in 2009) coincided with 'Anton Long' writing a plethora of new ONA items.

Since Senholt does not give dates, and does not list the items, before and after this date, this is a rather vague assumption which also ignores two important facts. First, the vast quantity of literature I produced from 2006 onwards (following the suicide of my fiancée) in the form of essays about my Numinous Way/philosophy of patheismathos, letters, poetry, and so on. Second, Senholt does not discuss the fact that there were and are several self-confessed satanists (such as the pseudonymous Jason King) who are of opinion that most if not all of the newer, recent, items attributed to Anton Long were written by someone quite different from the 'original Anton Long' associated with the original ONA (or ONA 1.0 as King described it).

(6) That some of my ideas and concepts - such as acausality and Aeons and Homo Galactica - are and have been used by the ONA.

These concepts date to the early to middle 1970's, evident in such non-occult writings as *Emanations of Urania*, and, later on, in my *Vindex - Destiny of the West*.

As an early advocate of copyleft, I have never been bothered by plagiarism or by others using and adapting my ideas and my 'inventions', such as The Star Game. Thus there is use and adaptation by others, and possibly plagiarism, but no proof of a direct link.

In most of the above cases there is also the established and the admitted fact up until 1998 I knew, as friends, some of the people involved with various occult groups, although - as mentioned to Professor Kaplan ^[7] and others - I did not share their views with us therefore agreeing to disagree on many things. Thus some allowed borrowing of ideas, concepts, and inventions, by such friends is hardly surprising.

Finally, the omitted facts and circumstances that do not support Senholt's claims and conclusions include:

(1) My publicly stated admission, made in the 1990's in correspondence with Professor Kaplan and others - and publicly repeated by me many times in the past ten and more years - that my occult involvement, such as it was in the 1970's and later, was for the singular purpose of subversion and infiltration in the cause of National-Socialism, with part of this being to spread racist ideas and denial of the holocaust. Thus one such occult group I associated with was a honeytrap, and the whole intent was political, revolutionary, not occult and not to with 'satanism'. It was a matter of using, or trying to use, such occult groups for a specific neo-nazi purpose without any interest in or personal involvement with the occult.

As I wrote in part two (1973-1975) of *Ethos of Extremism*:

"In respect of covert action, I came to the conclusion, following some discussions with some C88 members, that two different types of covert groups, with different strategy and tactics, might be very useful in our struggle and thus aid us directly or aid whatever right-wing political party might serve as a cover for introducing NS policies or which could be used to advance our cause. These covert groups would not be paramilitary and thus would not resort to using armed force since that option was already covered, so far as I was then concerned, by C88.

The first type of covert group would essentially be a honeytrap, to attract non-political people who might be or who had the potential to be useful to the cause even if, or especially if, they had to be 'blackmailed' or persuaded into doing so at some future time. The second type of covert group would be devoted to establishing a small cadre of NS fanatics, of 'sleepers', to - when the time was right - be disruptive or generally subversive.

Nothing came of this second idea, and the few people I recruited during 1974 for the second group, migrated to help the first group, established the previous year. However, from the outset this first group was beset with problems for - in retrospect - two quite simple reasons, both down to me. First, my lack of leadership skills, and, second, the outer nature chosen for the group which was of a secret Occult group with the 'offer', the temptation, of sexual favours from female members in a ritualized Occult setting, with some of these female members being 'on the game' and associated with someone who was associated with my small gang of thieves [...]

But what happened was that, over time and under the guidance of its mentor, the Occult and especially the hedonistic aspects came to dominate over the political and subversive intent, with the *raisons d'etat* of blackmail and persuasion, of recruiting

useful, respectable, people thus lost. Hence, while I still considered, then and for quite some time afterwards, that the basic idea of such a subversive group, such a honeytrap, was sound, I gradually lost interest in this particular immoral honeytrap project until another spell in prison for an assortment of offences took me away from Leeds and my life as a violent neo-nazi activist [...]

I had occasion, during the 1980's, to renew my association not only with some old C88 comrades but also with the mentor of that Occult honeytrap when, after of lapse of many years, I became involved again in neo-nazi politics and revived my project of using clandestine recruitment for 'the cause'. By this time, that Occult group had developed some useful contacts, especially in the academic world, so some friendly co-operation between us was agreed; a co-operation which continued, sporadically, until just before my conversion to Islam in 1998.

This clandestine recruitment of mine was for a small National-Socialist cadre which went by a variety of names, beginning with 'G7' (soon abandoned), then *The White Wolves* (c. 1993), and finally the *Aryan Resistance Movement* aka Aryan Liberation Army [qv. Part Five for details].

However, while some of these Occult contacts were, given their professions, occasionally useful 'to the cause' and to 'our people', by 1997 I had come to the conclusion that the problems such association with Occultism and occultists caused far outweighed the subversive advantages; a conclusion which led me to re-write and re-issue a much earlier article of mine entitled *Occultism and National-Socialism*, and which revised article was subsequently published in the compilation *Cosmic Reich* by Renaissance Press of New Zealand. As I wrote in that article - "National-Socialism and Occultism are fundamentally, and irretrievably, incompatible and opposed to each other."

By the Summer of 1998 I had abandoned not only such co-operation and contacts with such Occult groups but also such clandestine recruitment on behalf of National-Socialism, concentrating instead on my Reichsfolk group and my 'revised' non-racist version of National-Socialism which I called 'ethical National-Socialism'. Later still, following my conversion to Islam, I was to reject even this version of National-Socialism."

This explains many things, including early occult articles with my name - not the name 'Anton Long' - in zines such as *The Lamp of Thoth*, and the early version of *Copula cum Daemone* (which in fact was about the birth of Adolf Hitler). One question Senholt does not ask is why both my name and the name Anton Long occur on the same early texts, with the simple answer being that there were two different people, one of whom (me) ceased all involvement with such occult honeytraps in 1998.

(2) My time as a Christian monk and my writings praising Catholicism in particular and Christianity in general.

This does not fit in with the claim of me being a life-long 'devotee of extreme ideologies' or being a satanist, so it is ignored. No attempt was made to use primary sources - to talk to people who knew me as monk and who could recount my life then, and my autobiography *Myngath* where I recount my time as a monk.

No mention is made of my many articles in which I praise Catholicism or refer to it in a positive way. For example, my mention of the numinosity of the Latin Tridentine Mass [qv. *Concerning The Nature of Religion and The Nature of The Numinous Way*] and of the sacrament of confession. As I wrote in *Soli Deo Gloria*:

"It is my personal opinion that traditional Catholicism, with its Tridentine Mass and its particular conservative traditions, was a somewhat better, more harmonious, expression of the numinous (a necessary and relevant expression of the numinous), than both Protestantism and the reforms introduced by the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, and which reforms served only to undermine the numinous, to untwist the threads that held together its 'hidden soul of harmony'."

There is also the small matter of me being married in Church in accordance with the Christian ceremony of marriage. And the small matter of writings of mine such as *Pathei-Mathos - A Path To Humility*.

(3) My article *Occultism and National-Socialism* - written in the 1980's and republished in the 1990's and again around 2006 - and in which I denounced occultism, is ignored.

(4) My writings about National Socialism and Islam - spanning some three decades - are for the most part ignored, except when they are adduced to show I, as a nazi or as a Muslim, incited violence and possibly terrorism. Are they ignored because they in their quantity and content reveal they were written by someone who was at the time of their writing a dedicated neo-nazi and then a dedicated Muslim, and which dedication to such causes most certainly precludes being some sort of sinister person who was just using those causes for his own satanic ends?

In addition, and importantly, what are also overlooked are:

(a) The very real threat of being imprisoned for some of those writings - something surely only a genuine fanatic, a believer, would be prepared to do.

(b) My decades of political activism on behalf of National-Socialism, my two terms of imprisonment resulting from such activities, and my involvement with the paramilitary group Column 88. Which long-term activities over some thirty years, which imprisonment, and which paramilitary involvement surely indicate an inner - a rather fanatical - dedication to that cause.

(c) My travels, as a Muslim, to certain lands, the talks I gave to and the discussions I had with Muslims ^[8], and my regular attendance at Mosques to pray with other Muslims, which would indicate someone

who was, during those years, committed to that Way of Life.

(5) My semi-autobiographical poetry ^[9], my published correspondence, and my ethical philosophy of The Numinous Way/philosophy of pathei-mathos, are completely ignored. Why are these voluminous writings and these ideas of mine ignored? Because they honestly reveal the thoughts and feelings and ideas and experiences and (importantly) the failings of someone so different from a satanist that they have to be ignored.

(6) My years of interior ethical and philosophical struggle to reform, to change, myself - documented in hundreds of letters, essays, poems, especially after the suicide of my fiancée in 2006 - are completely ignored. Why? Because they do not fit in with the idea, with the theory, of me being 'a deceitful, manipulative, sinister trickster', the archetypal satanist.^[10]

It seems, therefore, that *some* of the facts of my life have been interpreted in order to fit a theory regarding some posited and ideal ONA member, with this interpreted ONA life - with inconvenient facts and circumstances conveniently omitted or ignored - then being held up as proof that I am Anton Long, since this truncated, re-interpreted, life of mine allegedly seems to fit in with the person Anton Long is alleged to be or is said to be according to his satanist writings or according to what some anonymous person has written on the World Wide Web.

In essence, there are no proofs presented in the thesis, with many aspects of my life omitted and with no mention, let alone analysis, of those voluminous writings of mine which portray a person almost the exact opposite of a satanist.

As one person wrote in respect of the rumour, the allegation, and the claim, that I am the pseudonymous Anton Long,

"We basically have a choice between: (i) believing Myatt is an astonishingly diabolical, duplicitous, creative, polymathical genius who over four decades has been playing 'sinister games' and who has not deviated from his youthful sinister cunning plan, and which diabolical genius makes the likes of Crowley and LaVey (and everyone else associated with modern Satanism and the 'left hand path') seem pathetic and mundane; or (ii) assuming Myatt has spent most of his adult life as a covert servant of the British state; or (iii) accepting that Myatt has lived a quite adventurous (but not an exceptionally amazing) life, has made mistakes, has suffered a personal tragedy, and has learned from and been changed by his experiences and by that tragedy [...]"

Which of [these] three scenarios is therefore the most plausible? Which offers the most simple, the most rational, explanation for Myatt's peregrinations? Which require the pomp of conspiracy theory,

and which involve superfluous causes, and (sometimes bizarre, sometimes astonishing) ad hoc assumptions and claims?" [11]

Conclusion

In respect of allegations about involvement with satanism and 'being Anton Long' - and in respect of those who manufacture and propagate them - my own experience, my pathei-mathos, manifest in my philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, leads me to two conclusions. My first conclusion is that the research done by some modern authors and even some academics - whose works are published by reputable publishers or quoted by others engaged in academic research - is inadequate and does not meet the taxing criteria of scholarship. Thus these works are unreliable; they have no gravitas, no worth - in terms of learning - for the sagacious.

My second conclusion is that most if not all modern Media that concern themselves with the deeds and lives of individuals - from un-scholarly books and essays, to newspapers, to television news programs and political documentaries, to magazines, to the World Wide Web - are by their very impersonal and mass-media nature unethical. Why? Because they are un-numinous, and encourage and often embody hubris, being as they are the realm of personal opinions, hasty judgement, and misapprehension, and the abode of those for whom 'a story' or some personal/political agenda/prejudice or 'their career' or some unethical un-numinous abstraction (such as 'the public interest') come before honour, empathy, and the reasoned judgement of a personal knowing that has extended over a lengthy period of causal Time and/or been based on an extended period of scholarly research.

A corollary is that those who use such Media, and/or unscholarly books/essays, as sources of allegedly reliable information, as a guide, as *a* or as *the* basis for their judgement about and knowledge of someone or some many, are being unfair and uncultured because lacking in the following necessary virtues: (1) a reasoned, balanced, and thus ethical, judgement; (2) the empathy of manifold direct personal contacts; and (3) a scholarly research and/or a personal knowing extending over many years. Virtues which are the genesis of a genuine understanding of, and thence an unbiased knowledge of, another human being; and virtues which rapid, impersonal, mass means of modern communication actively discourage and which virtues are seldom, it seems, cultivated and employed by those involved with and who use and who rely on such modern means for information.

Quite simply it is matter of honour. Of personal knowing. As I mentioned above, the traditional gentlemanly and ladylike virtues and their cultivation are no longer the standard which individuals are expected to aspire to and to uphold. Thus I do not expect the plethora of rumours and allegations about me to suddenly cease, although I admit I do and perhaps naively nurture a vague

hope that what I have written here may cause a few individuals to reconsider the veracity of such rumours and allegations.

As for who and what I really am, I can only suggest the curious read such writings of mine as the following: (a) *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*; (b) *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*; and (c) *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*.

Notes:

[1] Many people seem to rely on four items in respect of accusations of occult involvement. These items are: (1) an article published in 1998 in the Searchlight magazine entitled *The Most Evil Nazi in Britain*; (2) a 2009 thesis by Senholt entitled *Political Esotericism & the convergence of Radical Islam, Satanism and National Socialism in the Order of the Nine Angles*; (3) a chapter in Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke's book *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism and the Politics of Identity* (published in 2001); and (4) a 1974 interview I allegedly gave to a reporter.

(a) In respect of the Senholt, see the section in this article subtitled *The Logical Fallacy of Incomplete Evidence - A Case Study*.

(b) In respect of Goodrick-Clarke, his identification of me, in his book, as 'Anton Long' is solely based on his claim that I was the author of a manuscript entitled *Diablerie, Revelations of a Satanist* the only known copy of which is in the British Library. No evidence, no sources, are provided for this claim - this assumption. No evidences or sources are given for his other claims about me, such as that "the ONA was founded by David Myatt" or that I was "a long time devotee of satanism."

In addition, Goodrick-Clarke never bothered to contact me regarding these claims of his, and the first thing I knew about them was when the book was published. Had he contacted me, then, I would have been in a position to supply him with the unpublished autobiographical MS that the plagiarist had purloined and used as the source for that fanciful work of fiction entitled *Diablerie*. An unpublished autobiographical MS that I circulated to a few friends, and a few 'interested parties', in the 1980's when I was engaged in writing *The Logic of History* from which the text *Vindex, The Destiny of the West* (published in 1984) derived. One of 'the interested parties' was the publisher of *Vindex, The Destiny of the West* who subsequently published some other pro-NS works of mine. An interesting overview of *Diablerie* is given in the 2012 e-text *A Sceptics Review*

of *Diablerie*, by R. Parker.

It is interesting and - to me - relevant that among the many errors of Goodrick-Clarke are the following:

- i) I was not born in 1952, as he claimed.
- ii) I first met Colin Jordan in 1968, not 1969 as he claimed.
- iii) My two terms of imprisonment for political offences were not both for six months, as he claimed.
- iv) Morrison was never 'my follower' as Goodrick-Clarke claimed (Eddy was never anyone's follower).
- v) Morrison's first name is Eddy, not Eddie as Goodrick-Clarke claimed.
- vi) The Occult lady that 'Anton Long' met in the early 1970's did not 'lead the ONA' as Goodrick-Clark claimed, but rather the Camlad association, with the ONA being founded and then led by Anton Long himself following his meeting with that lady.
- vii) He mentions a certain Wulstram Tedder whom he claims was a former aide of Colin Jordan during the old NSM days, whereas 'W Tedder' was one of the noms-de-plume I used, for instance when writing for John Tyndall's *Spearhead* magazine in the 1980's.

It also interesting that Goodrick-Clarke was ignorant of - or did not bother to discover - many documented things about me during the late 1960's and the early 1970's, such as my arrest by the Yorkshire Regional Crime Squad for organizing a gang of thieves. Instead, the often fictitious account he gives of 'my life' during that time is almost entirely taken from the fictional *Diablerie* manuscript

Such errors, and the lack of evidence to support his assumptions about me, really say all that needs to be said about this particular 'source'.

Interestingly (perhaps) another fanciful work of fiction, similar to *Diablerie*, and purporting to be yet another autobiography by 'Anton Long' seems to have been recently written by someone, possibly for financial gain resulting from selling it at some silly price to collectors of rare Occult memorabilia. The bulk of this new fictional 'autobiography' consists of an early (now out of date) edition of *Myngath* to which various fictional autobiographical stories and 'sinister' incidents and diatribes have been added in line with what might be expected from a mythical 'Anton Long'. Given that the majority of these autobiographical stories in this so-called *Bealuwes Gast* are quite risible and fanciful (and not fundamentally satanic at all), and given that the 'sinister diatribes' seem to have been cut-and-pasted from various internet articles attributed to those who over the years have used the nom-de-plume Anton Long, it seems unlikely that this forgery will ever be taken seriously by anyone. I mean - and to name just one risible example - who can take seriously a 'clockwork orange cult' and the wearing of white lab coats to boot...

Since this *Bealuwes Gast* also contains certain autobiographical information

contained in private correspondence (e-mails) sent by me to a certain correspondent in 2009, I believe I know the identity of the author, or at least the identity of the person who supplied that private information to the author.

(c) In respect of the 1974 'interview', I reproduce a comment I made in part one of my *Autobiographical Notes*, first published in 2001:

" The journalist promised to let me read his final copy before it was published – a condition I had specified before giving the interview – and several photographs of me were taken, with him suggesting I hold something to do with the Occult, since he had noticed I had a collection of horror, and Occult, fiction (most of which in fact were given or loaned to me by Eddy Morrison). Perhaps foolishly, I agreed, holding up some Occult thingy which Joe Short had given to me a few days before. Our conversation lasted for about half an hour, during which the journalist took a few notes (it was not recorded).

I assumed that he would simply recount what I had said. Of course he neither showed me the article before publication, nor printed what I said, except for one short sentence about causing chaos. The journalist also made some rather silly allegations about animal sacrifice, which were investigated at the time by both the Police and the RSPCA whose conclusion was that they were fabrications concocted by the journalist, and perhaps, as I concluded, to get his name on the front page of the newspaper and sell more copies.

What surprised me (and to be honest, upset me, for a while), after this interview, was how so many people believed everything the journalist had written, without bothering to ask me for my side of the story. As if just because something was printed in some newspaper or other then "it must be true" or – as the cliché of mundanes goes: "there is no smoke without fire." And it was then that I learnt several valuable lessons: just how easily people can be manipulated, just how dishonest and conniving (and thus dishonourable) some journalists seemed to be, by nature; and just how powerful the established Media was, able make or break a person's reputation."

(d) In respect of the 1998 *Searchlight* item, I reproduce here a rather polemical item written by me, the fanatic, in 1998 (during my extremist decades) just before my conversion to Islam and privately circulated to the few members of Reichsfolk. The item was subsequently re-issued - with some amendments and alterations made by Richard Stirling - in 2003 as a confidential supplement to the *Reichsfolk Situation Report* of that year.

"Not once, in the past thirty years, has anyone provided any evidence of my alleged involvement with the Order of Nine Angles or with Satanism in general [...]

All *Searchlight* has ever done is make unsubstantiated allegations [...]

One of the unsubstantiated allegations of the *Searchlight* crowd is that I was a friend of someone called Vik Norris – something they blandly stated in their alleged 'expose' of me, under the headline *The Most Evil Nazi in Britain*, in the April 1998 issue of *Searchlight* magazine. No evidence for this allegation was presented then, or subsequently.

Indeed, the article simply contains bland assertions by them about me and Satanism with no evidence presented to support such assertions. For example: (1) they stated that the ONA was "formed by Myatt himself in the early 1980's" but offer no proof for this claim of theirs; (2) they write about "Myatt and his satanic friends" yet never name these alleged 'satanic' friends or provide any proof of involvement by any of my friends with Satanism; (3) they claim that "within days of being investigated", the ONA withdrew its material from the Internet and that I had shaved off my beard in an attempt to disguise myself, with yet again no evidence being provided for these allegations, which were patently untrue, as anyone could have verified at the time by searching the Internet, calling on me at my home or place of work or asking those with whom I worked.

Unsurprisingly, many people over the years have – for personal or political reasons – referenced this *Searchlight* article as 'proof' of my alleged involvement, when anyone of any sagacity on reading that and similar articles about me can rationally deduce that it and other such articles are merely malicious propaganda designed to discredit, but worded in such a dishonourable way that even were one to sue the authors for libel in a British civil court (assuming one had the money to do so) there would be no guarantee of success – a legalistic tactic such dishonourable journalists often rely on when they peddle their lies and make their malicious accusations.

As for me, I have never bothered to have recourse to civil law, and established Courts, to sue those making libellous allegations about me quite simply because the only law I believe in and strive to uphold is the law of personal honour. Given that I have challenged two journalists, according to the law of personal honour, to a duel with deadly weapons for making such malicious allegations, and given that they did not have the honour to accept this challenge or issue an apology in lieu of fighting a duel, I consider my honour vindicated and their own dishonourable character proven."

[2] The completed BBC programme was broadcast, as a 'Panorama Special' entitled *The Nailbomber*, on the 30th June, 2000. Nick Lowles, who at the time was working for *Searchlight*, was listed as the associate producer.

[3] The recent writings of mine include the compilation *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*, as well as voluminous essays about The Numinous Way/The Way of Pathei-Mathos, and which mystical Way of Life is one of compassion, empathy, humility, gentleness, and love.

As I wrote in *Letter To My Undiscovered Self*,

"The honest, the obvious, truth was that I – and people like me or those who supported, followed, or were incited, inspired, by people like me – were and are the problem. That my, that our, alleged 'problems' (political/religious), were phantasmagorical; unreal; imagined; only projections based on, caused by, invented ideas that had no basis in reality, no basis in the simple reality of human beings. For the simple reality of most human beings is the need for simple, human, things: for personal love, for friendship, for a family, for a personal freedom, a security, a stability – a home, food, playfulness, a lack of danger – and for the dignity, the self-respect, that work provides.

But instead of love we, our selfish, our obsessed, our extremist kind, engendered hate. Instead of peace, we engendered struggle, conflict, killing. Instead of tolerance we engendered intolerance. Instead fairness and equality we engendered dishonour and discrimination. Instead of security we produced, we encouraged,

revolution, violence, change.

The problem, the problems, lay inside us, in our kind, not in 'the world', not in others. We, our kind - we the pursuers of, the inventors of, abstractions, of ideals, of ideologies; we the selfish, the arrogant, the hubriatic, the fanatics, the obsessed - were and are the main causes of hate, of conflict, of suffering, of inhumanity, of violence. Century after century, millennia after millennia [...]

That it took me four decades, and the tragic death of two loved ones, to discover these simple truths surely reveals something about the person I was and about the extremisms I championed and fought for.

Now, I - with Sappho - not only say that,

I love delicate softness:
For me, love has brought the brightness
And the beauty of the Sun

but also that a personal, mutual, love between two human beings is the most beautiful, the most sacred, the most important, the most human, thing in the world; and that the peace that most of us hope for, desire in our hearts, only requires us to be, to become, loving, kind, fair, empathic, compassionate, human beings. For that we just have to renounce our extremism, both inner and outer."

As I wrote in *Pathei-Mathos, Genesis of My Unknowing*:

"There are no excuses for my extremist past, for the suffering I caused to loved ones, to family, to friends, to those many more, those far more, 'unknown others' who were or who became the 'enemies' posited by some extremist ideology. No excuses because the extremism, the intolerance, the hatred, the violence, the inhumanity, the prejudice were mine; my responsibility, born from and expressive of my character; and because the discovery of, the learning of, the need to live, to regain, my humanity arose because of and from others and not because of me.

Thus what exposed my hubris - what for me broke down that certitude-of-knowing which extremism breeds and re-presents - was not something I did; not something I achieved; not something related to my character, my nature, at all. Instead, it was a gift offered to me by two others - the legacy left by their tragic early dying. That it took not one but two personal tragedies - some thirteen years apart - for me to accept and appreciate the gift of their love, their living, most surely reveals my failure, the hubris that for so long suffused me, and the strength and depth of my so lamentable extremism.

But the stark and uneasy truth is that I have no real, no definitive, answers for anyone, including myself. All I have now is a definite uncertainty of knowing, and certain feelings, some intuitions, some reflexions, a few certainly fallible suggestions arising mostly from

reflexions concerning that, my lamentable, past, and thus - perhaps - just a scent, just a scent, of some understanding concerning some-things, perfumed as this understanding is with ineffable sadness."

[4] A revised and updated version of Senholt's thesis, under the title *Secret Identities in The Sinister Tradition*, is included in Per Faxneld & Jesper Petersen: *The Devil's Party - Satanism in Modernity*, Oxford University Press, 2012. International Standard Book Number 9780199779246

[5] For my view on Goodrick-Clarke, see footnote 1.

[6] The logical fallacy of incomplete evidence is when material concerning or assumptions about a particular matter are selected and presented to support a particular argument or conclusion, while other material or assumptions which do not support, which contradict, the chosen argument or conclusion are withheld or not discussed. In effect, selective evidence and/or selective argument are used in order to 'prove' a particular point, with such selectivity being deliberate, or the result of fallacious reasoning or unscholarly research.

[7] Refer to footnote #51 of Kaplan's book *Nation and Race*. Northeastern University Press. 1998.

[8] Refer to Mark Weitzmann, *Anti-Semitism and Terrorism*, in Diemel, Hans-Liudger (ed), *Terrorism and the Internet: Threats, Target Groups, Deradicalisation Strategies*. NATO Science for Peace and Security Series, vol. 67. IOS Press, 2010. pp.16-17.

[9] The compilation *Relict* contains my selection of most of those poems, written between 1971 and 2012, that I feel are worth reading.

[10] Mention perhaps should also be made of my many writings about extremism, my extremist past, and my rejection of extremism, which post-date Senholt's thesis, and in which writings I have endeavoured to explore and understand the roots of both my extremism and of extremism itself. These writings include *The Development of The Numinous Way* (2012) and *Recuyle of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos* (2012).

Other such writings are included in the more recent *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*.

Also of interest should be my seven-part retrospective and autobiographical text *The Ethos of Extremism, Some Reflexions on Politics and A Fanatical Life*, and which "personal reflexions on my forty years of extremism may be of interest to a few people, especially given that, as a result of experience, a pathei-mathos, I have come to reject racism, National-Socialism, hatred, and all forms of

extremism, having developed a personal weltanschauung, a non-religious numinous way, centred around empathy, compassion, fairness, and love."

[11] Wright, Julie. *David Myatt, Satanism, and the Order of Nine Angles*. e-text, 2012. Revised 2016.

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All translations by DW Myatt



Relict

A Selection of Poems by David Myatt

My poetry was composed between the years 1971-2012, and is of varying quality. Having undertaken the onerous task of re-reading those poems that I still have copies of, there are in my fallible view only around a dozen that I consider may possibly be good enough to be read by others. This collection contains these few poems, and most are autobiographical in nature.

David Myatt
2012

One Exquisite Silence

These are the moments of an exquisite silence
As we lie together on your sofa, holding, pressing
Our bodies together
As I, gently, stroke your face and hair
And you kiss each finger of my hand.

There is a fire of logs to warm us,
As night descends:

There are no words to confuse,
No time, as we flow, together,
As clouds on a warm Summer's day
Beneath a dome of blue.

There is a peace, here, which fills us
As if we are the world and all the beautiful, peaceful, things
Of the world.

Nearby, your two ginger cats sleep
Secure in the warmth of their world
As we are secured while we lie,
Wordless, feeling those subtle energies
Born from no barriers:
You are me as I am you,
In such exquisite moments.

But you belong to another
And it is against my will, my dreams, desires
That I leave
To walk the lonely miles under moonlight
To where a dreary lamp lights my empty room.

(2003)

Dark Clouds of Thunder

The moment of sublime knowing
As clouds part above the Bay
And the heat of Summer dries the spots of rain
Still falling:
I am, here, now, where dark clouds of thunder

Have given way to blue
Such that the tide, turning,
Begins to break my vow of distance
Down.

A women, there, whose dog, disobeying,
Splashes sea with sand until new interest
Takes him where
This bearded man of greying hair
No longer reeks
With sadness.

Instead:
The smile of joy when Sun of Summer
Presents again this Paradise of Earth
For I am only tears, falling

(c. 2010)

The Sun, The City

The Sun, the city, to wear such sadness down
For I am only one among the many
Where a night-of-dreams becomes unreal
With all that is human living, dwelling,
Faster slower slowing grateful hateful hoping loving
Here:
No Time to relay the inner rush of sorrow
That breaks, broken, by some scheming need to-be
Since the 1-train, conveying, is here to grace me
In perspective.

But there are moments, to still,
When - tasks, duty - done
That inner quietness betrays
So that I sit where

The Sun of English Summer
Would could bring me down
There where the meadow grass had grown
Green greener drier keener
And farm's field by hedge with scent
Would keep me still but sweating -
No cider to induce
Then that needed paradisal-sleep.

And now: now I only this all this,
One being cavorting where one past melds
To keep me silent, still, so that the sidewalk
Is only that sidewalk, there
Where hope, clustering, fastly moves us
On.
Good, bad, indifferent - it makes no difference:
I am no one to judge so many, any,
So that there is - becomes - only the walk faster slower slowing here
And we free in Sun to trust to sleep to-be to seep a dream
Bought at some cost, to many:

Fidelis ad Mortem

And yet there is the Sun, the city, to witness how we can should must break
Such sadness down.

(2012)

Wine

Stale
I once drank you
Knowing no difference because of herbs.

She held me, her cunning hands
That did not wish
Nor offer the warmth that snared my soul:
The wine was
Intoxicating our senses
But only I was drunk:
She laughed.

I needed rest
Dreaming marriage under sun -
Until bright morning came
When she, alas, changed
Her form in the reality of the room
And I was left to walk with my sack
Down the dusty track
Past a grove of sun-burnt trees
Toward those distant hills:

And yet the white-washed house was only
One step
Along my Way.

(1972)

No Sun To Warm

There is an ineffable sadness
For your eyes betray that warmth, that beauty,
That brings me down
To where even my street-hardened Will cannot go:
So I am sad, almost crying

Outside, there is no sun to warm
As yesterday when I touched the warmth of your breasts
And the wordless joy of ecstatic youth
Lived to suffuse if only briefly with world-defying life
This tired battle-bruised body

But now: clouds, rain-bleakness
To darken such dreams as break me.
For there are many places I cannot go.

(1974)

Closeness Becomes Us

This is the life of silence
As she lives warm, within -
There where a net of dreams is woven
By a day's walk, a night's love,
And those hopes that stretched out as our hands entwining
Seeking some horizon
Beyond
Where the cloudy sky of our dull October day
Became the silky sandful warmful Summer smoothness of beach
Beside a sea azure, Sunful, clear - and warming.

These are the moments of her silence
As she lies warm within such arms as hold her
And the blood of sleep, slowing, keeps her still
Because the nightful sky of night is still

With stars
And the breath to keep her living
Is a gentle tide to ebb to rise to flow
Upon our shore of sharing.

There is sand still – a little – between her toes
Unwashed by such haste as brought us
Back, back to one bed shared
Because we could not would not wait
To be together to seep again
Here where, door locked, the world divides
To be only that which we feel dream see, and flow
Here where daylight seeped sepia-softly
To become our starlit night bright
With stars.

Now, now surely I have dreams memories ecstasy enough
To keep the inner smile
As time, my time, seeps to break me
As those three score years and ten seek to break
Each Earth-dwelling being of Life.

So, three decades older, I touch and touch with gentle touch
The warm soft tautful flesh that keeps her youth
The way our warmth melds us
As the scent of night, sea and sex
Melds together to be a perfume for her Sun
To warm me here
Where I am nothing more than moments.

For these are such moments of a loveful silence
Seeping
That I could die here peaceful in her sleepful scented arms

(2009)

Such A Poem As This

There is work - the overtime - long walks under Sun, stars
To keep me distracted
For there is then no hours-long dwelling on your absence:
But this music undid such willful cunning plans:

You were there, then, as that Lute sounded,
Here, so real in memory, I touched our dream:
Warm, sensuous, as when that day I held your hand, felt your body
And empathy, sorrow, memory, made you cry.
I loved you then in that moment with a strength which surprised me
And had to fight to keep
That truth, my tears, from bursting forth:
Such love a torrent sweeping my calm of years
Away.

This week will become the month of loss,
This month a toil endured
As when the weary soil, drought-kept,
Waits, waiting, to bring forth flowering joy from seeds,
Like memory, sown from tears that are earth's rain,
My pain.

I know - and because I know the you
The years of sadness, doubt, self-loathing, hid and hides away,
I love the love that has no words I know:
Such love that is only the touch of you, the smile of you, the need of you, the scent of you,
The longing to be with you as if my love might redeem
The sorrows which made you hide
Still hiding a hope, within.

So much to say before you travel to stay a month away
With he who is your choice:
So much to miss I am, will be, lost
Needing now to run the miles to your house
Bearing such a poem as this.
This is all I have -
No house, car, money, prospects.
Only a love, a dream
Seen when I kissed your tears before you rested your head
On my shoulder that one night of belonging
When we knew, felt, touched, remembered, the essence.

But - three decades of love, thwarted - I am no longer naive enough to believe
You will be mine
And so I shall not, cannot, will not - must not - call upon you bearing
Such a poem as this.

2003

A Summer Sun

Crows calling while sheep cry
By the road that shall take them
To their death:
I sit, while sun lasts
And bleeds my body dry
In this last hour before dark
On a day when a warm wind
Carried the rain that washed
A little of this valley
Like the stream washes
My rock:

There are no trees to soften
This sun - only heather and fern
To break the sides of the hill.
I cannot keep this peace
I have found -
It seems unformed like water
Becomes unformed without a vessel
A channel or some stream:
It cannot be contained
As I contain my passion and my dreams.

There are no answers I can find
Only the vessel of walks in hills
Alone
Whereby I who seek
Am brought toward the magick peak
That keeps this hidden world
Alive:

It does not last
But like the cirrus cloud
Is blown by breeze to free
A summer sun.

(c. 1975)

Only Time Has Stopped

Here I have stopped
Because only Time goes on within my dream:
Yesterday I was awoken, again,

And she held me down
With her body warmth
Until, satisfied, I went alone
Walking
And trying to remember:

A sun in a white clouded sky
Morning dawn yellow
Sways the breath that, hot, I exhale tasting of her lips.
The water has cut, deep, into
The estuary bank
And the mallard swims against the flow -
No movement, only effort.
Nearby - the foreign ship which brought me
Is held by rusty chains
Which, one day and soon
And peeling them like its paint,
Must leave.

Here I shall begin again
Because Time, at last, has stopped
Since I have remembered the dark ecstasy
Which brought that war-seeking Dream

(c. 1978)

Relict

Sun, broken by branch, seeps
Into mist
Where spreading roots have cracked
The stones, overgrown, perhaps,
For an hundred years
From a seed, flesh fed, the oak
Sheltering

Mary
Relict of William

And a breeze, stirring again
This year
The leaves of an Autumn's green gold

(1976)

The Two Faces

I am the two faces of God -
Vox Patris Caelestis -
While, within, a lewd Satan grins
Playing at Change:
My pieces are human who cried
At my hurt.
I am alone, the cry
While Treble voices sing
Echoing, and strange shadows long dead
Dance too briefly along the cloister wall.

There is pain as I stare
Past dying sun and a valley
Winter cold
Trying to believe while stars break
And a crescent moon
Glowing like the whore's eyes
In that dark room
Jibbers over the heavy breasts
Of the hill:
No cloud

To veil her shame.

No one, nothing
Answers. Only
Air, and I sit, still waiting
And remembering prayer.
In the ruins, my dead self comes to life
Rising slowly, worm-slowly
To the first singing blackness
Of night.

No answers, nothing:
Only this tramp sheltering
In the ruins of a church -
And memories, yes there are memories
Glowing
Like the lies of my life

(1974)

Letter

It is raining
And I am watered
And cold

There is warmth in love
Which explains my wait
By this road while cars pass
Noisy in the shielding dark:
My spirit is not seen as it sits
On the wooden bench where hill
Meets valley sky
And where a standing stone waits
To whisper words
Of a language that has died.
But I listen, while rain falls,
Hearing your cry.

Always a dream or a memory
Lead us on
And we wait like children
Trusting in the spirits of the Earth.
We love unsuspecting
While they our lovers scheme,
Succour themselves on our blood
And bleed us dry.

There is a sun as we sit
In the heat of a summer
On this bench as new lovers
Holding hands -
Transmuting all the dark days
The tears of our past
In the touch that mingles our auras
As they must be mingled to bring
The words of our waiting stone
Alive:

Always this dream
Leads me on.
But it is raining
And in the rain I hear
Your spirit cry

(1987)

In The Night

A bright quarter moon
As I ran alone in the cold hours
Along the sunken road that twists
Between hill-valley and stream:

There was a dream, in the night
That woke me – a sadness
To make me sit by the fire
Then take me out, moon-seeing
And running, to hear only my feet
My breath, to smell only the coldness
Of the still, silent air:

But no spell, no wish
Brought my distant lover to me
And I was left to run slowly
Back
And wait the long hours
To Dawn.

By the fire, I think of nothing
Except the warmth of my love
No longer needed.

(1986)

cc David Myatt 1972-2012
Fourth Edition

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Four Forgotten Poems

by David Myatt

The Returning

All seasons transcend
Since each day differs
Through its cloud and its sun.

In the wood, gold spreads
Slowly
Like the slow death it is
As every soft colour is returned.
Only pasture remains green
Below mist
While brown earth is broken
By plough:

Sufficiency is shelter itself
And the once reluctant farmer nods
As he turns with his bent back
Where sun rests
Between its hill and his home.
It will be gone, soon, this sun
Lost
While stars stare down the sky
Where for fifty years
His house has stood
Stone grey among muddy sheep-torn grass.

There was a horse, then,
To plough the steep slope
Of his hill: a different way
When even the village
Fifteen furlongs west
Was wary of all change.

But shelter is sufficiency itself
He knows
As he walks the short path
To his home.
There will be fire,
A son's warm wife
To welcome this leathery skin.

He is old, he knows,
Worn like the oak, and his path
Which three years of bloody hands
Tore from Her earth
And which each year She renews.

All rain can be smelt

In the wood, wind spins
Slowly, like Earth.
There is a mist, a mingling
While the fallen man waits among leaves
Like Her kestrel
For death.

Every wind is his breath.

(c.1984)

o o o o o

A Warm Day One Spring

In the hills
Where heat haze is scattered
By wind
Wisdom sits like the shepherd
Waiting;
No words suffice
While bleached bracken
Scratches beneath blue.

Nearby, heather sprouts
Where silty shales chewed
By frost
Crumble slowly like life:

There is no haste
Where eighty years of wind
Have twisted the small Douglas tree
Like this Peregrine twists
Itself in flight:

Somewhere a death

While on the road below
Two cars scurry
Noiseless like lice:
Soon they will rust
Just as I will be bleached bones
And dust.

Little endures
Like this rock

(c.1984)

o o o o o

Travelling

A hot day in Summer as I walk
Slowly
But fastly sweating
Down this road
While speeding traffic passes
As speeding traffic does:
The drivers seem unaware or careless
Of my slowness
And grimly swerve to almost
Touch me
Here where a town - ten miles distant - creeps
Over a river to spread across
A narrow greening plain.

There is food in the town,
A path's beginning to take me upward
And turning through a forest
To the sheep-sided hills
Beyond.

Slowly, my world passes -
I cannot comprehend the rush
And sit in the hot sun on a low wall
Having passing through the breathless body
Of this town.

Even my water is warm
And suspicious faces watch me
As their owners in gardens surround themselves
With sound:
There seems a rushing in the seeping loud
Music, a barrier
To keep my slow moving solitary travelling world

Away -
I smile, but my beard, my worn clothes -
Perhaps my eyes - mark me.

A few hours
And it is good to be alone again
Among the peace of hills
Where my walking slowness seems to frame
Each slowly passing world:

Above - clouds
To herald some future rain.

(1975)

o o o o o

Remembering

Haunting
As the cry of the owl
Within the frost of night
When I walked to this stream
With no moon:

I saw your face as I waited for dreams,
Tired by my waiting:
You the ghost walking the path
Of my life.

Sun came, slowly, bringing
A little mist around the stream,
A spreading calm to make me stretch
And walk like an old man
Bent by cold and doubt.

Here in the valley no trees exist
To greet in wakeing this Winter's sun -
There is only frost-bruised heather
And fern,
No song
Of birds, only
The timbre of stream.

Slowly, cold-raw hands
Transform a little warmth
From my dream:
How many more nights shall I need
To remember
Until I cannot forget
Again?

(1987)



Sappho

Poetic Fragments

Translated by DW Myatt

Prefatory Note

The aim of the present translation is to try and present something of the unadorned beauty of Sappho's Greek.

From the many fragments that remain of her poetry, I have chosen those that in my fallible opinion best reflect something of this beauty. The text used is that of Lobel and Page [*Poetarium Lesbiorum Fragmenta*, Oxford 1955] - and the numbering of the Fragments in this present work follows that of their text.

.... in the text indicates a break in the fragment; [] indicates a conjecture.

DW Myatt
1986

Fragment 1

Deathless Aphrodite – Daughter of Zeus and maker of snares –
On your florid throne, hear me!
My lady, do not subdue my heart by anguish and pain
But come to me as when before
You heard my distant cry, and listened:
Leaving, with your golden chariot yoked, your father's house
To move beautiful sparrows swift with a whirling of wings
As from heaven you came to this dark earth through middle air
And so swiftly arrived.

Then you my goddess with your immortal lips smiling
Would ask what now afflicts me, why again
I am calling and what now I with my restive heart
Desired:

Whom now shall I beguile
To bring you to her love?
Who now injures you, Sappho?
For if she flees, soon shall she chase
And, rejecting gifts, soon shall she give.
If she does not love you, she shall do so soon
Whatsoever is her will.

Come to me now to end this consuming pain
Bringing what my heart desires to be brought:
Be yourself my ally in this fight.

Fragment 16

For some – it is horsemen; for others – it is infantry;
For some others – it is ships which are, on this black earth,
Visibly constant in their beauty. But for me,
It is that which you desire.

To all, it is easy to make this completely understood
For Helen – she who greatly surpassed other mortals in beauty –
Left her most noble man and sailed forth to Troy
Forgetting her beloved parents and her daughter
Because [the goddess] led her away

Which makes me to see again Anactoria now far distant:
For I would rather behold her pleasing, graceful movement
And the radiant splendour of her face

Than your Lydian chariots and foot-soldiers in full armour

Fragment 22

Gather your [lyre] and sing for me
[Soon]
As desire once again [enhances] your beauty:

Your dress excites, and I rejoice
For I once doubted Aphrodite
But now have asked that soon
You will be with me again

Fragment 31

I see he who sits near you as an equal of the gods
For he can closely listen to your delightful voice
And that seductive laugh
That makes the heart behind my breasts to tremble.

Even when I glimpse you for a moment
My tongue is stilled as speech deserts me
While a delicate fire is beneath my skin -
My eyes cannot see, then,
When I hear only a whirling sound
As I shivering, sweat
Because all of me trembles;
I become paler than drought-grass
And nearer to death ...

Fragment 34

Awed by her brightness
Stars near the beautiful moon
Cover their own shining faces
When she lights earth
With her silver brilliance
Of love

Fragment 23

When I look at you
I know that even Hermione
Was not such as you -
Fairer to compare you to Helen
The golden-haired

Fragment 41

Beautiful girls, towards you
My thoughts will never change

Fragment 47

Love shook my heart
Like the mountain wind
Falls upon trees of oak

Fragment 94

I can reveal to you that I wished to die –
For with much weeping she left me
Saying: “Sappho – what suffering is ours!
For it is against my will that I leave you.”
In answer, I said: “Go, happily remembering me
For you know what we shared and pursued –
If not, I wish you to see again our [former joys]
The many braids of rose and violet you [wreathed]
Around yourself at my side
And the many garlands of flowers
With which you adorned your soft neck:
With royal oils from [fresh flowers]
You anointed [yourself]
And on soft beds fulfilled your longing
[For me]

Fragment 96

She honoured you like a goddess
And delighted in your choral dance.
Now she is pre-eminent among the ladies of Lydia
As the rose-rayed moon after the sinking of the Sun
Surpasses all the stars and spreads it's light upon the sea
And the flowers of the fields
To beautify the spreading dew, freshen roses
Soft chervil and the flowering melilot

Restless, she remembers gentle Atthis –
Perhaps her subtle judgement is burdened

By your [fate]

For us, it is not easy to approach
Goddesses in the beauty of their form
But you

Fragment 58

Age seizes my skin and turns my hair
From black to white:
My knees no longer bear me
And I am unable to dance again
Like a fawn.

What could I do? I am not ageless:
My youth is gone.
Red-robed Dawn, immortal goddess,
Carried [Tithonus] to earth's end
Yet age seized him
Despite the gift from his immortal lover

I love delicate softness:
For me, love has brought the brightness
And the beauty of the sun

Fragment 126

May you sleep on the breasts
Of your tender companion

Fragment 130

Once again, desire -
That looser of limbs and bitterly sweet -
Makes me to tremble
You are irresistible

Fragment 138/147

Believe me, in the future someone
Will remember us

Because you love me
Stand with me face to face
And unveil the softness in your eyes

cc David Wulstan Myatt 1986, 2017

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Image credit:

Sappho, depicted on Attic red-figure kalathos, c. 470 BCE.
Provenance: Akragas (Sicily) and currently in Staatliche Antikensammlungen, Munich



1995: Visiting A Catholic Church

ooo

David Myatt: Three Interviews

Between April and August of 2022 David Myatt gave three interviews each one of which was informative about his philosophy of pathei mathos, his life experiences, about extremism, and about his current views, and which together provide a fairly comprehensive understanding of not only Myatt himself but also of his philosophy, or weltanschauung as he prefers to call it.

In addition to these interviews we include the June 2022 text 'Misunderstanding Denotata In Myatt's Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos' which provides an insightful overview of his philosophy.

[What Is The Meaning Of Myatt, April 2022](#)

[Some Questions For DWM, May 2022](#)

[The Uncertitude Of Knowing, August 2022](#)

[Misunderstanding Denotata In Myatt's Philosophy](#)

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DAVID MYATT AND THE “PINCH OF DESTINY”

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF MYATT?

An Interview with David Myatt, April 2022

By Nameless Therein



FOREWORD BY NAMELESS THEREIN

This interview was intended as more than a series of thoughtful and challenging questions for David Myatt. When I sat down to compose these questions, I realized two things. The first was that most critics tend to repeat the same misinterpretations of his work rather than engage it from the diversity of perspectives required to understand his ideas. The second was that apologists of his work tend to repeat what Myatt has already written numerous times, threatening a dogmatic approach to something that requires a radical openness and fluidity. Neither are fully equipped to address his work.

In an effort to break out of that circle, I decided to do a test. Let's call it the Lothian test. The Lothian test pairs two of the most compelling minds I have known in a dialogue spanning over two thousand years. The first was my ex-Harvard professor, a wise and erudite Protestant. The second was David Myatt, whose influence cannot be overstated. Both men significantly shaped my spiritual and intellectual worldview in their own way.

I felt it was time for these two figures to have a conversation. Having received the intellectual legacy that my ex-Harvard professor passed down to me and having been entrusted with some of the wisdom he imparted, I wanted to re-open that dialogue with Myatt.

The dialogue concerns the relationship between faith and reason in Western thought over the last two thousand years of intellectual and religious history. It involves the confrontation between Hellenic and Christian thought, pagan pluralism and religious monism, abstraction and particulars, religious and secular faith, as well as human and divine reason. From Thomas Howard to William James and Emil Cioran to Mother Teresa, it is my hope that this interview will contextualize David Myatt’s work in a new and insightful way, one that will help equip and inspire a new generation. Just as each individual must make their way through their own “pinch of destiny” on the quest for meaning, so too must everyone undergo their own form of the Lothian test. But in measuring one’s success, one must stand on a needle point: one that punctures all pretense and draws out truth, as a wise man once told me.

With that, I present the interview.

Nameless Therein
A hot day in summer
July 18, 2022

Nameless Therein: You have stated that your philosophy of pathei-mathos is expiative.¹ As expressions of that expiation, you mention that your writings and reclusiveness “do little to offset the deep sadness felt, except in fleeting moments.”² In your “desire for a numinous non-religious expiation,”³ your life may be said to resemble a kind of secular restoration of the Fall. Insofar as your non-religious expiation resembles what Wilfred Cantwell Smith describes as faith, involving “man’s capacity to perceive, to symbolize, and to live loyally and richly in terms of a transcendent dimension to his and her life,”⁴ the “deep sadness felt” about your past is perhaps offset less by what you have learned and more so by who you have become. In this – in the way your own pathei-mathos has shaped you – one can sense sincere atonement. Could you comment on how pathei-mathos can help one “live loyally and richly in terms of a transcendent dimension to his ... [or] her life”?

David Myatt: I admit I do not presume to know – I do not even now understand – “how pathei-mathos can help one live loyally and richly in terms of a transcendent dimension to someone’s life”.

All I do know is what I wrote over a decade ago about something which somehow in some ineffable way seemed to personally work for me:

“the so beautiful sound of birdsong in English woods and fields in early May; or perhaps the sight of small cumulus clouds slowly passing beneath the sky of blue in Summer when Sun so warms us that we stop to wipe away the sweat upon our brow; or, perhaps, that so special scent of a meadow field in middle June after rain when Sun, re-emerging from passing stormful cloud, dries us and our so fragile land, and we are moved – so moved, so still, amid the country silence – that we lie down awhile beside the Hawthorn

hedge to feel again this simple English paradise of field, farm, life, and burgeoning birth.”⁵

But this, such a heritage, such a still so very numinous place, is not an option for so very many around the world that I can only and so fallibly suggest it might possibly be such a Nature in such a place as still exists, and a personal loyal love of partners and of family bound together through personal honour.

NT: On the subject of faith, Wilfred Cantwell Smith notes that “faith is that quality of or available to humankind by which we are characterized as transcending, or are enabled to transcend, the natural order.”⁶ This points to an interesting disparity you previously highlighted regarding the activities of your extremist decades, which were marked by a desire to “bring-into-being some-thing that ... [you now recognize] would not and could not, in centennial terms (let alone in millennial or cosmic terms) endure.”⁷ In the desire to “stop or somehow try to control, to shape, the natural flux of change ... [and] to preserve, whatever the cost, what we or others after us might bring-into-being,” you noted the underlying belief that you and your associates “would or could do what no one in human history had been able to do: make our presencings immortal, or at least immune to the natural cycle of birth-life-decay-death.”⁸ Having since rejected those beliefs, in addition to the activities and writings of your extremist decades, how would you now reconcile the desire to create enduring works capable of transcending the natural order with a rejection of politics, religion, and violent social activism?⁹

DM: Again I have no abstractive, generalized, ideological supra-personal answers. All I have is my feeling, my intuition, my fallible learning that it is a personal loyal love and a very personal honour in the immediacy of the moment which matter.

NT: Could you comment on how to reconcile the tension between the universal application of pathei-mathos to our species across thousands of years of human history on the one hand and the recognition of our own mortality as a human species on the other? In other words, how is pathei-mathos meant to endure according to what you call the “Cosmic Perspective”¹⁰ in light of our own mortality, and particularly without a “religious” dimension that transcends the natural order? Might pathei-mathos’ endurance be immanent rather than transcendent, presenced in our mortality rather than beyond it? And how might this relate to Aeschylus’ original sense of πάθει μάθος (pathei-mathos) with respect to “[the immortal Zeus] guiding mortals to reason”?¹¹

DM: Is there or should there ever be anything which is or which is suggested as a ‘universal’ or a religious or an ‘ideological’ supra-personal application or causal abstraction? Something believed or hoped to be enduring?

My own fallible experience is that there is not and perhaps should never be again, since all supra-personal suggestions or applications or abstractions however denoted in my experience and in respect of my classical learning immediately or sooner later are the genesis of hubris and suffering.

Thus and yet again I am returned to a personal loyal love between two people and/or their family and to a very personal honour in the immediacy of the moment.

NT: William James said that religion is “the individual pinch of destiny’ as the individual feels it.”¹² James’ characterization of religion was largely a response to the question, “What is the character of this universe in which we dwell?”¹³ In order to address this question, he noted that one “must go behind the foreground of existence and reach down to that curious sense of the whole residual cosmos as an everlasting presence, intimate or alien, terrible or amusing, lovable or odious, which in some degree everyone possesses.”¹⁴ In “[t]his sense of the world’s presence,” we become either “strenuous or careless, devout or blasphemous, gloomy or exultant, about life at large.”¹⁵ And our reaction, he says, which is “involuntary and inarticulate and often half unconscious,” is the “completest of all our answers” to the above question.¹⁶

In making cosmic meaningful tragedy from the individual to the broader context of our species, it seems that this “pinch” has been present throughout your life and your philosophy despite your “desire for a numinous non-religious expiation”¹⁷ and your view that mainstream religions no longer provide “a satisfactory answer to the question of suffering ... [or of] what may be required for us to consciously change ourselves for the better.”¹⁸ In reaching down to “that curious sense of the whole residual cosmos as an everlasting presence,” how would you describe your reaction to that “sense of the world’s presence,” and how has that changed over the course of your life?

DM: We human beings especially of the male genus and often because of centuries of so-called “thinking” make matters of existence, Being, and morality seem complicated, and offer our own suggestions as to how matters could or perhaps should be.

But over the course of my life I seem to have learned that the suffering such suggestions cause and the hubris of humans continues. The invention of causal abstractions continues, century after century. And the Cosmos with its billions of galaxies and its perhaps billions of life-habitable planets continues. So, we humans here on Terra Firma are what? Some transient fallible persons sallying forth – and killing, causing suffering – on behalf of some ancient or modern abstraction such as some religious faith or some nation-State or on behalf of some personal instinct we seemingly cannot control?

Simply expressed: there should no longer be an aspiration for a broader supra-personal meaning.

NT: William James’ description of religion seems oddly in keeping with what, in paraphrasing Cicero, you have described as the essence of ancient European paganism.¹⁹ Additionally, your characterization of the ancient sense of *pathei-mathos* as wisdom arising from personal suffering²⁰ also seems in keeping with the Pyrrhonian sense of *ataraxia* (ἀταραξία) or “freedom from worry,”²¹ which is reached by raising “oneself above a condition of misery and despair” through self-mastery and fortitude.²² With respect to the ancient question, “How can we keep from suffering?”²³ your life and writings seem to fluctuate between resilience and renunciation. In this, there seems to be an almost Stoic undertone with respect to how the ideas that have shaped your worldview do not resemble “an interesting pastime or

even a particular body of knowledge, but ... a way of life.”²⁴ You have mentioned the influence of Marcus Aurelius on your thinking, which may explain that undertone.²⁵ Looking back, how do you view the Stoic notion of *elevating* sorrow rather than abolishing it²⁶ in order to overcome and then meaningfully reshape it in our lives? Does this resilience in the face of tragic renunciation have any bearing on the overarching theme of honor throughout your life?

DM: As ever these days, I am wary of a general term – in this case Stoicism – being applied to describe what a person or some persons wrote or such writings ancient or otherwise. In this matter before answering a specific question I would have to read critical editions of Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, and the necessary others, and then undertake my own translations and commentaries with particular attention to what words such as *tempus* and *πένθος* and *εὐδαιμονία* in their work may have meant and implied to those writers and their contemporaries and not what is meant or assumed now by such terms as ‘time’ and ‘grief’ and ‘good fortune’/‘happiness’. Such a task would occupy me for perhaps a year if not more. One of many comparisons of interest might be between Seneca's *De Consolatione ad Marciam* and how *Antigone* is portrayed by Sophocles and *Klytemnestra* by Aeschylus.

But from previous readings of Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, and some of the necessary others I would in regard to honour answer in the negative given how I now understand honour as an individual feeling related to the numinous which cannot be abstracted out from a personal moment in the form of some written or aural code, ethical or otherwise, or become a basis for or a part of some -ism or some -ology.

NT: On the subject of religion and the previous question on Stoicism, I am reminded of the Romanian nihilist Emil Cioran's vitriolic but insightful words from his little-known article, “A Bouquet of Heads.” Remarking on Christianity and Stoicism in the ancient world, he says the following:

The Greco-Roman twilight deserved a better enemy, a better promise, a better religion. How can you believe even in the shadow of progress when you remember that those Christian fables, with no trouble at all, smothered Stoicism! If Stoicism had been able to grow and spread, to seize hold of the world, man would have *come through*, or almost. Resignation, made obligatory, would have taught us to endure our suffering with dignity, to silence our voices, to face our Nothingness coldly.... To accuse no one, to stoop neither to sadness, nor joy, nor regret, to reduce our connection with the world to a harmonious play of defeat, to live condemned and serene, never imploring the deity but rather putting him on notice.... That was not possible. Stoicism, overrun from all sides and faithful to its principles, had the elegance to die without a struggle. A religion founds itself on the ruins of wisdom, but the tactics used by religion are scarcely appropriate to wisdom.²⁷

Many would agree that you have endured suffering with dignity over the course of your life. But rather than founding your legacy on the ruins of wisdom, you appear to have forged an existential crucible from which many now draw inspiration. How would you like to see that

inspiration embodied in the lives of those who look up to you? And if those ruins were a monument to the past, what virtues and activities would you like to see take their place?

DM: My answer can possibly be deduced from my previous one. Just as my fallible understanding is that honour cannot be abstracted from a personal moment to become some sort of principle or guide, so my similar fallible understanding is that a person who learns by means of *pathei-mathos* cannot be or rather should not become such a guide or even an example and certainly should not assume any sort of guiding role.

NT: In a 2017 interview, you noted that both the Numinous Way and the philosophy of *pathei-mathos* now seem to you “a rather wordy and a rather egoistic, vainful, attempt to present what I (rightly or wrongly) believed I had learned about myself and the world as a result of various experiences.”²⁸ You add that, in your solitude and now concentrating on your translations, you live “each day as it passes ... unconcerned about what my being – and my relation to Being – is now or perhaps should be.”²⁹ In some respects, your withdrawal into solitude resembles Mother Teresa’s confession of feeling a “deep loneliness,” having previously confessed that her “own soul ... [remained] in deep darkness [and] desolation” as she began to doubt her faith.³⁰ In this, there may be an element of truth in what Emil Cioran says of solitude: “Solitude is not a gift, it is a mission: to rise to it, to take it upon oneself, is to renounce that portion of baseness needed to guarantee the success of any enterprise whatever, religious or otherwise.”³¹ On the other hand, C. S. Lewis’ point that “[e]very mode of being in the whole universe contributes to ... [man]; he is a cross-section of being”³² carries some weight. These two tensions additionally seem to resolve in the words of Gregory the Great (540-604), who said that “because man has existence (*esse*) in common with stones, life with trees, and understanding (*discernere*) with angels, he is rightly called by the name of the world.”³³

The sentiments expressed by all of these figures point to an important concern: In your solitude and your lack of concern with what your being and your relation to Being is now or should be, one senses the danger of also losing concern for your relation to other beings, and specifically to other human beings. In the shadow of commonality you share with those who take inspiration from your work, what do you hope to wager in the eclipse between how they see your life and how they speak your name – perhaps not as the name of *the* world, but certainly as a name of theirs?

DM: The question of possibly “losing concern for your relation to other beings, and specifically to other human beings” has bothered me and does bother me and the only answer I have is again that of honour in the immediacy of the living moment which seems to me the only numinous exception to ‘not interfering in the world’ however good one believes one’s interference to be.

All this means seems to me to amount to doing what is honourable when personally, in the immediacy of the moment, confronted with someone or some many doing what is dishonourable in relation to another person or persons or to another living being. My intuition is that a person of honour either instinctively knows what is dishonourable or has learned so from personal experience.

NT: In a letter to his brother Henry James during the completion of his great work on the *Principles of Psychology*, William James said, “I have to forge every sentence in the teeth of irreducible and stubborn facts.”³⁴ In contrast to European science in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Alfred North Whitehead notes that James was alluding to a “new tinge to modern minds ... [as] a vehement and passionate interest in the relation of general principles to irreducible and stubborn facts.”³⁵ Whitehead elaborates on this, noting that:

All the world over and at all times there have been practical men, absorbed in “irreducible and stubborn facts”: all the world over and at all times there have been men of philosophic temperament who have been absorbed in the weaving of general principles. It is this union of passionate interest in the detailed facts with equal devotion to abstract generalisation which forms the novelty in our present society. Previously it had appeared sporadically and as if by chance. This balance of mind has now become part of the tradition which infects cultivated thought. It is the salt which keeps life sweet. The main business of universities is to transmit this tradition as a widespread inheritance from generation to generation.³⁶

Whitehead’s observance that the wedding of particular facts with abstract generalizations marks a distinct shift from the “disruption of Western Christianity and the rise of modern science” in the sixteenth century³⁷ to a “new colouring of ways of thought ... [which] had been proceeding slowly for many ages in the European peoples.”³⁸ The new mentality this gave way to “altered the metaphysical presuppositions and the imaginative contents of our minds; so that now the old stimuli provoke a new response,” which Whitehead notes was “more important even than the new science and the new technology.”³⁹ Given that this wedding of particular facts with abstraction was in large part responsible for a new way of thinking that shaped the whole of Europe, do you find it problematic that much of your writing has a tendency to be interpreted as pulling this wedding apart or even declaiming a divorce (two examples being the emphasis on individual or particular experience and the negative sense of “causal abstraction”)?

DM: A marriage and a pulling apart of or a conflict between what? An idea, an ideal? Another idea? A generalization termed ‘Europe’, a generalization termed Western Christianity; another one named modern science? Another termed our present society? And so on.

My focus in the past ten or so years has been on the personal and interactions between individuals such as personal love based on a loyalty between individuals and the families that two such individuals can bring-into-being biologically or otherwise. Such persons, such interactions, can and do sometimes cause suffering; but is this and has this been on the scale of that caused by ideologies, ideas, ideals, and entities such as codified religions, nations, States, Empires?

Do the achievements of some such nations, States, Empires, of some ideas, ideals, and what has been termed ‘science’ and ‘technology’ balance out what suffering they may have caused?

For in my experience it is or it should be a question of balance; of accepting there are limits; of accepting responsibility; of accepting that the personal and such things as love, empathy, compassion, and honour are the essential aspects of that necessary balance, with

extremism of whatever type or form the result of the harshness of personal imbalance when love, empathy, compassion, and honour are ignored or rejected or never personally known because some -ism or -ology or some manufactured entity or hatred of some perceived enemy have priority in the life of an individual with our human culture of pathei-mathos also ignored or rejected or never personally known.

Have we as a species in the past experienced in some way and in some place a part of the necessary balance? Possibly, for a while. Do we have a part of such a balance now in any society in the world? Possibly, although some may disagree. Are we as a species learning from our human culture of pathei-mathos with its documentation by means of music, memoirs, poetry, and other arts, of human suffering, human love, tragedy, and loss?

NT: Two-part question. Question one. You have noted that certain forms of abstraction tend to be associated with the masculous and can take on a kind of violence toward muliebral virtues like empathy, compassion, and humility.⁴⁰ This can occur, for example, in the masculous “favouring of abstractions and the notion of an idealized duty over empathy and compassion and the muliebral virtues in general,”⁴¹ which can lead to forms of extremism. However, this push against abstraction has resulted in a tendency by many of your readers to identify abstraction with an erroneous or even harmful way of thinking. That identification seems dangerously close to a kind of nominalism or rejection of all universals and abstract objects,⁴² which itself may germinate a species of extremism.

I suspect part of this tension may have been influenced by Aristotle and his account of *physis* (φύσις) or nature, where, in contrast to Plato’s *Timaeus*, “nature is not an abstract, impersonal, ‘all-pervading demiurgic force,’”⁴³ but rather an “inner driving force we reference when saying of a natural being: ‘That is *its* nature.’”⁴⁴ I am also reminded of the medieval problem of universals,⁴⁵ which highlights a debate that spans the work of the Neo-Platonists, pagans such as Plotinus and Porphyry, and medieval Christians such as Augustine and Boethius.⁴⁶ With respect to your work, one could argue that the muliebral virtues at the heart of the philosophy of pathei-mathos require a grounding in some sense of abstraction, whether in the transition from individual pathei-mathos to the broader context of collective and sustainable millennial change, in the universal application of pathei-mathos to the human condition, or in the way individual experience is related to other forms of life. Part of the confusion regarding your use of the term “abstraction” may rest on your characterization of the difference between personal knowledge of an individual and reifying that individual according to some ideology or cause.⁴⁷ Given that many readers seem to miss the broader context of this distinction, would you mind clarifying what forms of abstraction you view as negative, detrimental, or harmful and what forms you view as productive or even necessary for the cultivation of the muliebral virtues you have described?

Question two. In an interview with you from 2014,⁴⁸ your work *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism: A Very Strange Peregrination* is cited with respect to what you identify as the inflexible and often excessive masculous character that goes with extremism.⁴⁹ In your view, are there non-extremist contexts where the masculous can find positive, non-violent applications? In what cases might a masculous character compliment “the muliebral virtues of empathy, sensitivity, humility, gentleness, forgiveness, compassion, and the desire to love and

be loved” rather than work against them?⁵⁰ Conversely, are there cases, however exceptional, where these muliebral virtues could become vices? Though such cases may be few and far between, your description of the difference between personal love and empathy comes to mind, where you noted that “the emotion gendered by personal love can also cause suffering both of the person who loves and in regard to the one loved, especially if there is not a mutual, loyal, equality of love.”⁵¹ Do you think there is a danger in this personal asymmetry carrying over to the collective level, as in the case of certain religious ideologies? And much like the important wedding of the particular with the abstract described by Whitehead in the previous question, how might we wed the masculous and the muliebral without inciting these forms of harm?

DM: In relation to masculous and muliebral I understand them as descriptors of personal behaviour and attitudes and how it seems to me that the numinous and thus the honourable tend to be and have tended to be manifest in the world and in our lives. Created abstractions tend toward the supra-personal and tend to cause suffering sooner or later.

An operative expression here is ‘tend to be’. Do empathy, compassion, humility, and honour tend toward us not causing suffering? Do ideologies and codified religions tend to – over durations of causal time – cause suffering, harm, and schisms resulting from exegesis? Does what is often described as the masculous virtue of heroism tend toward suffering by making *a* or *the* hero an ideal to be admired and followed, or should it be more correctly described as a balance of both masculous and muliebral if it is understood in the personal sense as the actions of one honourable person?

For another operative expression in my attempts at explanation is ‘personal behaviour and attitudes’ which being variable and subject to change can perhaps only and sometimes point us toward a certain intuition that might be an uncovering of a possible answer to the question *quid est veritas*. That what is uncovered is only a personal, causally-dependant, experience and a knowing but always dies and yet can return to be rediscovered yet again by others.

Given my hubriatic past and the suffering I have personally caused by championing this or that ideology or this or that religion or this or that abstraction I am all too fallible, all too prone to making mistakes so perhaps I could be wrong regarding this and other matters.

NT: In addition to expiation and remorse, much of your work conveys an overtone of regret. In your recent writings, this can be sensed acutely in the opening sections of “A Vagabond in Exile from the Gods,” to cite one example. How have you come to terms with what you now view as mistakes of the past in terms of your legacy to the future and its influence on the world? Additionally, in contrast to the overtones of regret, the desire for forgiveness seems to be a recurrent undertone throughout your writing. Against the sullied public and the lies that your opponents continue to spread about you, will you find the courage to forgive yourself? In reconciling the pain of the past with its shadow of regret, what do you hope to see in the dawning of the future, and what enduring works do you hope to leave for future generations in the brave valence of tomorrow?

DM: In regard to regret for having caused suffering to others through both selfishness and adherence to various -isms or -ologies, the personal lamentation derived and derives from

acknowledging my suffering-causing mistakes and from what I hope is an understanding of our human physis and an understanding of the harshness of extremism. As for forgiveness, who or what can forgive those who have caused suffering? In many cultural traditions it was of course the person or persons who were directly harmed or their relatives. In Christian, Islamic and Judaic tradition it is God/Allah.

But the impersonal nature of many suffering-causing extremist deeds and of many criminal justice systems often means there are no living victims or relatives to directly offer forgiveness even should they desire to do so, which would probably be unlikely given the harshness, intractability, the fanatical hatred, of so many extremists.

While there are expiatory means in the Christian, Islamic and Judaic traditions, if one does not or no longer believes in God/Allah then there can be no forgiveness. Thus, for me as mentioned in some of my essays, my *weltanschauung* of *pathei-mathos*, such answers as these, my many autobiographical effusions, are my attempts at expiation.

NT: Before one can derive wisdom from meaningful suffering it seems that one must first constitute the world meaningfully. Deriving meaning from the world and constituting it in turn both rest on the way we interpret the world and the framework of interpretation we have at our disposal. I think many individuals today are unaware of the disparity between the framework of interpretation we had at our disposal in ages past and the framework of interpretation that distinctly characterizes modernity. In some respects, the Hellenic vitality of your philosophy risks becoming lost in the "transliteration" from the individual to modernity when interpreted without this frame of reference. In an attempt to sustain that vitality, I think the following summary by Thomas Howard regarding what he calls "The Old Myth and the New" frames this well:

There were some ages in Western history that have occasionally been called Dark. They were dark, it is said, because in them learning declined, and progress paused, and men labored under the pall of *belief*. A cause-effect relationship is frequently felt to exist between the pause and the belief. Men believed in things like the Last Judgment and fiery torment. They believed that demented people had devils in them, and that disease was a plague from heaven. They believed that they had souls, and that what they did in this life had some bearing on the way in which they would finally experience reality. They believed in portents and charms and talismans. And they believed that God was in heaven and Beelzebub in hell and that the Holy Ghost had impregnated the Virgin Mary and that the earth and sky were full of angelic and demonic conflict. Altogether, life was very weighty, and there was no telling what might lie behind things. The ages were, as I say, dark.

Then the light came. It was the light that has lighted us men into a new age. Charms, angels, devils, plagues, and parthenogenesis have fled from the glare into the crannies of memory. In their place have come coal mining and $E = mc^2$ and plastic and group dynamics and napalm and urban renewal and rapid transit. Men were freed from the fear of the Last Judgment; it was felt to be more bracing to face Nothing than to face the Tribunal. They were freed from worry about getting their souls into God's heaven by

the discovery that they had no souls and that God had no heaven. They were freed from the terror of devils and plagues by the knowledge that the thing that was making them scream and foam was not an imp but only their own inability to cope, and that the thing that was clawing out their entrails was not divine wrath but only cancer. Altogether, life became much more livable since it was clear that in fact nothing lay behind things. The age was called enlightened.

The myth sovereign in the old age was that everything means everything. The myth sovereign in the new is that nothing *means* anything.⁵²

With respect to Howard's description of "the myth sovereign in the old age" and "the myth sovereign in the new," where do you situate your own "paganus weltanschauung" and how do you reconcile it against the modern view that "nothing *means* anything"?

DM: I do not situate my weltanschauung anywhere in terms defined or believed or discussed by others, ancient or modern, because it is just my weltanschauung, born from various experiences and the loss of loved ones, and nurtured by working and living on a farm in England, by solitary walks along a sea-shore and in the hills and deciduous woods of English Shires.

NT: In another article, I have cited Pope Benedict XVI's comments regarding the topic of violent religious conversion. Recalling a dialogue between "the erudite Byzantine emperor Manuel II Paleologus and an educated Persian on the subject of Christianity and Islam,"⁵³ the Pope recounts how:

The emperor, after having expressed himself so forcefully, goes on to explain in detail the reasons why spreading the faith through violence is something unreasonable. Violence is incompatible with the nature of God and the nature of the soul. "God," he says, "is not pleased by blood – and not acting reasonably (σὺν λόγῳ) is contrary to God's nature. Faith is born of the soul, not the body. Whoever would lead someone to faith needs the ability to speak well and to reason properly, without violence and threats... To convince a reasonable soul, one does not need a strong arm, or weapons of any kind, or any other means of threatening a person with death..."⁵⁴

Having long-since rejected Muslim extremism and having had a first-hand account of it for ten years as a radical Muslim, I think the Pope's framing of the aforesaid dialogue finds an acute expression in your current views on the issue. In "Understanding and Countering Muslim Extremism," you describe two aims that typically motivate Muslim extremism – a supra-personal one and a personal one – which you note are "inextricably entwined."⁵⁵ You additionally note that "one effective way to counter Muslim extremism is for Muslims themselves to, using Quran and Sunnah, counter the harsh interpretation of Islam by the extremists," thereby pointing to "the humanity that is at the heart of Islam; a humanity so evident in the millions of Muslims ... world-wide."⁵⁶ Speaking to that humanity – and more specifically to the humility you cite⁵⁷ – how do you now view the spreading of faith through

violence with respect to its incompatibility with the nature of God and the nature of the soul described by emperor Manuel II Paleologus? Additionally, if the supra-personal and personal aims that motivate this form of extremism are intertwined, how might we ward against them in their many variations within society and within our own lives?

DM: It seems to me that there are difficult and long-standing questions in relation to religions which wholly or in part rely on texts as the Christian, Islamic, Judaic and Buddhist traditions have done. Questions of exegesis and the different interpretations which often result.

Thus, even if as I wrote in the essay you refer to that one way – not the only way – in regard to events such as 9/11 and 7/7 is for Muslims themselves using Quran and Sunnah to counter the harsh interpretation of Islam by others, that may not prevent such harsh interpretations now or in the future given the reliance on texts with their inevitable exegesis.

In another essay I compared the Shia and the Sunna traditions noting that the Shia tradition of Taqlid seemed to me to preclude exegesis by those scholarly unqualified to do so. I suggested that this might explain why the Shia tradition has:

“no such thing as modern independent extremist Shia groups who indiscriminately target and kill the kuffar (‘infidels’) in Western lands or elsewhere, or who fly aeroplanes into buildings or who blow themselves up in order to kill ‘infidels’. For Shia mujtahidun have given rulings in respect of such things.”⁵⁸

This should lead to difficult questions for not only groups such as ad-Dawlah al-Islamiyah (commonly known as Islamic State) and their followers who regularly target and kill Shia Muslims but also for Western allies of Saudi Arabia who have for decades imposed sanctions on Iran and who support a conflict in Yemen in which Shia Muslims have been killed in their thousands and Shia children starved to death.

How many in the West even know what these difficult questions are? Not only in relation to Shia Muslims but in relation to exegesis of Christian texts such as The Gospels? To in some minor way draw attention to such questions I began a translation of and writing a commentary on The Gospel According To John and have so far for various personal reasons only managed to make public chapters one to five, available at <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2017/10/gospel-of-john-1-5.pdf>

NT: In your autobiography, *Myngath*, you mention an interest in chess in your youth. In fact, you mention being one of the only competitors to have drawn against a visiting Grandmaster in a simultaneous display at the Singapore Polytechnic as a young man.⁵⁹ As a chess player, I would be remiss not to ask: do you still have the recorded chess notation for that match? Additionally, do you still play chess? And did you find anything applicable or of value with respect to the lessons you learned in your study of the game and your subsequent study of martial arts?

DM: In regard to the Chess game in Singapore, I do not any longer have the ‘descriptive’ notation of the game, but the results of the tournament were briefly together with my surname

mentioned in a local newspaper – it may have been The Straits Times – and I hunched over a Chess board fleeting appeared in a local TV newsreel of the event.

I lost interest in Chess when, living in Blighty in 1968, I first met Colin Jordan and became a National-Socialist activist in his newly formed British Movement.

NT: In one of your early relationships as a young man, you mention that you and your female companion once spent hours listening to jazz at a small club, noting that “she was a Jazz aficionado and very knowledgeable about that genre.”⁶⁰ Do you recall what artists or songs you two enjoyed listening to at the time, and do you enjoy the genre? Additionally, are there other genres, artists, or songs of special significance for you that you would care to mention? You have noted that classical music has played an important role in your life, and I am curious to hear more about your musical influences.

DM: Being a young man in love with a lady who was Jazz aficionado I did for a while try to share her interest in and enthusiasm for such music but failed, given my interest in and love of classical music. Which interest began when as a young boy in a private – Whites-only – school in Africa our music teacher played our class a Long Playing record of music by JS Bach performed by Segovia. It was transformative.

NT: I doubt I am alone in feeling that your poetry reveals something deeply moving about the way you and your worldview have transformed over the course of your life. I find the poems in *One Exquisite Silence* particularly moving. Would you care to provide any additional background regarding the circumstances that led to the composition of any of these poems? I am especially interested in “Travelling,” which affects me intensely at this stage of my life.

DM: The poem *One Exquisite Silence* was composed not long after I met and fell in love with a lady who worked on a commercial (wholesale) plant nursery; while the *Travelling* poem was composed not long after I left Leeds (and my violent National-Socialist activism) in 1974 to wander the English countryside for a while as a vagabond, as was the poem *Summer Days Walking Roads*. The poem titled *Relict* was composed during a visit to a rather neglected cemetery when in 1976 I was travelling around and staying in various monasteries in the United Kingdom with a view to becoming a Catholic monk. The poem titled *Wine* was composed in Spain in the early 1970’s, before I moved to Leeds, during another period when I was wandering around wondering what to do with my life.

NT: Martin Heidegger revived one of the most important questions in the Western philosophical tradition: *what is the meaning of Being?* This question set the philosophical tradition in motion all the way back to the ancient Greeks. At one level, the question points to the fact that we generally operate through an unclarified pre-comprehension of what we mean by “exist,” or what we mean by “this is” versus “this is not,” where for the ancient Greeks Being was equated with ongoing or constant presence. At a deeper level, it points to an important interpretive dynamic regarding how we are to understand the type of being we are, the one who asks the question and for whom the question is an issue.

Much like Heidegger’s question, there are many theories regarding how to interpret the meaning of your life. Sadly, all of these have a tendency to reduce the ideas and ideals that

motivated your life’s narrative to deeds that you have long-since denounced and atoned for. Put another way, many are concerned with the details of your life without being equipped to take seriously the ideas that have shaped it. Given that your philosophy is not just a collection of ideas but a mode of living, this presents two problems. The first concerns the philosophy of *pathei-mathos*, where the way one interprets his or her experiences through the lens of that philosophy is called into question when one is not equipped to address or interpret the meaning of the philosophy itself. In that case, there is often an asymmetry between the vital experience needed to understand the philosophy and the framework needed to interpret those experiences, where the two eventually disconnect or fail to connect at all. The second problem concerns the attempt by others to interpret your life without first being equipped to interpret their own. We have seen this time and time again with respect to your opponents, in the media, and even among those who take inspiration from your life and work. I would thus like to conclude with one final question, returning us, as is so often the case, to where we began: *what is the meaning of David Myatt?*

DM: I have no answer to the question “What is the Meaning of Myatt?” because all I seem to be is one fallible mortal among so many billions past and present and one who will die soon having already outlived his three score and ten. Someone who has and perhaps vainly tried in some way in the past ten years or so, and in various poems, to record his feelings, his fallible understanding of himself and the world he has passed through and the events and the people he has, or so he believes, learned from.

In those past ten or so years my references are usually only the classical authors; or occasionally a poet such as TS Eliot or a composer such as JS Bach because for those years my world, my influences, have been the outdoor world of Nature, my *pathei-mathos*, the women I have loved and lost, with my only constant companions those classical authors, my memories, and such a poet and such a composer.

David Myatt

27.iv.22

NOTES

¹ David Myatt, “Some Questions for DWM (March 2014),” *David Myatt – Παθει Μάθος*, May 2014, <https://www.davidmyatt.info/dwm-questions-may2014.html>.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Faith and Belief: The Difference Between Them* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1998), 141.

⁵ <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2010/05/02/rain-following-weeks-of-warmful-april-sun/>

⁶ Smith, *Faith and Belief*, 142.

⁷ Myatt, “Some Questions (March 2014).”

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ David Myatt, "I. Pathei-Mathos as Authority and Way," in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, 5th ed. (CreateSpace, 2018), <https://www.davidmyatt.info/numinous-way-pathei-mathos.pdf>.

¹² Clifford Geertz, "The Pinch of Destiny: Religion as Experience, Meaning, Identity, Power," chap. 8 in *Available Light: Anthropological Reflections on Philosophical Topics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 167. See William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1902; New York: Routledge, 2002), 386. Citations refer to the Routledge edition.

¹³ James, *Varieties*, 33.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 32-33.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁷ Myatt, "Some Questions (March 2014)."

¹⁸ David Myatt, "Some Questions for DWM, 2017," *David Myatt: Learning from Adversity; a Rejection of Extremism*, 2017, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2017/08/dwm-questions-2017-v1b.pdf>.

¹⁹ See Myatt, "Some Questions, 2017": "an apprehension of the complete unity (a cosmic order, κόσμος, mundus) beyond the apparent parts of that unity, together with the perceivment that we mortals – albeit a mere and fallible part of the unity – have been gifted with our existence so that we may perceive and understand this unity, and, having so perceived, may ourselves seek to be whole, and thus become as balanced (perfectus), as harmonious, as the unity itself."

²⁰ Myatt, "Authority and Way."

²¹ Richard Bett, "Pyrrho," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, updated October 23, 2018, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pyrrho/>.

²² Pascal Massie, "Ataraxia: Tranquility at the End," in *A Companion to Ancient Philosophy*, eds. Sean D. Kirkland and Eric Sanday (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2018), 246.

²³ Emil Cioran, "A Bouquet of Heads," *The Hudson Review* 15, no. 4 (Winter 1962-1963): 492.

²⁴ Dirk Baltzly, "Stoicism," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, updated April 10, 2018, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/stoicism/>.

²⁵ Myatt, "Some Questions, 2017."

²⁶ Massie, "Ataraxia," 251.

²⁷ Cioran, "Bouquet," 495-96.

²⁸ Myatt, "Some Questions, 2017."

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Mother Teresa, "My Own Soul Remains in Deep Darkness," in *Mother Teresa, Come Be My Light: The Private Writings of the Saint of Calcutta*, ed. Brian Kolodiejchuk (New York: Doubleday, 2007).

³¹ Cioran, "Bouquet," 496.

³² C. S. Lewis, *The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 153.

³³ Quoted in Lewis, *Discarded Image*, 153.

³⁴ Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (New York: Pelican Mentor Books, 1948), 2-3.

³⁵ Whitehead, *Modern World*, 3.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Myatt, "Some Questions (March 2014)."

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Gonzalo Rodriguez-Pereyra, "Nominalism in Metaphysics," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, updated April 1, 2015, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nominalism-metaphysics/>.

⁴³ Marjolein Oele, "Aristotle on Physis: Analyzing the Inner Ambiguities and Transgression of Nature," in *A Companion to Ancient Philosophy*, eds. Sean D. Kirkland and Eric Sanday (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2018), 162.

⁴⁴ Oele, “Aristotle on Physis,” 162.

⁴⁵ Gyula Klima, “The Medieval Problem of Universals,” Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, updated February 27, 2022, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/universals-medieval/>.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ See, for example, David Myatt, “Understanding and Countering Muslim Extremism,” *David Myatt – Πάθει Μάθος*, 2015, <https://www.davidmyatt.info/muslim-extremism.html>.

⁴⁸ Myatt, “Some Questions (March 2014).”

⁴⁹ See David Myatt, “The Masculous Extremist,” in *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism: A Very Strange Peregrination* (CreateSpace, 2013), <https://www.davidmyatt.info/muslim-extremism.html>.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Myatt, “Some Questions, 2017.”

⁵² Thomas Howard, “The Old Myth and the New,” chap. 1 in *Chance or the Dance? A Critique of Modern Secularism* (1969; repr., San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2001).

⁵³ Pope Benedict XVI, “Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections” (speech, Aula Magna of the University of Regensburg, Bavaria, Germany, September 12, 2006). The speech can be accessed here: https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg.html.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Myatt, “Countering Muslim Extremism.”

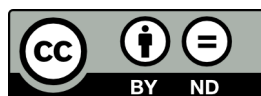
⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/dwm-questions-2015.pdf>

⁵⁹ David Myatt, “Far East,” in *Myngath: Some Recollections of a Wyrdful and Extremist Life* (CreateSpace, 2013), <https://www.davidmyatt.info/david-myatt-myngath.pdf>.

⁶⁰ Myatt, “Toward First Love,” in *Myngath*.



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Some Questions For DWM, 2022



In the *Numinous Expiation* chapter of your *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos* [1] you wrote that

"One of the many problems regarding my own past which troubles me - and has troubled me for a while - is how can a person make reparation for suffering caused, inflicted, and/or dishonourable deeds done,"

and that you did not "know the answer to the question how to so numinously make reparation, propitiation."

Since that was written twenty years ago are you still troubled and have your views changed in regard to personally not seeking propitiation through a religion such as Christianity?

Yes, I am still troubled, burdened, by my extremist past and the suffering I caused by believing in, agitating for and propagandizing on behalf of the ideology of National Socialism and a particular interpretation of Islam.

For me, the source of such a burden is two-fold: how can I, and perhaps others, not cause suffering; and for me at least there is not and probably never can be any expiation, any reparation made.

The only answer I have now, as then, is an attempt to live in "a certain gentle, quiet, way so as not to intentionally cause suffering, so as not to upset the natural balance of Life."

Have I succeeded? I cannot presume to answer.

Which brings me to my next question. Some of your former political opponents do not believe what one socialist called your "change of heart". [2]

Hence they claim you are still a neo-nazi; that what you write and have written since 2010 such as your autobiography should be treated with suspicion and not taken seriously; that unless you come out in public to attend some sort of 'media circus' and directly answer their questions, they will never believe you; and that you are so concerned about your reputation that you continually search 'social media' sites and anonymously try to not only engage with them but try to cover-up your past.

How do you react to such claims?

φημι ἐγώ, Μαθεῖν θέλω τὰ ὄντα καὶ νοῆσαι τὴν τούτων φύσιν καὶ γνῶναι τὸν θεόν· [3]

Such a seeking to apprehend such things is what now and for the past twenty or so years has occupied me.

As for trying to cover-up my past almost everything I wrote during my neo-nazi decades and my decade as a Muslim is archived somewhere. In the case of my neo-nazi decades by what used to be called 'Special Branch' as I learned following my arrest by them in 1998, and also archived on the 'world-wide web'. In the case of my decade as a Muslim an archive of my Muslim writings also exists on the 'world-wide web'. [4]

Therefore, any attempt by me or by anyone to 'cover-up' my past would be pointless. In addition, I have no desire whatsoever to do so since what exists documents my mistakes, failings, extremism, and arrogance which I want those who may be interested to know, and which acknowledgment of my past by me led to that 'change of heart'. One person has used such archives to document my extremism and the weltanschauung I developed after my rejection of that extremism. [5]

As for what they or others claim or believe about me now and the past, it is their burden howsoever brought-into-being, howsoever nurtured and howsoever it might be described by them or by others. Occupied by the aforementioned seeking, I am now too near death, too wearied by my own hubris and acknowledgment of it, too saddened by how so much suffering is still caused despite our human culture of pathei-mathos, to be concerned about what others claim or believe about me let alone try to change anyone's beliefs or attitudes by engaging with them in whatever way.

In a compilation published in 2019 containing some earlier essays of yours about race and extremism and which compilation complemented your 2013 book *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism* [6] you wrote:

"the personal fault of extremists seems to be that of being unable and/or unwilling to view, to consider, the good that exists in people, in society, and/or of ignoring the potential for good, or change toward the good, which is within people, within society, within what-is. To prefer the dream in their head to reality; and/or to prefer the struggle, the strife, the conflict, to stability and peace; and/or to need or to desire repeated stimulation/excitement. One cause of such things could, in my view - from my experience - be the inability or the unwillingness of a person, an extremist, to develop and use their own individual judgement, as well as the inability or the unwillingness to take individual, moral, responsibility for their actions and for the effects those actions personally have upon people." [7]

Is that and what follows about 'the good of society' and about what you term The Uncertainty of Knowing a reasonable summary of your understanding of extremism and of your past, and are you dismayed that such personal reflections are ignored?

That essay and my *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism* are indeed a reasonable summary, and which understanding was the genesis of my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos.

But as I wrote in *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*,

"My conclusions regarding extremism resulted from some years of moral, personal, and philosophical questioning and reflexion; a questioning whose genesis was a personal tragedy in 2006, and which questioning led me a few years later to reject all forms of extremism and develop my own weltanschauung - the philosophy of pathei-mathos - based on the virtues of empathy, compassion, and humility.

I make no claim concerning the originality, or concerning the correctness or the value or the importance of my conclusions about extremism. They are just my personal, and fallible, conclusions which - given my extremist past - may interest, or be of some use to, some people; and, being such personal conclusions, they are neither presented in an academic way nor are comparisons made with the work and the conclusions (academic or otherwise) of others about extremism."

Similarly, my weltanschauung is just my weltanschauung; representing my attempt to apprehend the physis of human beings; to understand the causes of suffering and how suffering can be alleviated; and understand the nature of the numinous and what it means and meant, and thus whether the numinous is embodied in theos, however understood, or in human virtues such as compassion, empathy and honour which thus might obviate the need for a belief in something supra-personal be that theos or some -ism or some -ology.

One of the causes of suffering is of course what is now termed 'extremism' be it personal, of one's character, or ideological or religious or political or social.

As for such writings being ignored, no, I am not dismayed only sadly resigned as an old man to what appears to me to be the current reality of the unchanged perhaps unchangeable physis of some human beings "despite our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos". Yet, and perhaps naively, I still nurture a slight hope that we mortals here on Earth can change in sufficient numbers toward being compassionate, empathic, and honourable and thus reduce the suffering we cause to other beings, human and otherwise.

In a 2017 monograph you wrote about καλὸς κάγαθός in a manner which some readers found controversial given you seemed not only to be suggesting some sort of new aristocracy but also some kind of new European style paganism. One striking passage is:

"[W]e are, ontologically, emanations of and presence Being, and are a connexion to the cosmos - to other presencings of Being - through, in terms of epistemology, not only reason (λόγος), perceivance (νοῦς) and wordless-awareness (συμπάθεια, empathy) but also through τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, and ἀρετὴ, through the beautiful and the well-balanced, the valourous and honourable, and those who possess arête, all of which are combined in one Greek phrase: καλὸς κάγαθός, which means those who conduct themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner and who thus manifest - because of their innate physis or through pathei-mathos or through a certain type of education or learning - nobility of character." [8]

Were you suggesting a new aristocracy and a new pagan religion?

I was suggesting, evidently not very well, that

"the sophia, the sapientia, of theos is presented not in the 'word of God' (scriptures) but in the personal Greek virtues of τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, and ἀρετὴ, and in the metaphysical principle denoted by the term αἰών," [9]

and thus that those who conduct themselves in an old-fashioned gentlemanly or lady-like manner manifest an aspect of the numinous that was anciently described as "the sophia, the sapientia, of theos" [10] and that combined with empathy - manifest as empathy is in compassion and tolerance - that this could lead to a new non-theological awareness of, and a respect for, the numinous. One which being personal is non-doctrinal but akin to some ancient pagan weltanschauungen that existed for millennia in some Western lands as well as in other places around the world.

I summarized this non-theological awareness as

"we human beings having a connexion to other living beings, a connexion to the cosmos beyond, and a connexion to the source of our existence, the source of the cosmos, and the source - the origin, the genesis - of all living beings. Which source we cannot correctly describe in words, by any denotata, or define as some male 'god', or even as a collection of deities whether male or

female, but which we can apprehend through the emanations of Being: through what is living, what is born, what unfolds in a natural manner, what is ordered and harmonious, what changes, and what physically - in its own species of Time - dies."

In another monograph I also suggested that

"an aspect of the paganus, Greco-Roman, apprehension of the numinous, of καλὸς κάγαθός, is a [Ciceronian] awareness and acceptance of one's civic duties and responsibilities undertaken not because of any personal benefit (omni utilitate) that may result or be expected, and not because an omnipotent deity has, via some written texts, commanded it and will punish a refusal, but because it is the noble, the honourable - the gentlemanly, the lady-like, the human - thing to do." [11]

What are these civic duties and responsibilities? To a State, or nation, or as in Greece to a πόλις or as in Rome to a Caesar?

This is a subject I really should have written about in that monograph and it was remiss of me not to have done so. My mistaken assumption at the time was that readers would be aware of my previous writings about how my weltanschauung dealt with what I termed supra-personal abstractions or 'forms' such as the State and the nation. As in Parts Two, Three and Four of *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*. [1]

In Part Three of that work I wrote that

"[i]n the case of the culture of pathei-mathos, it not only provides, as does the modern State, a perspective (and a teleology) unrelated to the judgement of a supreme deity and the promise of an after-life, but also points us toward answers rather different from those provided by proponents of the State, of liberal democracy, and of a jurisprudence concerned with international law and codifying and criminalizing what politicians, and/or some political theory, ideology, dogma, or agenda, deem to be bad.

For what that culture provides is an understanding of how all forms - be they considered political, or codified ideologically or in the form of a dogmatic hierarchical religion - have caused suffering, or do cause suffering sooner or later, because they are judgemental, supra-personal; and that such suffering is unjustified because it is individual human beings and indeed the other life with which we share this planet who and which are important; and that to alleviate and to prevent and remove the causes of suffering is necessary because a manifestation of what is good; that is, a manifestation of reasoned, balanced, compassionate, personal judgement, and of that learning, that knowledge, the insights, that personal experience of conflict, war, disaster, tragedy, havoc, violence, hatred, and pain, have taught and revealed to individuals for some three thousand years."

In Part Four I compared the answers of conventional religions and proponents of The State, writing that

"[i]n respect of the culture of pathei-mathos, I find within it an alternative to these two influential, but in many ways quite similar, ontologies with their powerful entities, their guidance, their punishments and rewards, and the progression of individuals toward some-thing which the powerful entity asserts or promises it can provide.

This alternative is the ontology of us - we human beings - as a transient affective and effective connexion to other living beings, an emanation of the flux of Life, of ψυχή. That is, of the separation-of-otherness - of I and of 'them', the others - being the result of a causal-only perception, and of denotatum: of our propensity to give names to, or to describe by means of terms, that which we observe to be or that which we assume to be is different to and separate from us, whereas, as empathy reveals, 'we' are part of, an aspect, of 'them' since 'they' are also finite, transient, emanations of ψυχή.

There is no abstract 'good' and 'evil' here; no division or cleaving asunder of φύσις (physis). There is only us in harmony, in balance, with our nature, our φύσις, or us not in harmony with our nature as an affecting and effecting, finite, transient, mortal, aspect of Life. If we are harmony -

in balance with Life, with other life - we do not cause or contribute to or are not the genesis of suffering: we do not affect Life in a harmful way, and as I have intimated elsewhere love, compassion, humility, empathy, and honour, are a possible means whereby we, in harmony with our φύσις, can avoid harming Life and its emanations, be such life our fellow human beings or the other life with which we share this planet."

I went on to write that this

"alternative ontology, derived from the culture of pathei-mathos, suggests that the answer to the question regarding the meaning of our existence is simply to be that which we are. To be in balance, in harmony, with Life; the balance that is love, compassion, humility, empathy, honour, tolerance, kindness, and wu-wei,"

with wu-wei a Taoist term

"used in my philosophy of pathei-mathos to refer to a personal 'letting-be' - a non-interference - deriving from humility and from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, their φύσις, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive - that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous."

All of which implies, with one important exception, non-violence. The exception being the matter of personal honour in the immediacy of the moment when an individual is confronted with someone or some many who are intent on harming or bullying that individual or someone or some others nearby. The person of honour would defend themselves, with force if necessary, as they would when defending those being harmed or bullied.

Your writings about your philosophy have been described as making "inscrutably dense arguments." Is there a work of yours you would recommend for those interested in your philosophy of pathei-mathos? Finally what is your opinion of the book titled *The Mystic Philosophy Of David Myatt*, a third edition of which was published in 2021?

A short introduction is my 2019 essay *Physis and Being* [12] with my 2022 text *Numinosity, Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition* providing a more detailed perspective. [13] The third edition of *The Mystic Philosophy Of David Myatt* [14] is a reasonably comprehensive overview.

David Myatt
May 2022

[1] *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. Gratis Open Access pdf:
<https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/religion-and-empathy.pdf>

[2] <https://web.archive.org/web/20121214002444/http://hurryupharry.org/2012/12/11/david-myatt-has-a-change-of-heart/>

[3] Poemandres, 3. "I answered that I seek to learn what is real, to apprehend the physis of beings, and to have knowledge of theos." Myatt, *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*. Gratis Open Access pdf:
<https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

[4] <https://web.archive.org/web/20101111104858/http://www.davidmyatt.info/>

- [5] <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2021/12/11/a-national-socialist-ideologue/>
- [6] *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*. 2013. Gratis Open Access pdf:
<https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/david-myatt-rejecting-extremism.pdf>
- [7] *Some Notes on The Politics and Ideology of Hate in Extremism And Reformation*. 2019. Third Edition. Gratis Open Access pdf: <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2019/09/reformation-extremism-v3b.pdf>
- [8] *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*. 2017. Gratis Open Access pdf:
<https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/classical-paganism-v2-print.pdf>
- [9] Chapter Three, *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*. Op.cit.
- [10] The MSS of Tractate XI:3, Corpus Hermeticum, reads:
- Ἡ δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ σοφία τί ἔστι;
Τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ καλὸν καὶ εὐδαιμονία καὶ ἡ πᾶσα ἀρετὴ καὶ ὁ αἰὼν.
- But the Sophia of theos is what?
The noble, the beautiful, good fortune, arête, and Aion.
- [11] *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua: Christianity, The Johannine Weltanschauung, And Presencing The Numinous*. 2017. Gratis Open Access pdf: <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/tua-es-diaboli-ianua.pdf>
- [12] <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/collected-works-2/physics-and-being/>
- [13] <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/03/dwm-denotata-empathy-v1b.pdf>
- [14] <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2021/08/myatt-philosophy-third-edition.pdf>

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The Uncertainty Of Knowing

An Interview With David Myatt
Summer 2022



Editorial Note: The interview was conducted and recorded by Rachael Stirling, on behalf of The Seven Oxonians, in England in early August 2022.

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Rachael Stirling: We have been perusing an archive of your writings as a Muslim {1} which in retrospect make fascinating reading because you presented Islam in a way it is not often presented in English in the societies of the modern West.

Are you embarrassed that those writings are still so easily accessible given that you have moved on?

DM: No, since they document an interesting and in terms of pathei-mathos an important ten years of my life.

RS: Our three part question is in relation to exegesis and what you wrote about it in *Exegesis and Translation: Some Personal Reflexions* {2} and what you wrote years earlier, as a Muslim, in *The Difference Between Eemaan and Kufr*,

"in Islam, we have the best example of a human being - the Prophet, Muhammad (salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam) - to strive to emulate and follow, and which human example, when followed, produces in us a most noble, a most civilized, individual character. This best example, this noble and human way, is evident to us in Seerah, in Ahadith: in the Sunnah of the Prophet, Muhammad (salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam) [...]

The simple but profound truth about Al-Islam is that this Way of Life, this Deen, works: for Al-Quran and the Sunnah, when followed, produce, and have produced, noble, honourable, civilized human beings, and they, and the guidance of Shariah, produce, and have produced, the most noble, the most civilized, communities in human history.

In essence, Al-Islam is the simple way of - the discovery of, the return to - Tawheed, which is to know, to feel, to remember, our correct relationship with and to Allah, our Creator and thus to know Allah as Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala is. This knowing of The Unity, The Oneness, of Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala is expressed in *Kalimaah Tayyibah* - La ilaaha illallaahu Muhammadur rasoolullaah - which itself forms the basis for Kalimaah Shahadah, the declaration that makes one a Muslim, and which re-affirms one's Islam: that simple submission to submit to and to only obey Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala and that knowing that Muhammad (salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam) is the Prophet and Messenger of Allah, whose message, whose Allah-given revelation (Al-Quran) and whose life (Sunnah) are the guidelines, the means, by which we can return to, and

know, Tawheed.

This knowing of, this remembrance of, this feeling of, Tawheed is the basis for Eemaan, for that simple and total reliance on, and belief in and trust of, Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala."

Would it be correct to suggest: i) that in many ways this echoes, with its mention of noble, civilized communities and its belief in trusting a person, what you wrote during your National Socialist years regarding Hitler and National Socialism; and (ii) that you believed you had discovered in Islam a means to creating a noble way of life as you formerly did in National Socialism; and (iii) that it was "the difficult question of exegesis" that began or at least contributed to your doubts about Islam?

DM: To some extent, yes that is correct, since it was practical experience over many years of the human reality, manifest in those who adhered to, or believed in, or supported such weltanschauungen, that caused me to begin to reflect upon not only questions of various interpretations of texts and words but also on questions in regard to denotata, the fallible nature of humans in general, and how if not immediately then over causal Time most if not all denotata were the genesis of an opposite and thus of a dialectic.

Thus, in regard to National Socialism my experience was of how my believed in version based on honour, loyalty and duty and thus as a manifestation of the numinous, was not the reality of perhaps a majority of persons who described themselves as National Socialists, and that even in the days of the Third Reich it had been so, mirroring as this seemed to do our propensity as human beings to in our majority so easily be or revert to being egoistical or materialistic when and if it suited us.

With Islam, I initially apprehended it as different, as a better manifestation of the numinous, just as I did in regard to Catholicism when I became a Christian monk. But suffice to say that my Muslim adventures over a period of almost a decade not only disillusioned me but forced me to confront my own flawed character and lack of understanding.

For it was not just that as an adult I was naively idealistic but also I did not understand the reality of what honour meant resulting in me both as a National Socialist and as a Muslim supporting and doing dishonourable deeds.

Which realization and awareness of my own flawed character was not due to anything I did or due to the aforementioned intellectual questioning, but due to a personal circumstance which was both tragic and beyond my comprehension: the suicide in 2006 of my then fiancée.

In the months following that tragedy such intellectual questioning became one of several means by which I sought to understand myself, the numinous, and honour, and thus that tragedy.

RS: In relation to not understanding "the reality of what honour meant." In many of your Islamic writings you mentioned honour and in *Honour Is From Allah Alone* quoted a verse from the Koran: "Those who seek dignity and honour should know that they derive from Allah (alone)," 35:10. In the same article you quoted a Hadith from Sahih al-Bukhari (8: 56b) which translates as "the best among you are those who have the best manners and character."

In your *An Open Letter To Nick Griffin of the BNP* - dated July 17th 2004 - you described honour as "a respect for others; a striving to be reasonable. Honour sets ethical limits to our behaviour - and prejudice, of whatever kind, is surely a negation of honour."

How after that tragedy did you arrive, if indeed you did arrive, at what honour thereafter meant to you?

DM: My fallible conclusion, some three years after that tragedy, was that I had previously, both as a National Socialist and as a Muslim, not considered honour as a denotatum; as a naming of some personal quality or personal virtue, such as dignity, grace, of good repute, which themselves are open to interpretation. In my National Socialist years I defined it by a written or aural code of personal behaviour such as described in the sixteenth century *Booke of Honor and Armes*. or by the modern one I included in my *The Meaning of National-Socialism*. {3} As a Muslim I considered it a gift from Allah and manifest in the life of the Prophet Muhammed as described in the Sunnah.

What I very slowly came to appreciate was that every denotatum has implicit in it or developes - is by virtue of its physis the genesis of - a named opposite, another denotatum, resulting in a dialectic and thus has the potential for discord; a discord evident in exegesis but more often than not evident in conflict, verbal and physical, between individuals and groups of individuals. The result is as Heraclitus expressed it a cleaving of physis with Enantiodromia a bringing-back-together of what has been cleaved apart:

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος αἰεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπίροισιν εἰκόσσι, πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῖμαι κατὰ φύσιν διαιρέων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅκως ἔχει· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὖδοντες ἐπιλανθάνονται (Fragment 1, Diels-Krantz)

πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα (Diogenes Laërtius, ix. 7) {4}

My understanding came to be that Enantiodromia was, or rather should be understood and appreciated as, empathy;

the wordless-knowing of empathy by which we could perceive the physis of beings, their wholeness, without the need for denotata and the discord that denotata was the genesis of.

Given the personal horizon of empathy, the personal nature of empathy, {5} I considered that honour could not be understood by some supra-personal code or by reference to someone else be the reference to their life, their deeds, or their words. That it could not

"be extrapolated from such a personal knowing into some-thing supra-personal be this some-thing denotata, including an ἰδέα/εἶδος, or an axiom (ἀρχή) or a source (αἴτιος) for some 'revelation' or ideology or similar manifestations constructed by and dependent on appellation." {6}

That is, I discovered that empathy is or can be the geniture of our Uncertitude Of Knowing as human beings and thus of that personal humility which during my Muslim years I had felt, through such things as Namaz, was a manifestation of the numinous.

Honour thus became, for me, a personal matter: of being fair, reasonable, well-mannered, and aware of the numinous and thus of my own fallibility.

RS:

Hence your rejection of all extremism?

DM: Yes.

RS: Yet your many vociferous politically motivated opponents have not accepted that you have rejected extremism with many still considering you a neo-nazi. Does that bother you?

DM: No. For judging by their deeds and words they live in a different world from the one I now inhabit or rather that I now perceive. My perceivation is a very local and personal one; of my locality, of Nature and its local emanations; of my relatives and friends and my interactions with and concern for them. That other world beyond - or should that be those other worlds beyond - this local personal world no longer concern me given my plenitude of past mistakes, my past hubriatic suffering-causing interference, and my recently discovered Uncertitude Of Knowing.

They, those opponents, in comparison seem to have that Certitude Of Knowing that I for many decades had, breeding as it did and does prejudice, intolerance, hatred, and discouraging as it did and does empathy, forgiveness, and a personal Uncertitude Of Knowing.

RS: One of your politically motivated opponents recently claimed that "nothing in Myatt's sanitized autobiography [Myngath] should be taken too seriously," {7} while a few years ago another stated that he knew what was in the original draft of *Myngath* and knew what was removed in the published, 2013, version, stating that you thereby had tried to hide something.

Would you care to comment?

DM: The opinion or claim of someone - politically motivated or otherwise - is just their personal opinion or claim at a particular moment. The passing of causal Time - decades, centuries - often places such personal opinions and claims into context often because of some information having become revealed through scholarly research or otherwise, or because of the collapse of the society in which such a personal opinion or claim was propagated and believed by others.

As for drafts of *Myngath*, so far as I remember the first drafts were made around 2010 while I was still in thrall to some causal abstractions and several years before I as a result of further personal and philosophical insights reformed my 'Numinous Way' into my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos. For such drafts were just drafts, and thus subject to revision. Furthermore, those early drafts are still publicly available through the medium of the Internet, so there is not and was not any hiding of anything.

RS: In a ten page overview of your life, which overview contained some inaccuracies, {8} an academic last year wrote that you were "driven by a search for meaning and purpose, as well as an intellectual desire to find and create the all-encompassing and perfect political philosophy."

Would you agree?

DM: No, because during my National-Socialist decades I was driven by a somewhat fanatical desire to not only propagate what I then believed National-Socialism to be - an honourable, noble, way of life, a practical presencing of the numinous - but also to recruit people to that cause in the hope of creating a National-Socialist society in the land of my ancestors. Over those years I developed what I termed "ethical National-Socialism" and thus moved away from some of the policies and principles of the Third Reich such as the belief in the superiority of the Aryan race and the concepts of "eternal struggle" and of the "survival of the fittest" regarding them as incompatible with acting honourably.

During my years as a Muslim I nurtured a similar desire to propagate what I then believed the Muslim way of life to be:

which again was an honourable, noble, way of life, and a practical presencing of the numinous.

There was thus no search for "meaning and purpose" because I foolishly believed I had already found a meaning and a purpose: for thirty years in National-Socialism and then for ten years in Islam. In 1998 I turned away from National-Socialism to Islam because during a decade (1988-1998) of foreign travels the culture, the Muslims, of the Muslim lands - and especially of Egypt - slowly, almost imperceptibly, impressed me as did, and perhaps more so, travels alone in the Sahara Desert where I wordlessly felt intimations of Being, of The Acausal, of The-Unity, of The One-The Only (τὸ ἕν), of The Monas (μονάς) which 'acausal' Being Muslims called Allah and Christians called God.

As for a "perfect political philosophy", I never believed my ethical National-Socialism - my development of Hitler's National Socialism - was perfect, and as a Muslim rejected the very notion of politics, writing in *The Knowledge of Islam*,

"Siyasah is defined as the application of the Quran and Sunnah in the world: the means whereby Muslims can live in a community according to the command of Allah [...]"

It must be understood that siyasah neither means nor implies 'politics'. Politics is a kaffir term which expresses or manifests the concealment of The Unity, which Unity is the essence of Islam. To understand Islam, and the Islamic apprehension - and in particular how Islam can be applied in the world - is to consider Islam in Islamic terms only. To apply something like 'politics' to Islam and speak and write about 'Islamic politics' is a fundamental mistake which constitutes imitation of the kuffar. Why? Because such words and terms, of the kuffar, are always referred back to kaffir ideas and concepts - just as 'politics' is referred back to the polis of Ancient Greece, and 'State' to Aristotle, Plato, Marx and others. This is, in effect, causal - historical - reductionism which is completely at odds with the acausal revelation of Islam. It is also a making profane that which is sacred: divorcing the Divinity from the practical application of Islam. It is exchanging knowledge for Jahiliyyah [...]"

In effect, siyasah is sacred: it belongs to, and manifests, what is sacred, divine. This is in complete and utter contrast to the temporal, profane - and lower - nature of kaffir politics."

It could be argued that since that personal tragedy in 2006 I have been 'driven' by a desire to understand both my extremist past and extremism, as well as by a desire to apprehend the numinous and how, sans denotata, it is and has been and can be presenced to we human beings.

RS: Do you intend to write anything else about your life or your philosophy of pathei-mathos?

DM: Answering a similar question almost ten years ago I replied in the negative and yet went on to write an awful lot more. The honest answer is that currently I do not intend to, but one never knows what circumstances may conspire to bring about a perhaps vainglorious desire to pontificate some more.

RS: What is your view of Islam now?

DM: As explained in several of my post-2012 writings, I still consider Islam and Christianity as manifesting both now and in the past aspects of the numinous especially in relation to expiation and such awareness of the numinous as can bring and nurture a necessary personal humility.

But since both rely on revelation through words, chiefly written but sometimes aural, and both have sometimes been interpreted by some or by many in such a harsh way as has caused and contributed to the suffering of other human beings, then I as a result of my pathei-mathos and of a study of what I have termed the human culture of pathei-mathos, cannot and do not personally believe in or support them. For given such a reliance on words, on denotata, they can and possibly will be interpreted in a harsh way in the future by others.

RS: Is your own answer, your philosophy of pathei-mathos, suitable to or applicable to others?

DM: No, for it is not a supra-personal philosophy nor a way of life which might be suitable for others but only the fallible conclusions I have derived from striving to understand and admit my many mistakes and from the learning that, sometimes against my will, I acquired or believe I have acquired from diverse, sometimes extreme, experiences.

RS: How would you summarize what you have learned?

DM: As an appreciation of empathy, honour, humility, and compassion as personal virtues which we as individuals strive to live by; as an understanding of the need to not interfere in non-personal matters; and as being non-violent with the one and the only exception that necessitated by personal honour when we personally or our family or someone nearby are confronted in the immediacy of the moment by someone or by some others intent on doing harm or demanding we submit to their demands.

In such circumstances personal honour means that we without hesitation oppose them and fight and if circumstances require it use lethal force.

RS: Which surely means that you and perhaps your family are trained to defend yourselves with lethal force if necessary?

DM: Yes indeed.

RS: Which all seems to me to be a very pagan way of living. Would you agree?

DM: Depending on how one defines 'pagan' of course!

RS: I mean concern for and prepared to and trained to defend one's kith and kin, and having a local, a community, perspective as in olden times in England of one's village and the small personally known community dwelling there and on nearby land.

DM: In that sense, yes it is somewhat pagan. Which pagan weltanschauungen seems to me to have over causal Time been replaced by many and various other weltanschauungen derived from and reliant on denotata. In the form of, for example, the idea of some supra-local entity - a region, then a "nation", ruled by some usually male potentate whose governance was enforced by coercion, threat of imprisonment, and ultimately violence; and then in the form of the idea of a religion - in the Isles of Britain, Christianity, whose representatives were often in league with that regional or national potentate, hence inscriptions such as *Dei Gratia Rex Angliæ* on coinage.

RS: How do you view the current situation not only in England, the land of your ancestors, but worldwide and does your weltanschauung of pathei-mathos inform your view?

DM: My view is somewhat coloured by - perhaps I should have said informed by - my decades of rural living and working outdoors on farms and as a gardener, rather than by anything philosophical.

Perhaps a poem - one of my many "manically-depressed", "self-indulgent" poems, as one of my many political opponents once described them some years ago - may better express what such living and working have meant to me:

So this is Peace:
As the Sun of warm November
Warms and the grass grows with such mildness.

No strife, here;
No place beyond this place
As Farm meets meadow field
And I upon some hessian sack sit, write
To hear some distant calls from hedged-in sheep:
No breeze
To stir the fallen leaves
That lie among the seeds, there
Where the old Oak towers, shading fence
From Sun
And the pond is hazed with midges.

So this is peace, found
Where dew persists,
Flies feed to preen to rest
And two Robins call from among that tangled brambled
Bush
Whose berries - unplucked, ripened - rot,
While the Fox-worn trail wobbles
Snaking
Through three fields.

So, the silent Buzzard soars
To shade me briefly:
No haste, worry, nor Hubris, here

Where there is much sadness, leaving
As the damp field-mists of morning
Have given way
To Sun

A way of life, rural places, changed and changing: and for what and why? In some ways my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos is my answer: a way to live without the hubris of human-manufactured urban-centric supra-personal causal abstractions; a way where the natural balance that is presenced through empathy and honour is an intimation of the numinous; and where there is an ancestral peace found, wordlessly treasured, and passed-on to the next generation.

RS: You expressed such sentiments in a letter - more of a missive - that you sent to me over a decade ago when you left that farm having had to seek work elsewhere. Which reading of that letter might be, if you agree, a fitting end to this interview.

DM: Agreed. But it will most probably be described as one of my "manically-depressed", "self-indulgent", missives!

RS:

"Work, in a small industrial concern; manual work with days spent indoors where the only light is from a multitude of bright fluorescent tubes and where the tedium of long hours is relieved only by a short morning break and one half unpaid hour for lunch when I sit, hedged-in by walls, in the small back yard on an old box upon broken concrete surrounded by broken glass; by old, smashed bricks; by patches of oil, and the detritus of such an urban place. Some sky - but not much - is visible over and above the roof and walls and vents, and nothing natural lives or even exists here: no tree, no bush, no flowers, not any weeds. No sound of birds - only noise, from the unceasing machines; from the lorries and vans which arrive and depart nearby, disgorging and receiving their goods. No peace; certainly no Numen of Nature.

There is only the incessant unnatural rhythm of industrial life, of factory toil - a card to be stamped by a clock: in, out, even for lunch. And, at days end, I - tired as the others - slope off and out into the nearby street where no one, passing, says "hello!" or greets me as almost always they did in those small villages of England where I have mostly lived. No, no greeting here; not even any eye-contact, held. For this is urban life where humans are shunted to shuffle encased in their worries, their inner worlds, and where traffic gluts streets. Nowhere here the calm, measured, quiet of that life, rural, where Time is what it is. Instead, there is abstraction, measuring out our lives as the clear water from a leaking tank seeps out, to the dirty ground, drop by drop by drop; drip drip dripping away, clean water to dirty ground... So I am once again adrift; not lost but far, far from home and measuring out my days until, sufficient money saved, I can return to the source of my belonging: there, where such dreams in such quiet places as may bring the Numen back to me.

Yet here, in this place of work, people rush to compete as if such swift toil was a badge of pride; thus do they scamper, to complete abstractly-imposed tasks; for profits, and ego, must be made, saved. Thus do we toil - so many slaves, en-slaved, needing but not-needing the pittance to live such a life as lives among the urban clutter, the smallness, the meanness and the sprawl. But I, I have seen the sky and hold here in my being such visions as bring the Earth to earth - dust to dust, and life to Life: one world, one planet, one dimension, among so many. Nowhere for so many in day or night that sigh when we close our eyes to feel the oboe d'amore of one slow movement of one piece by JS Bach, bringing thus such quiet tears of empathy as connect us, one human life, to other human lives beyond the-words the-abstractions - and thus take us out, out, out into the being, the Numen, of Nature. There is then in such a moment that sacred precious meaning which cramped urban living, and traffic, has, these days, defiled.

No beauty, here, no song to the sanctity of Life - except, perhaps, fleetingly glimpsed in her eyes, face, as she, the young blonde-haired Polish worker, smiles. Four, five times - more - this week we have looked into each other's eyes as she, I, smiled, touched-but-not-touched, in wordless greeting. Then, such humanity over, we return to our tasks - I, to lift, move, heavy laden objects; she, to her machine. But she is there, in the background, as she works with her sister - quietly, stoically, both toiling as they toil: hard, grafting, as if inured to such a way of life. So they keep their own company - with few words between them; few for others, for they have "little english" and at lunch sit together beside the machine that steals their day, gazing ahead while they eat their meagre food perhaps enwrapped in dreams which are their dreams, bringing perchance some glimmer of hope among the stark noisey brightly-lit bleakness.

This life is grim, grim grim, only saved by such an intimation. No insects, outside, as I sit here, scribbling - except: a few ants, and I gasp-in lungfulls of the cleaner outside air; only a few ants, dithering, backwards, forwards, over the detritus, as if lost. Toiling, grafting, working - untouched, it seems, by that knowing of Life which a knowing of death may bring.

Such are we here, slaves of a modern life - sure, such toil could bring me the security of some settled home; warmth enough, from fire, to ease the pains that seep now into olding flesh and bones; food enough to keep me well; walls and roof enough to keep clothes dry from rain and turn a chilling wind, away; perhaps another companion-bestfriend-wife... But such a price, to pay: too high a price, it seems, for freedom, Numen, lost.

No time, here - then - to watch the Sun rise on a clear day; no time here - then - to catch the growing Dawn Chorus as it grows, week by week from early to late and later Spring. Nowhere to wander watching clouds form and shade to move as they are moved. No stream to watch as sunlight filters and fractures and water ripples, singing a wordless song. No sounds of an English Summer - flies, darting aimless and aimed; bees, seeking; birds, warning, calling, sparring; no wind breezing as it breezes among tree, hedge, reed, grass and Autumn's late leaf-litter... No natural Time to stand dreaming or sitting as the day passes in moments of memory. No natural Time, of Nature - only that unsettling abstract time of clocking-in-clocks, measuring out the seconds to our death. No, no natural Time, here: only the unnatural unnecessary one of which adds one hour to herald so-called "Summer time" - for even when I, toiling hard during years on Farms, planted, in Spring, or harvested in Autumn - weather-permitting - such "government time" made no difference: work began with Sunrise, to finish, weather-permitting, as the Sun began to set, for thus we followed there in that, our almost vanished world, a different Time to the time of some rootless traffic-fume-filled city.

Yes, freedom is hard, while savings dry and boots are worn as one walks, alone, with that walking that tries to measure out the now almost forgotten pace of a rural life and a rural way of living, bringing back as such slow rhythm and quietness does that connexion to presence the Numen without and within. Yes, freedom is hard while too much toil for another, in the wrong place, lasts." {9}

{1} The archive is at <https://web.archive.org/web/20101111104858/http://www.davidmyatt.info/> [Accessed August 2022]

{2} Myatt wrote:

"The original message of a revelation or of a spiritual way often seems to become obscured or somehow gets lost over centuries. A loss or obscuration partly due to the reliance on revealed or given texts; partly due to divergent interpretations of such texts, with some interpretations accepted or rejected by those assuming or vested with a religious authority; and partly due to a reliance, by many of the faithful, on translations of such texts." <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/exegesis-and-translation-partsone-two.pdf>

{3} Included in *Selected National Socialist Writings Of David Myatt*, <https://archive.org/download/myatt-selected-ns-writings1/myatt-selected-ns-writings1.pdf>

{4} Myatt's somewhat idiosyncratic translations of these fragments of Heraclitus are:

(a) Fragment 1:

"Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done."

Text, translation and commentary: <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/heraclitus-fragment-1/>

(b) Diogenes Laërtius ix. 7 in context:

ἐκ πυρὸς τὰ πάντα συνεστάναι
εἰς τοῦτο ἀναλύεσθαι
πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα
καὶ πάντα ψυχῶν εἶναι καὶ δαιμόνων πλήρη

"The foundation/base/essence of all beings ['things'] is πυρὸς [pyros] to which they return, with all [of them] by genesis appropriately apportioned [separated into portions] to be bound together again by enantiodromia, and all filled/suffused/vivified with/by ψυχή and Dæmons."

Text, translation and commentary: <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/heraclitus-and-enantiodromia/>

{5} In his 2015 essay *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*, Myatt wrote:

"The 'local horizon of empathy' is a natural consequence of my understanding of empathy as a human faculty, albeit a faculty that is still quite underdeveloped. For what empathy provides - or can provide - is a very personal wordless knowing in the immediacy-of-the-living-moment. Thus empathy inclines us as individuals to appreciate that what is beyond the purview of our empathy - beyond our personal empathic knowing of others, beyond our knowledge and our experience, beyond the limited (local) range of our empathy and that personal (local) knowledge of ourselves which pathei-mathos reveals - is something we rationally, we humbly, accept we do not know and so cannot judge or form a reasonable, a fair, a balanced, opinion about. For empathy, like pathei-mathos, lives within us; manifesting, as both empathy and pathei-mathos do, the always limited nature, the horizon, of our own knowledge and understanding."

The essay is included in *Sarigthersa*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/dwmyatt-sarigthersa-v7.pdf> [Accessed August 2022]

{6} *Numinosity, Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2022/03/17/numinosity-denotata-empathy-and-the-hermetic-tradition/> [Accessed August 2022]

{7} For those of a rational disposition who are inclined to judge matters and individuals for themselves, Myatt's autobiography *Myngath* is available at: <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/david-myatt-myngath.pdf> [Accessed August 2022]

{8} Koehler, Daniel. *From Traitor to Zealot: Exploring the Phenomenon of Side-Switching in Extremism and Terrorism*. Cambridge University Press, 2021. pp.153-163.

One inaccuracy among several is that Koehler (p.161) confuses Myatt's fiancée Fran - who committed suicide in 2006 - with Myatt's second wife, Sue, who died of cancer in 1993. Some years after Sue's death Myatt re-married and lived with his third wife near Malvern - in a detached village house, where he was filmed nearby by BBC Panorama in 2000 - until he left that village some months after that filming to move alone to Shropshire to live on a farm. He met Fran

several years after that move to Shropshire where he had previously lived from the late 1970s to 1994.

{9} I have retained, at his request, Myatt's idiosyncratic punctuation and spelling. Myatt's use of the term 'numen' deserves some explanation. He uses it several times in his translations of tracts from the Corpus Hermeticum, particularly in tract III, ἱερός Λόγος, where he writes in his commentary:

"the meaning of 'numen' here being expressed by what follows: "numinal and of numinal physis", where by numinal - in this ἱερός λόγος - is meant divine not in the specific sense of a monotheistic and Biblical (a masculous) God but in the more general sense of pertaining to a deity or deities, male or female, as in a paganus (and not necessarily patriarchal) polytheism." *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

In his scholarly essay *A Note Concerning θεϊότης* - <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2018/03/28/a-note-concerning-θεϊότης/> - he places it in relation to θεῖος and the Greek text of Romans, 1.20.

cc Rachael Stirling & The Seven Oxonians

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Denotata, Physis, And Pathei-Mathos

Part One

Misunderstanding Denotata In Myatt's Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos

A Particular Perceivration

A certain misunderstanding of David Myatt's weltanschauung of Pathei-Mathos seems to have arisen based on Myatt's use of terms such as acausal, abstractions, and denotatum {1} which does not seem to take into account matters such as the following:

1. That Myatt's weltanschauung was developed and refined over a period of some years (c.2011-2017) and was based primarily on his outré experiences over some four decades, which refinement led him to write in 2022 that

"my weltanschauung is just my weltanschauung; representing my attempt to apprehend the physis of human beings; to understand the causes of suffering and how suffering can be alleviated; and understand the nature of the numinous and what it means and meant, and thus whether the numinous is embodied in theos, however understood, or in human virtues such as compassion, empathy and honour which thus might obviate the need for a belief in something supra-personal be that theos or some -ism or some -ology." {2}

In effect, his weltanschauung of Pathei-Mathos is a mystical perceivration and not an academic philosophy. {3}

2. That his classification of his insights using terminology such as ontology, epistemology, and ethics - as in for example his statement that "the ontology of beings [...] is often obscured by denotatum and by abstractions, both of which conceal physis" {4} - is only a temporary guide for readers since his focus is primarily on empathy and pathei-mathos as a means to knowing, both of which are personal, of the immediate moment, and which knowing, as he writes many times, cannot be extracted out from that personal experiencing to form the basis for anything supra-personal be it a denotata or some -ism or some -ology. {5}

That is, ontology itself is an abstraction, a denotatum, which empathy and pathei-mathos take us beyond. In this respect a simile might be Wittgenstein's 'ladder'.

3. That what applies to terminology such as ontology applies to his use of the acausal and his division of our physis, following his understanding of the Corpus Hermeticum, into masculous and muliebral. That they are also useful denotata to explain what is as it now is and has been but are ultimately discarded by the wordless knowing of empathy and pathei-mathos.

4. That his comparisons and examples derived from ancient Greek texts and philosophy - most of which he cites in Greek and provides his own translations - are of the insights of some others with which he finds some correlation with his own insights, eschewing as he does in his iconoclasm and resonance with Greco-Roman culture the modern practice in academia of citing works by philosophers of the past few centuries and more recent texts by academics.

The Mysticism Of Mr Myatt

The statement by Myatt, quoted above, that his weltanschauung is his

"attempt to apprehend the physis of human beings; to understand the causes of suffering and how suffering can be alleviated; and understand the nature of the numinous and what it means and meant, and thus whether the numinous is embodied in theos, however understood, or in human virtues such as compassion, empathy and honour which thus might obviate the need for a belief in something supra-personal be that theos or some -ism or some -ology," {2}

is a succinct description of his mysticism; that is, of his personal perceivration of what is conventionally termed 'Reality', of Being and of beings. Which perceivration is of the numinous capable of apprehension, sans denotata, by means of empathy and pathei-mathos, obviating the need for theos (a supreme divinity) and for theoi (the divinities of various ancient religions, pagan and otherwise) and obviating the need for not only ideologies of whatever kind but for religions such as Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Buddhism which rely on the interpretation, the exegesis, of some text or texts. {6}

For Myatt, this apprehension of the numinous is manifest in the personal behaviour of individuals through the compassion, humility, and tolerance born of empathy and through the fairness, the reasonableness, of personal honour.

As noted in *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*, empathy:

"inclines a person toward certain virtues; toward a particular type of personal character; and disinclines them toward doing what is bad, what is unfair; what is harsh and unfeeling; what intentionally causes or

contributes to suffering. For empathy enables us to *directly perceive*, to sense, the φύσις (the physis, the nature or character) of human beings and other living beings, involving as empathy does a translocation of ourselves and thus a knowing-of another living-being as that living-being is, without presumptions and sans all ideations, all projections." [My emphasis] {7}

Furthermore, empathy is inextricably linked to pathei-mathos {8} and that there is what Myatt terms a 'local horizon' to empathy:

"The 'local horizon of empathy' is a natural consequence of my understanding of empathy as a human faculty, albeit a faculty that is still quite underdeveloped. For what empathy provides - or can provide - is a very personal wordless knowing in the immediacy-of-the-living-moment. Thus empathy inclines us as individuals to appreciate that what is beyond the purveu {9} of our empathy - beyond our personal empathic knowing of others, beyond our knowledge and our experience, beyond the limited (local) range of our empathy and that personal (local) knowledge of ourselves which pathei-mathos reveals - is something we rationally, we humbly, accept we do not know and so cannot judge or form a reasonable, a fair, a balanced, opinion about. For empathy, like pathei-mathos, lives within us; manifesting, as both empathy and pathei-mathos do, the always limited nature, the horizon, of our own knowledge and understanding." {10}

"[a]s a personal human faculty empathy has a personal horizon and thus cannot be extrapolated from such a personal knowing into some-thing supra-personal be this some-thing denotata, including an ἰδέα/εἶδος, or an axiom (ἀρχή) or a source (αἴτιος) for some 'revelation' or ideology or similar manifestations constructed by and dependent on appellation." {11}

In regard to the numinous Myatt writes:

"In contrast to Otto et al, my understanding of the numinous is that it is primarily a perceivation, not a personal emotion or feeling, not a mysterium, and not an idea in the sense of Plato's εἶδος and thus is not similar to Kant's concept of a priori. As a perceivation, while it includes an apprehension of what is often referred to as 'the divine', 'the holy' - and sometimes thus is an apprehension of theos or theoi - it is not limited to such apprehensions, since as in the past it is often an intimation of, an intuition concerning, the natural balance of ψυχή; a balance which ὕβρις upsets. This natural balance - our being as human beings - is or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful." {12}

Which brings us to what seems to be a neglected aspect of his weltanschauung: the natural balance, harmony, ἁρμονία, for which he often uses the Taoist-derived term wu-wei which he defines as being "used in my philosophy of pathei-mathos to refer to a personal 'letting-be' - a non-interference - deriving from humility." {13} That is, from the humility revealed by empathy.

His 2018 essay *Towards Understanding Ancestral Culture* elaborates on this notion of balance where he provides an example not only from Ancient Greece but from Tractate IV:2 of the Corpus Hermeticum, and from Ficini's *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda*, written in Latin and published in 1489,

"Correctly understood, Δίκη - and δίκη in general - represents the natural and the necessary balance manifest in ἁρμονία (harmony) and thus not only in τὸ καλόν (the beautiful) but also in the Cosmic Order, κόσμος, with ourselves as human beings (at least when unaffected by hubris) a microcosmic re-presentation of such balance, κόσμον δὲ θείου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον. A sentiment re-expressed centuries later by Marsilii Ficini: Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona, 'How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned'.

This understanding and appreciation of ἁρμονία and of κόσμος and of ourselves as a microcosm is perhaps most evident in the Greek phrase καλὸς κάγαθός, describing as it does those who are balanced within themselves, who - manifesting τὸ καλόν and τὸ ἀγαθόν - comport themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner." {14}

Which ancient notion of καλὸς κάγαθός he mentions in his two 2017 monographs *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* and *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* {15} and which comportment succinctly describes how his weltanschauung could be manifest in the world.

Gentlemanly And Lady-like Behaviour

As described earlier, Myatt's mystical apprehension of the numinous is manifest in the personal behaviour of individuals and this behaviour amounts to an individual comporting themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner; a comportment which has a long history in European culture from the idealized medieval chivalry of Morte Arthure to fictional Regency characters such as Mr Darcy, Elizabeth Bennet, Colonel Brandon, and Elinor Dashwood, to the 1940s Clive Wynne-Candy and Theo Kretschmar-Schuldorff.

In his 2014 essay *The Consolation Of A Viator*, Myatt indirectly references the character of Mr Darcy:

"For most of my life - and to paraphrase what someone once wrote - I have been a selfish being, prideful and conceited, and would still be so were it not for the suicide of a woman I loved." {16}

In the final paragraph of his autobiography *Myngath* he concludes that "a shared, a loyal, love between two people is the most beautiful, the most numinous, the most valuable thing of all." {17}

Such personal sentiments ground, and in my view express the essence of, his weltanschauung and have apparently been somewhat neglected in discussions of Myatt's 'philosophy' of pathei-mathos. For it is not an academic philosophy divorced from the realities of human life but the life-experience of someone who, learning from both diverse experiences and decades of scholarly study, has distilled that learning into the understanding that in order to presence the numinous we do not need religions or any -ism or -ology or abstractions but have only to behave in a certain cultured way: with manners, fairness, honour, humility, and compassion.

Which attributes of personal character are, to use Myatt's term, descriptors not abstractions:

"A descriptor is a word, a term, used to describe some-thing which exists and which is personally observed, or is discovered, by means of our senses (including the faculty of empathy)." {13}

Hence why Myatt aptly describes his 'philosophy' as a "mystical individualistic numinous way," and as "the way of striving to cultivate, striving to live by, the virtues of humility, empathy, compassion, honour, non-interference, and self-restraint. A very individual way..." {18}

Morena Kapisiris
June 2022

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{1} It should be noted that in many of his writings Myatt often idiosyncratically uses *denotatum* as an Anglicized term for both singular and plural instances. However, I shall use denotata for the plural and denotatum for the singular.

{2} *Some Questions For DWM*, 2022, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/05/dwm-questions-may-22.pdf>

{3} We have appropriated the term 'perceiveration' from Myatt's translations of and commentaries on tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum where he explains that he uses it to translate the Greek term νοῦς in place of the conventional translation 'mind', explaining his reasons in his article *Concerning ἀγαθός and νοῦς in the Corpus Hermeticum* - <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/03/24/concerning-ἀγαθός-and-νοῦς-in-the-corpus-hermeticum/> - and in his commentary on v.2 of the Poemandres tractate where he describes perceivance as:

"a particular type of astute awareness, as of one's surroundings, of one's self, and as in understanding ('reading') a situation often in an instinctive way. Thus, what is not meant is some-thing termed 'mind' (or some faculty thereof), distinguished as this abstract 'thing' termed 'mind' has often been from another entity termed the body." <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

{4} *Towards Understanding Physis*. Included as an appendix in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, fifth edition, 2018, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/numinous-way-v5c-print.pdf>

{5} See for example *Some Questions For DWM 2014*, included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*, 2014, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/one-vagabond-pathei-mathos.pdf>

{6} In many of his writings Myatt has explained that the need for and practice of exegesis leads to suffering through reliance on a particular interpretation and through the conflict of competing interpretations which can lead to accusations of 'heresy'. See for example (i) the 2017 text *The Way Of Jesus of Nazareth: A Question Of Hermeneutics?* <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/09/30/the-way-of-jesus-of-nazareth/> and (ii) the 2019 text *Two Metaphysical Contradictions Of The Modern West* which is included in his text *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/in-defence-rc-1.pdf>

In his 2018 essay *From Mythoi To Empathy* - included as an appendix in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, fifth edition - he wrote that the local horizon of empathy

"and the fact that empathy is a human faculty mean that the apprehension is wordless and personal and cannot be extrapolated beyond, or abstracted out from, the individual without losing some or all of its numinosity since the process of denotatum - of abstraction - devolves around the meanings assigned to words, terms, and names, and which meanings can and do vary over causal time and may be (mis)interpreted by others often on the basis of some idea, or theory, or on some comparative exegesis. It therefore follows that the numinous cannot be codified and that numinosity cannot be adequately, fully, presenced by anything doctrinal or which is organized beyond a small, a localized, and thus personal level; and that all such a supra-local organization can ever hope to do at best is provide a fallible intimation of the numinous, or perhaps some practical means to help others toward individually apprehending the numinous for themselves." <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/numinous-way-v5c-print.pdf>

{7} included in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, fifth edition, op.cit.

{8} *The Mystic Philosophy Of David Myatt*, third edition, 2021, p.5. <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2021/09/myatt-philosophy-third-edition.pdf>

In his *Some Questions For DWM*, 2022, Myatt writes that the third edition of *The Mystic Philosophy* provides "a reasonably comprehensive overview" of his weltanschauung.

{9} As often, Myatt uses an alternative spelling: here *purveu* (from Middle English) instead of the now conventional 'purview'. See *On Idiosyncratic Capitalization and Spelling*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/on-idiosyncratic-capitalization-and-spelling/>

{10} Included in *Sarigthersa*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/dwmyatt-sarigthersa-v7.pdf>

{11} *Numinosity, Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition*, 2022, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2022/03/17/numinosity-denotata-empathy-and-the-hermetic-tradition/>

{12} *From Mythoi To Empathy*, 2018. Included as an appendix in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, fifth edition, 2018, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/numinous-way-v5c-print.pdf>

{13} *Vocabulary of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*, in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, op.cit.

{14} The essay is included as an appendix in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, op.cit. Myatt translates the quotation from Tractate IV:2 of the Corpus Hermeticum as "A cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings," writing in his commentary:

"That is, human beings re-present, presence, the 'divine body' and are, of themselves, a reflection of the cosmic order itself. This, and the preceding line, express a fundamental part of ancient and Renaissance hermeticism: human beings as a microcosm of the cosmic order and the divine." *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

{15} (i) *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/classical-paganism-v2-print.pdf> (ii) *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/tua-es-diaboli-ianua.pdf>

{16} The essay is included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/one-vagabond-pathei-mathos.pdf>

{17} *Myngath*, 2013, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/david-myatt-myngath.pdf>

{18} *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/in-defence-rc-1.pdf>

Denotata, Physis, And Pathei-Mathos

Part One

Misunderstanding Denotata In Myatt's Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos

A Particular Perceivration

A certain misunderstanding of David Myatt's weltanschauung of Pathei-Mathos seems to have arisen based on Myatt's use of terms such as acausal, abstractions, and denotatum {1} which does not seem to take into account matters such as the following:

1. That Myatt's weltanschauung was developed and refined over a period of some years (c.2011-2017) and was based primarily on his outré experiences over some four decades, which refinement led him to write in 2022 that

"my weltanschauung is just my weltanschauung; representing my attempt to apprehend the physis of human beings; to understand the causes of suffering and how suffering can be alleviated; and understand the nature of the numinous and what it means and meant, and thus whether the numinous is embodied in theos, however understood, or in human virtues such as compassion, empathy and honour which thus might obviate the need for a belief in something supra-personal be that theos or some -ism or some -ology." {2}

In effect, his weltanschauung of Pathei-Mathos is a mystical perceivration and not an academic philosophy. {3}

2. That his classification of his insights using terminology such as ontology, epistemology, and ethics - as in for example his statement that "the ontology of beings [...] is often obscured by denotatum and by abstractions, both of which conceal physis" {4} - is only a temporary guide for readers since his focus is primarily on empathy and pathei-mathos as a means to knowing, both of which are personal, of the immediate moment, and which knowing, as he writes many times, cannot be extracted out from that personal experiencing to form the basis for anything supra-personal be it a denotata or some -ism or some -ology. {5}

That is, ontology itself is an abstraction, a denotatum, which empathy and pathei-mathos take us beyond. In this respect a simile might be Wittgenstein's 'ladder'.

3. That what applies to terminology such as ontology applies to his use of the acausal and his division of our physis, following his understanding of the Corpus Hermeticum, into masculous and muliebral. That they are also useful denotata to explain what is as it now is and has been but are ultimately discarded by the wordless knowing of empathy and pathei-mathos.

4. That his comparisons and examples derived from ancient Greek texts and philosophy - most of which he cites in Greek and provides his own translations - are of the insights of some others with which he finds some correlation with his own insights, eschewing as he does in his iconoclasm and resonance with Greco-Roman culture the modern practice in academia of citing works by philosophers of the past few centuries and more recent texts by academics.

The Mysticism Of Mr Myatt

The statement by Myatt, quoted above, that his weltanschauung is his

"attempt to apprehend the physis of human beings; to understand the causes of suffering and how suffering can be alleviated; and understand the nature of the numinous and what it means and meant, and thus whether the numinous is embodied in theos, however understood, or in human virtues such as compassion, empathy and honour which thus might obviate the need for a belief in something supra-personal be that theos or some -ism or some -ology," {2}

is a succinct description of his mysticism; that is, of his personal perceivration of what is conventionally termed 'Reality', of Being and of beings. Which perceivration is of the numinous capable of apprehension, sans denotata, by means of empathy and pathei-mathos, obviating the need for theos (a supreme divinity) and for theoi (the divinities of various ancient religions, pagan and otherwise) and obviating the need for not only ideologies of whatever kind but for religions such as Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Buddhism which rely on the interpretation, the exegesis, of some text or texts. {6}

For Myatt, this apprehension of the numinous is manifest in the personal behaviour of individuals through the compassion, humility, and tolerance born of empathy and through the fairness, the reasonableness, of personal honour.

As noted in *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*, empathy:

"inclines a person toward certain virtues; toward a particular type of personal character; and disinclines them toward doing what is bad, what is unfair; what is harsh and unfeeling; what intentionally causes or

contributes to suffering. For empathy enables us to *directly perceive*, to sense, the φύσις (the physis, the nature or character) of human beings and other living beings, involving as empathy does a translocation of ourselves and thus a knowing-of another living-being as that living-being is, without presumptions and sans all ideations, all projections." [My emphasis] {7}

Furthermore, empathy is inextricably linked to pathei-mathos {8} and that there is what Myatt terms a 'local horizon' to empathy:

"The 'local horizon of empathy' is a natural consequence of my understanding of empathy as a human faculty, albeit a faculty that is still quite underdeveloped. For what empathy provides - or can provide - is a very personal wordless knowing in the immediacy-of-the-living-moment. Thus empathy inclines us as individuals to appreciate that what is beyond the purveu {9} of our empathy - beyond our personal empathic knowing of others, beyond our knowledge and our experience, beyond the limited (local) range of our empathy and that personal (local) knowledge of ourselves which pathei-mathos reveals - is something we rationally, we humbly, accept we do not know and so cannot judge or form a reasonable, a fair, a balanced, opinion about. For empathy, like pathei-mathos, lives within us; manifesting, as both empathy and pathei-mathos do, the always limited nature, the horizon, of our own knowledge and understanding." {10}

"[a]s a personal human faculty empathy has a personal horizon and thus cannot be extrapolated from such a personal knowing into some-thing supra-personal be this some-thing denotata, including an ἰδέα/εἶδος, or an axiom (ἀρχή) or a source (αἴτιος) for some 'revelation' or ideology or similar manifestations constructed by and dependent on appellation." {11}

In regard to the numinous Myatt writes:

"In contrast to Otto et al, my understanding of the numinous is that it is primarily a perceivation, not a personal emotion or feeling, not a mysterium, and not an idea in the sense of Plato's εἶδος and thus is not similar to Kant's concept of a priori. As a perceivation, while it includes an apprehension of what is often referred to as 'the divine', 'the holy' - and sometimes thus is an apprehension of theos or theoi - it is not limited to such apprehensions, since as in the past it is often an intimation of, an intuition concerning, the natural balance of ψυχή; a balance which ὕβρις upsets. This natural balance - our being as human beings - is or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful." {12}

Which brings us to what seems to be a neglected aspect of his weltanschauung: the natural balance, harmony, ἁρμονία, for which he often uses the Taoist-derived term wu-wei which he defines as being "used in my philosophy of pathei-mathos to refer to a personal 'letting-be' - a non-interference - deriving from humility." {13} That is, from the humility revealed by empathy.

His 2018 essay *Towards Understanding Ancestral Culture* elaborates on this notion of balance where he provides an example not only from Ancient Greece but from Tractate IV:2 of the Corpus Hermeticum, and from Ficini's *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda*, written in Latin and published in 1489,

"Correctly understood, Δίκη - and δίκη in general - represents the natural and the necessary balance manifest in ἁρμονία (harmony) and thus not only in τὸ καλόν (the beautiful) but also in the Cosmic Order, κόσμος, with ourselves as human beings (at least when unaffected by hubris) a microcosmic re-presentation of such balance, κόσμον δὲ θείου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον. A sentiment re-expressed centuries later by Marsilii Ficini: Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona, 'How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned'.

This understanding and appreciation of ἁρμονία and of κόσμος and of ourselves as a microcosm is perhaps most evident in the Greek phrase καλὸς κάγαθός, describing as it does those who are balanced within themselves, who - manifesting τὸ καλόν and τὸ ἀγαθόν - comport themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner." {14}

Which ancient notion of καλὸς κάγαθός he mentions in his two 2017 monographs *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* and *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* {15} and which comportment succinctly describes how his weltanschauung could be manifest in the world.

Gentlemanly And Lady-like Behaviour

As described earlier, Myatt's mystical apprehension of the numinous is manifest in the personal behaviour of individuals and this behaviour amounts to an individual comporting themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner; a comportment which has a long history in European culture from the idealized medieval chivalry of Morte Arthure to fictional Regency characters such as Mr Darcy, Elizabeth Bennet, Colonel Brandon, and Elinor Dashwood, to the 1940s Clive Wynne-Candy and Theo Kretschmar-Schuldorff.

In his 2014 essay *The Consolation Of A Viator*, Myatt indirectly references the character of Mr Darcy:

"For most of my life - and to paraphrase what someone once wrote - I have been a selfish being, prideful and conceited, and would still be so were it not for the suicide of a woman I loved." {16}

In the final paragraph of his autobiography *Myngath* he concludes that "a shared, a loyal, love between two people is the most beautiful, the most numinous, the most valuable thing of all." {17}

Such personal sentiments ground, and in my view express the essence of, his weltanschauung and have apparently been somewhat neglected in discussions of Myatt's 'philosophy' of pathei-mathos. For it is not an academic philosophy divorced from the realities of human life but the life-experience of someone who, learning from both diverse experiences and decades of scholarly study, has distilled that learning into the understanding that in order to presence the numinous we do not need religions or any -ism or -ology or abstractions but have only to behave in a certain cultured way: with manners, fairness, honour, humility, and compassion.

Which attributes of personal character are, to use Myatt's term, descriptors not abstractions:

"A descriptor is a word, a term, used to describe some-thing which exists and which is personally observed, or is discovered, by means of our senses (including the faculty of empathy)." {13}

Hence why Myatt aptly describes his 'philosophy' as a "mystical individualistic numinous way," and as "the way of striving to cultivate, striving to live by, the virtues of humility, empathy, compassion, honour, non-interference, and self-restraint. A very individual way..." {18}

Morena Kapisiris
June 2022

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{1} It should be noted that in many of his writings Myatt often idiosyncratically uses *denotatum* as an Anglicized term for both singular and plural instances. However, I shall use denotata for the plural and denotatum for the singular.

{2} *Some Questions For DWM*, 2022, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/05/dwm-questions-may-22.pdf>

{3} We have appropriated the term 'perceiveration' from Myatt's translations of and commentaries on tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum where he explains that he uses it to translate the Greek term νοῦς in place of the conventional translation 'mind', explaining his reasons in his article *Concerning ἀγαθός and νοῦς in the Corpus Hermeticum* - <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/03/24/concerning-ἀγαθός-and-νοῦς-in-the-corpus-hermeticum/> - and in his commentary on v.2 of the Poemandres tractate where he describes perceivance as:

"a particular type of astute awareness, as of one's surroundings, of one's self, and as in understanding ('reading') a situation often in an instinctive way. Thus, what is not meant is some-thing termed 'mind' (or some faculty thereof), distinguished as this abstract 'thing' termed 'mind' has often been from another entity termed the body." <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

{4} *Towards Understanding Physis*. Included as an appendix in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, fifth edition, 2018, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/numinous-way-v5c-print.pdf>

{5} See for example *Some Questions For DWM 2014*, included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*, 2014, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/one-vagabond-pathei-mathos.pdf>

{6} In many of his writings Myatt has explained that the need for and practice of exegesis leads to suffering through reliance on a particular interpretation and through the conflict of competing interpretations which can lead to accusations of 'heresy'. See for example (i) the 2017 text *The Way Of Jesus of Nazareth: A Question Of Hermeneutics?* <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/09/30/the-way-of-jesus-of-nazareth/> and (ii) the 2019 text *Two Metaphysical Contradictions Of The Modern West* which is included in his text *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/in-defence-rc-1.pdf>

In his 2018 essay *From Mythoi To Empathy* - included as an appendix in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, fifth edition - he wrote that the local horizon of empathy

"and the fact that empathy is a human faculty mean that the apprehension is wordless and personal and cannot be extrapolated beyond, or abstracted out from, the individual without losing some or all of its numinosity since the process of denotatum - of abstraction - devolves around the meanings assigned to words, terms, and names, and which meanings can and do vary over causal time and may be (mis)interpreted by others often on the basis of some idea, or theory, or on some comparative exegesis. It therefore follows that the numinous cannot be codified and that numinosity cannot be adequately, fully, presenced by anything doctrinal or which is organized beyond a small, a localized, and thus personal level; and that all such a supra-local organization can ever hope to do at best is provide a fallible intimation of the numinous, or perhaps some practical means to help others toward individually apprehending the numinous for themselves." <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/numinous-way-v5c-print.pdf>

{7} included in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, fifth edition, op.cit.

{8} *The Mystic Philosophy Of David Myatt*, third edition, 2021, p.5. <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2021/09/myatt-philosophy-third-edition.pdf>

In his *Some Questions For DWM*, 2022, Myatt writes that the third edition of *The Mystic Philosophy* provides "a reasonably comprehensive overview" of his weltanschauung.

{9} As often, Myatt uses an alternative spelling: here *purveu* (from Middle English) instead of the now conventional 'purview'. See *On Idiosyncratic Capitalization and Spelling*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/on-idiosyncratic-capitalization-and-spelling/>

{10} Included in *Sarigthersa*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/dwmyatt-sarigthersa-v7.pdf>

{11} *Numinosity, Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition*, 2022, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2022/03/17/numinosity-denotata-empathy-and-the-hermetic-tradition/>

{12} *From Mythoi To Empathy*, 2018. Included as an appendix in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, fifth edition, 2018, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/numinous-way-v5c-print.pdf>

{13} *Vocabulary of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*, in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, op.cit.

{14} The essay is included as an appendix in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, op.cit. Myatt translates the quotation from Tractate IV:2 of the Corpus Hermeticum as "A cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings," writing in his commentary:

"That is, human beings re-present, presence, the 'divine body' and are, of themselves, a reflection of the cosmic order itself. This, and the preceding line, express a fundamental part of ancient and Renaissance hermeticism: human beings as a microcosm of the cosmic order and the divine." *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

{15} (i) *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/classical-paganism-v2-print.pdf> (ii) *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/tua-es-diaboli-ianua.pdf>

{16} The essay is included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/one-vagabond-pathei-mathos.pdf>

{17} *Myngath*, 2013, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/david-myatt-myngath.pdf>

{18} *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/in-defence-rc-1.pdf>

David Myatt - Collected Works In Print

The following works, currently (2019) available as printed books, represent those writings of mine which may, just may in my fallible opinion, have some worth. The texts included in these published works were mostly written in 2012-2018; the exceptions being my Greek translations, some poetry, and some letters written between 2006 and 2011.

As far as I am concerned the rest of my writings, spanning some four decades, are either (i) hubriatic/tending toward hubris, or, as in the case of post-2011 material, (ii) can and should be forgotten, being only transitory scribblings.

Furthermore, all pre-2011 writings, save for (i) the translations and the poetry listed below, and some private letters written between 2002 and 2011, or (ii) included in the other works listed below, are disowned and rejected by me.

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N.B. All the books are 11 inches x 8.5 inches in format, which is somewhat larger than the conventional 'trade paperback' (6 inches by 9 inches). In terms of number of pages, add 20+ pages for each book listed below for the approximate number of pages in a standard 6 inches by 9 inches paperback.

1. Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates

190 pages. 2017

ISBN-13: 978-1976452369

BISAC: Philosophy / Metaphysics

A Translation of and Commentary on tractates I, III, IV, VI, VIII, XI, XII, XIII of the Corpus Hermeticum.

Contents:

Tractate I. Ποιμάνδρης. Poemandres

Tractate III. Ιερός Λόγος. An Esoteric Mythos

Tractate IV. Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς. From Hermes To Thoth: Chaldron Or Monas

Tractate VI. Ὅτι ἐν μόνῳ θεῷ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐστὶν ἀλλαχόθι δὲ οὐδαμοῦ. That In The Theos Alone Is Nobility And Not Anywhere Else

Tractate VIII. Ὅτι οὐδὲν τῶν ὄντων ἀπόλλυται ἀλλὰ τὰς μεταβολὰς ἀπωλείας καὶ θανάτους πλανώμενοι λέγουσιν. That no beings are lost, despite mortals mistakenly claiming that such transformations are death and a loss.

Tractate XI. Νοῦς πρὸς Ἑρμῆν. From Perceiverance To Hermes

Tractate XII. Περὶ νοῦ κοινοῦ πρὸς Τάτ. To Thoth, Concerning Mutual Perceiveration.

Tractate XIII. Ἑρμοῦ τοῦ τρισεγίστου πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν Τάτ ἐν ὄρει λόγος ἀπόκρυφος περὶ παλιγγενεσίας καὶ σιγῆς ἐπαγγελίας. On A Mountain: Hermes Trismegistus To His Son Thoth, An Esoteric Discourse Concerning Palingenesis And The Requirement of Silence

2. Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos

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3. The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos

92 pages. 2013

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Fifth Edition

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1 Conspectus.

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4 Enantiodromia and The Reformation of The Individual.

5 Society, Politics, Social Reform, and Pathei-Mathos.

6 The Change of Enantiodromia.

7 The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic.

Appendix I - The Principle of Δίκη

Appendix II - From Mythoi To Empathy: A New Appreciation Of The Numinous

Appendix III - Towards Understanding Ancestral Culture

Appendix IV - The Concept of Physis

Appendix V - Notes on Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015α

Appendix VI - Notes on Heraclitus Fragment 1

Appendix VII - Glossary of Terms and Greek Words

Footnotes

Errata: Appendix IV The Concept Of Physis

Paragraph 3: Ontologically, as Aristotle makes clear [2] *should read* Ontologically, as Aristotle makes clear [1]

The remaining bracketed numbers in the text should be renumbered consecutively so that, for example, in paragraph 4, It does not die, does not grow, does not decay." [3] *should read* It does not die, does not grow, does not decay." [2]

In the *Notes* section to the appendix, note [1] should be deleted. Note [2] should read: [1] See Appendix IV, below, and also my *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*.

The remaining bracketed numbers in the Notes section should be renumbered consecutively, ending with: [10] *Time And The Separation Of Otherness - Part One*. 2012.

4. **Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos:** Essays and Letters Regarding Spirituality, Humility, and A Learning From Grief

60 pages. 2013

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Letters and essays – some autobiographical in nature – concerning religion, redemption, expiation, and humility, and relating to the numinous way – the philosophy – of pathei-mathos.

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- ° The Consolation Of A Viator
- ° Some Questions For DWM
- ° Toward Understanding The Acausal

Essays - five written in 2014 and one a revision of an older essay - which compliment two similar compilations of mine published in 2013, 'The Numinous Way of Pathei Mathos' (ISBN 9781484096642) and 'Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos: Essays and Letters Regarding Spirituality, Humility, and A Learning From Grief' (ISBN 9781484097984).

13. Sarigthersa: Some Recent Essays

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15. Tu Es Diaboli Ianua

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BISAC: Philosophy / Metaphysics

Since the religion termed Christianity has, for over six centuries, been influential in respect of the ethos and

spirituality of the culture of the West – often to the extent of having been described as manifesting that ethos and that spirituality – one of the metaphysical questions I have sought to answer over the past forty years is whether that religion is, given our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos, a suitable presencing of the numinous. If it is not, then could that religion be reformed, by developing a Johannine Weltanschauung given that the Gospel According to John – τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον – arguably presents a somewhat different perspective on the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth than the three other synoptic Gospels. Would such a reformation be a suitable presencing of the numinous, and if not, then what non-Christian alternatives – such as a paganus metaphysics – exist, and what is the foundation of such an alternative?

This essay presents my answers to such questions and thus compliments my book *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*.

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The Mystic Philosophy Of David Myatt

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Preface

The essays included in this book - two written by JR Wright, and the others by R. Parker, and reproduced with their permission - not only provide an introduction to the philosophy of pathei-mathos as advanced by David Myatt between 2012 and 2015 but also place that philosophy into perspective, which is of a modern mystical philosophy with roots in Greco-Roman culture. Which somewhat distinguishes Myatt's philosophy from other contemporary philosophies and from the weltanschauungen of various individuals during the past three or more centuries. Myatt's philosophy is thus part of the Western philosophical tradition.

It is worth noting that in his more recent (2014-2015) essays Myatt has described his 'way of pathei-mathos' not as a philosophy but as a weltanschauung, writing in *The Way Of Pathei-Mathos - A Précis* [1] that

"What I have previously described as the 'philosophy of pathei-mathos' and the 'way of pathei-mathos' is simply my own weltanschauung, a weltanschauung developed over some years as a result of my own pathei-mathos. Thus, and despite whatever veracity it may or may not possess, it is only the personal insight of one very fallible individual."

Given Myatt's use of various terms from ancient Greek I have, for this third edition, included as appendices the Preface from his 2020 compilation *One Perceivoration* [2] and his 2019 text *Appreciating Classical Literature* [3] as well as his 2019 text *Physis And Being: An Introduction To The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos*, [4] and his *The Concept of Physis* which was included in the fifth, 2018, edition of his compilation *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. All of which additions further explain his mystical philosophy of pathei-mathos.

I have also updated references to his translations of tractates from the Corpus Hermeticism given the publication in 2017 of a book [5] containing his translations of and commentaries on the following eight tractates: I, III, IV, VI, VIII, XI, XII, XIII.

I have updated some of the web-links in the text including in the appendices; also, in the footnotes the number beginning 978 - which generally follows the title of a printed book and its date of publication - refers to the International Standard Book Number (ISBN) as for example in the reference *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, 2017, 978-1976452369

Richard Stirling
Shropshire
Third Edition, 2021

[1] The essay is included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*. 2014.

[2] <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2020/02/dwmyatt-one->

I. A Modern Mystic

David Myatt And The Way of Pathei-Mathos

Philosophy of a Modern Mystic

The 'way of pathei-mathos' (πάθει μάθος) is the name given, by David Myatt himself, to his own particular *Weltanschauung*, his own perspective about life, which he has expounded in numerous essays since 2011, and which perspective or personal philosophy he developed after he "had, upon reflexion, rejected much of and revised what then remained of my earlier (2006-2011) numinous way." (1)

Myatt has conveniently collected most of the essays expounding his personal philosophy into four books: *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, published in 2013; *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*, published in 2013; *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*, published in 2014; and *Sarigthersa*, published in May 2015. These works amount to some 240 pages.

In one essay he makes it clear that the way, or the philosophy, of pathei-mathos is

"simply my own weltanschauung, a weltanschauung developed over some years as a result of my own pathei-mathos. Thus, and despite whatever veracity it may or may not possess, it is only the personal insight of one very fallible individual, a fallibility proven by my decades of selfishness and by my decades of reprehensible extremism both political and religious. Furthermore, and according to my admittedly limited understanding and limited knowledge, this philosophy does not - in essence - express anything new. For I feel (and I use the word 'feel' intentionally) that I have only re-expressed what so many others, over millennia, have expressed as result of (i) their own pathei-mathos and/or (ii) their experiences/insights and/or (iii) their particular philosophical musings." (2)

As described in those four collections of essays, Myatt's particular perspective, or philosophy of life is, in my view, fundamentally a mystical one

because based on a personal intuitive insight about, a personal awareness of, the nature of Reality. A mystic accepts that there is, or there can arise by means such as contemplation, a spiritual apprehension of certain truths which transcends the temporal.

Myatt personal mystic insight is essentially two-fold: (a) that "we are a connexion to other life; of how we are but one mortal fallible emanation of Life; of how we affect or can affect the well-being - the very being, ψυχή - of other mortals and other life," (3); and (b) of "the primacy of pathei-mathos: of a personal pathei-mathos being one of the primary means whereby we can come to know the true φύσις (physis) of Being, of beings, and of our own being; a knowing beyond 'abstractions', beyond the concealment implicit in manufactured opposites, by ipseity (the separation-of-otherness), and by denotatum." (2)

According to Myatt, this awareness of our connexion to other life is that arising from empathy; more, precisely, from the faculty of empathy, which he explains is an awareness of, and a sympathy with, other living beings, and by means of which we can

"understand both φύσις and Πόλεμος, and thus apprehend Being as Being, and the nature of beings - and in particular the nature of our being, as mortals. For empathy reveals to us the acausality of Being and thus how the process of abstraction, involving as it does an imposition of causality and separation upon beings (and the ideation implicit on opposites and dialectic), is a covering-up of Being." (4)

Less metaphysically, he writes that empathy

"inclines a person toward certain virtues; toward a particular type of personal character; and disinclines them toward doing what is bad, what is unfair; what is harsh and unfeeling; what intentionally causes or contributes to suffering. For empathy enables us to directly perceive, to sense, the φύσις (the physis, the nature or character) of human beings and other living beings, involving as empathy does a translocation of ourselves and thus a knowing-of another living-being as that living-being is, without presumptions and sans all ideations, all projections." (5)

According to him, empathy is inextricably linked to pathei-mathos:

"Empathy is, as an intuitive understanding, what was, can be, and often is, learned or developed by πάθει μάθος. That is, from and by a direct, personal, learning from experience and suffering. An understanding manifest in our awareness of the numinous and thus in the distinction we have made, we make, or we are capable of making, between the sacred and the profane; the distinction made, for example in the past, between θεοί and δαιμόνων and mortals." (5)

One feature of Myatt's mysticism is his somewhat prolific use of ancient Greek terms and expressions; a use which he states is because

"the philosophy of πάθει μάθος has certain connexions to Hellenic culture and I tend therefore to use certain Greek words in order to try and elucidate my meaning and/or to express certain philosophical principles regarded as important in - and for an understanding of - this philosophy; a usage of words which I have endeavoured to explain as and where necessary, sometimes by quoting passages from Hellenic literature or other works and by providing translations of such passages. For it would be correct to assume that the ethos of this philosophy is somewhat indebted to and yet - and importantly - is also a development of the ethos of Hellenic culture; an indebtedness obvious in notions such as δίκη, πάθει μάθος, avoidance of ὕβρις, and references to Heraclitus, Aeschylus, and others, and a development manifest in notions such as empathy and the importance attached to the virtue of compassion." (5)(6)

Pathei-Mathos And Physis

Since - as the name for his 'way' or philosophy implies - the concept of pathei-mathos is fundamental, as is the concept of physis, it is necessary to understand what Myatt means by both these concepts.

1. Pathei-Mathos

In several of his essays Myatt writes about this concept in some detail. For example:

"The Greek term πάθει μάθος derives from The Agamemnon of Aeschylus (written c. 458 BCE), and can be interpreted, or translated, as meaning 'learning from adversary', or 'wisdom arises from (personal) suffering'; or 'personal experience is the genesis of true learning'.

However, this expression should be understood in context, for what Aeschylus writes is that the Immortal, Zeus, guiding mortals to reason, has provided we mortals with a new law, which law replaces previous ones, and which new law - this new guidance laid down for mortals - is pathei-mathos.

Thus, for we human beings, pathei-mathos possesses a numinous, a living, authority - that is, the wisdom, the understanding, that arises from one's own personal experience, from formative experiences that involve some hardship, some grief, some personal suffering, is often or could be more valuable to us (more alive, more meaningful) than any doctrine, than any religious faith, than any words one might hear from someone else or read in some book.

In many ways, this Aeschylean view is an enlightened - a very

human – one, and is somewhat in contrast to the faith and revelation-centred view of religions such as Judaism, Islam, and Christianity." (7)

"A personal pathei-mathos [is] one of the primary means whereby we can come to know the true φύσις (physis) of Being, of beings, and of our own being; a knowing beyond 'abstractions', beyond the concealment implicit in manufactured opposites, by ipseity (the separation- of-otherness), and by denotatum." (2)

This reliance on pathei-mathos makes his philosophy non-dogmatic, personal, and interior, especially given the connection Myatt makes between pathei-mathos and empathy; for the type of knowing both provide is a-causal in nature and is only manifest "in the immediacy-of-the-moment" and therefore "cannot be abstracted out from that 'living moment' via denotatum: by (words written or spoken), or be named or described or expressed (become fixed or 'known') by any dogma or any -ism or any -ology, be such -isms or -ologies conventionally understood as political, religious, ideological, or social." (2)

As Myatt explains, there is a 'local horizon' to both empathy and pathei-mathos:

"The 'local horizon of empathy' is a natural consequence of my understanding of empathy as a human faculty, albeit a faculty that is still quite underdeveloped. For what empathy provides - or can provide - is a very personal wordless knowing in the immediacy-of-the-living-moment. Thus empathy inclines us as individuals to appreciate that what is beyond the purview of our empathy - beyond our personal empathic knowing of others, beyond our knowledge and our experience, beyond the limited (local) range of our empathy and that personal (local) knowledge of ourselves which pathei-mathos reveals - is something we rationally, we humbly, accept we do not know and so cannot judge or form a reasonable, a fair, a balanced, opinion about. For empathy, like pathei-mathos, lives within us; manifesting, as both empathy and pathei-mathos do, the always limited nature, the horizon, of our own knowledge and understanding." (8)

In further explaining what he means by the 'acausal (wordless) knowing' of empathy and pathei-mathos, Myatt introduces another fundamental aspect of his philosophy, the culture of pathei-mathos:

"What, therefore, is the wordless knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal? It is the knowing manifest in our human culture of pathei-mathos. The knowing communicated to us, for example, by art, music, literature, and manifest in the lives of those who presenced, in their living, compassion, love, and honour. Germane to this knowing is that - unlike a form or an abstraction - it is always personal (limited in its applicability) and can only be embodied in and presenced by some-thing or by some-one which or

who lives. That is, it cannot be abstracted out of the living, the personal, moment of its presencing by someone or abstracted out from its living apprehension by others in the immediacy-of-the-moment, and thus cannot become 'an ideal' or form the foundation for some dogma or ideology or supra-personal faith." (8)

In addition he points out that such 'acausal knowing' is supplementary and complimentary to that 'causal knowing' which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science. (9)

2. Physis

In his essay *Towards Understanding Physis* (10) Myatt explains that he uses the term physis, φύσις, contextually to refer to:

- (i) the ontology of beings, an ontology - a reality, a 'true nature' - that is often obscured by denotatum and by abstractions, both of which conceal physis;
- (ii) the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being, which is of us - we mortals - as a nexion, an affective effluvium (or emanation) of Life (ψυχή) and thus of why 'the separation-of-otherness' is a concealment of that relationship;
- (iii) the character, or persona, of human beings, and which character - sans denotatum - can be discovered (revealed, known) by the faculty of empathy;
- (iv) the unity - the being - beyond the division of our physis, as individual mortals, into masculous and muliebral;
- (v) that manifestation denoted by the concept Time, with Time considered to be an expression/manifestation of the physis of beings.

According to Myatt - echoing as he does a concept found in several tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum (11) - the supposed necessity of denoting (or defining) ourselves, as an individual, in terms of either 'the masculous' or 'the muliebral' (12) is incorrect and distances us from understanding our human physis. That is, he suggests that every individual has (or can develop) a masculous and a muliebral aspect to their physis and that it is natural for us to develop both these aspects of our character, which development - and the balanced physis which results - would take us away from the dominating suffering causing patriarchal ethos of the past three thousand years, incline us toward empathy, compassion, and honour, and thus lessen the suffering which we inflict on other humans and on other life. (13) In respect of which development Myatt asks a rhetorical question:

"Will [it] take us another three thousand years, or more, or less, to live, world-wide, in societies where fairness, peace, and compassion, are the norm because the males of our species - perhaps by heeding Fairness and not obliging Hubris, perhaps by learning from our shared human culture of *pathei-mathos* - have personally, individually, balanced within themselves the masculous

with the muliebral and thus, because of sympatheia, follow the path of honour. Which balancing would naturally seem to require a certain conscious intent.

What, therefore, is our intent, as individual human beings, and can our human culture of pathei-mathos offer us some answers, or perchance some guidance? As an old epigram so well-expressed it:

θυητοῖσιν ἀνωϊστῶν πολέων περ οὐδὲν ἀφραστότερον πέλεται
νόου ἀνθρώποισι

"Of all the things that mortals fail to understand, the most incomprehensible is human intent."

Personally, I do believe that our human culture of pathei-mathos - rooted as it is in our ancient past, enriched as it has been over thousands of years by each new generation, and informing as it does of what is wise and what is unwise - can offer us both some guidance and some answers." (14)

A Complete Philosophy

According to academic criteria, in order to qualify as a complete, and distinct, philosophy - in order to be a *Weltanschauung* - a particular philosophical viewpoint should possess the following: (i) a particular ontology, which describes and explains the concept of Being, and beings, and our relation to them; (ii) a particular theory of ethics, defining and explaining what is good, and what is bad; (iii) a particular theory of knowledge (an epistemology), of how truth and falsehood can be determined; and (iv) it should also be able to give or to suggest particular answers to questions such as "the meaning and purpose of our lives", and explain how the particular posited purpose may or could be attained.

Given that Myatt's 'way of pathei-mathos' provides the following answers, it does appear to meet the above criteria and thus could aptly be described as a distinct modern philosophy.

i) Ontology

"The ontology is of causal and acausal being, with (i) causal being as revealed by phainómenon, by the five Aristotelian essentials and thus by science with its observations and theories and principle of 'verifiability', and (ii) acausal being as revealed by συμπάθεια - by the acausal knowing (of living beings) derived from faculty of empathy - and thus of the distinction between the 'time' (the change) of living-beings and the 'time' described via the measurement of the observed or the assumed/posited/predicted movement of things." (2)

ii) Epistemology

"The primacy of pathei-mathos: of a personal pathei-mathos being one of the primary means whereby we can come to know the true φύσις (physis) of Being, of beings, and of our own being; a knowing beyond 'abstractions', beyond the concealment implicit in manufactured opposites, by ipseity (the separation-of-otherness), and by denotatum.

Adding the 'acausal knowing' revealed by the (muliebral) faculty of empathy to the conventional, and causal (and somewhat masculous), knowing of science and logical philosophical speculation, with the proviso that what such 'acausal knowing' reveals is (i) of φύσις, the relation between beings, and between beings and Being, and thus of 'the separation-of-otherness', and (ii) the personal and numinous nature of such knowing in the immediacy-of-the-moment." (2)

iii) Ethics

"Of personal honour - which presences the virtues of fairness, tolerance, compassion, humility, and εὐταξία - as (i) a natural intuitive (wordless) expression of the numinous ('the good', δίκη, συμπάθεια) and (ii) of both what the culture of pathei-mathos and the acausal-knowing of empathy reveal we should do (or incline us toward doing) in the immediacy of the personal moment when personally confronted by what is unfair, unjust, and extreme.

Of how such honour - by its and our φύσις - is and can only ever be personal, and thus cannot be extracted out from the 'living moment' and our participation in the moment; for it only through such things as a personal study of the culture of pathei-mathos and the development of the faculty of empathy that a person who does not naturally possess the instinct for δίκη can develop what is essentially 'the human faculty of honour', and which faculty is often appreciated and/or discovered via our own personal pathei-mathos." (2)

iv) Meaning

"It is wise to avoid causing or contributing to suffering not because such avoidance is a path toward nirvana (or some other posited thing), and not because we might be rewarded by God, by the gods, or by some divinity, but rather because it manifests the reality, the truth - the meaning - of our being." (15)

"Of understanding ourselves in that supra-personal, and cosmic, perspective that empathy, honour, and pathei mathos - and thus an awareness of the numinous and of the acausal - incline us toward, and which understanding is: (i) of ourselves as a finite, fragile, causal, viatorial, microcosmic, affective effluvium of Life (ψυχή) and thus connected to all other living beings, human, terran, and non-terran, and (ii) of there being no supra-personal goal to strive

toward because all supra personal goals are and have been just posited - assumed, abstracted - goals derived from the illusion of ipseity, and/or from some illusive abstraction, and/or from that misapprehension of our φύσις that arises from a lack of empathy, honour, and pathei-mathos.

For a living in the moment, in a balanced - an empathic, honourable - way, presences our φύσις as conscious beings capable of discovering and understanding and living in accord with our connexion to other life." (2)

A Spiritual Way

Myatt's answers to the questions of "the meaning and purpose of our lives" and of "how the posited purpose might be attained" reveal - as he himself admits in many of his essays - that his philosophy of pathei-mathos embodies a cultured pagan ethos similar to the paganism manifest in many of the writings of Cicero. In his essay on *Education And The Culture Of Pathei-Mathos*, Myatt approvingly quotes Cicero (in Latin) and paraphrases the explanation of meaning which Cicero gives in the second book of *De Natura Deorum*:

"The classical weltanschauung was a paganus one: an apprehension of the complete unity (a cosmic order, κόσμος, mundus) beyond the apparent parts of that unity, together with the perceivation that we mortals - albeit a mere and fallible part of the unity - have been gifted with our existence so that we may perceive and understand this unity, and, having so perceived, may ourselves seek to be whole, and thus become as balanced (perfectus), as harmonious, as the unity itself.

Furthermore, this paganus natural balance implied an acceptance by the individual of certain communal responsibilities and duties; of such responsibilities and duties, and their cultivation, as a natural and necessary part of our existence as mortals." (16)

But Myatt's philosophy is certainly not a modern restatement of a type of paganism that existed in ancient Greece and Rome. For his philosophy is concerned with the individual and especially with their interior life; with their 'acausal' connection - through what Myatt terms the cultivation of the virtues of empathy, compassion, humility, and personal honour - to Being and thence to other life, sentient and otherwise. This marks it as a spiritual way, but one devoid of 'abstractions' and dogma. As Myatt writes:

"To formulate some standard or rule or some test to try to evaluate alternatives and make choices in such matters is to make presumptions about what constitutes progress; about what constitutes a 'higher' level - or a more advanced stage - and what constitutes a 'lower' level or stage. That is, to not only make a moral judgement connected to what is considered to be 'good' and

'evil' - right and wrong, correct and incorrect - but also to apply that judgement to others and to 'things'. To judge them, and/or the actions of others, by whether they are on a par with, or are moving toward or away from, that 'right' and that 'wrong'.

This is, in my view, a veering toward hubris, away from the natural balance, and thus away from that acknowledgement of our fallibility, of our uncertainty of knowing, that is the personal virtue of humility. For the essence of the culture of pathei-mathos, and the genesis, the ethos, of all religious revelations and spiritual ways before or until they become dogmatical, seems to be that we can only, without hubris, without prejudice, judge and reform ourselves.

For what the culture of pathei-mathos reveals is that we human beings, are - personally - both the cause and the cure of suffering; and that our choice is whether or not we live, or try to live, in a manner which does not intentionally contribute to or which is not the genesis of new suffering. The choice, in effect, to choose the way of harmony - the natural balance - in preference to hubris." (17)

According to Myatt, empathy and pathei-mathos incline us - or can incline us - toward humility (18), for

"personal humility is the natural balance living within us; that is, we being or becoming or returning to the balance that does not give rise to ἔρις. Or, expressed simply, humility disposes us toward gentleness, toward kindness, toward love, toward peace; toward the virtues that are balance, that express our humanity." (19)

In other words, humility expresses the *raison d'être* of Myatt's philosophy, born as this philosophy is from his own pathei-mathos.

A Modern Gnostic

A Gnostic is someone who seeks gnosis: wisdom and knowledge; someone involved in a life-long search, a quest, for understanding, and who more often than not views the world, or more especially ordinary routine life, as often mundane and often as a hindrance. In my view, this is a rather apt description of Myatt during his idealist and 'extremist' decades; decades (1968-2009) which are reasonably now well-known and documented in various academic sources.

It is thus no surprise that Myatt has been described as an "extremely violent, intelligent, dark, and complex individual," (20) as "a British iconoclast who has lived a somewhat itinerant life and has undertaken an equally desultory intellectual quest," (21); as "arguably England's principal proponent of contemporary neo-Nazi ideology and theoretician of revolution," (22); as having undertaken various "Faustian quests", (23); as "a fierce Jihadist," (24) and as having undertaken a "Siddhartha-like search for truth" and "a global odyssey which took him on extended stays in the Middle East and East Asia, accompanied by studies of religions ranging from Christianity to Islam in the

Western tradition and Taoism and Buddhism in the Eastern path." (25)

Thus, his

"philosophy of πάθει μάθος [...] is not a conventional, an academic, one where a person intellectually posits or constructs a coherent theory - involving ontology, epistemology, ethics, and so on - often as a result of an extensive dispassionate study, review, or a criticism of the philosophies or views, past and present, advanced by other individuals involved in the pursuit of philosophy as an academic discipline or otherwise. Instead, the philosophy of pathei-mathos is the result of my own pathei-mathos, my own learning from diverse - sometimes outré, sometimes radical and often practical - ways of life and experiences over some four decades; of my subsequent reasoned analysis, over a period of several years, of those ways and those experiences; of certain personal intuitions, spread over several decades, regarding the numinous; of an interior process of personal and moral reflexion, lasting several years and deriving from a personal tragedy; and of my life-long study and appreciation of Hellenic culture." (26)

As Myatt has explained in various writings - such as in parts two and three of his *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism: A Very Strange Peregrination*, published in 2013, (27) - it was his own painful 'learning from practical experience' which compelled him to develop his philosophy of pathei-mathos:

"What I painfully, slowly, came to understand, via pathei-mathos, was the importance - the human necessity, the virtue - of love, and how love expresses or can express the numinous in the most sublime, the most human, way. Of how extremism (of whatever political or religious or ideological kind) places some abstraction, some ideation, some notion of duty to some ideation, before a personal love, before a knowing and an appreciation of the numinous. Thus does extremism - usurping such humanizing personal love - replace human love with an extreme, an unbalanced, an intemperate, passion for something abstract: some ideation, some ideal, some dogma, some 'victory', some-thing always supra-personal and always destructive of personal happiness, personal dreams, personal hopes; and always manifesting an impersonal harshness: the harshness of hatred, intolerance, certitude-of-knowing, unfairness, violence, prejudice."

My considered opinion is that it is this redemptive 'Faustian' learning from practical (mostly extreme, and both 'dark' and 'light') experiences which distinguishes Myatt's philosophy of pathei-mathos from the many academic and/or armchair philosophies proposed by others in the last two hundred years. For Myatt has "been there, done that" and - so it seems - learned valuable lessons as a result, making his philosophy much more than either intellectual speculation by some academic or something devised by some pseudo-intellectual dilettante.

Notes

Abbreviations

NWPM: The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos (Fifth edition, 2017). 978-1484096642

REPM: Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos (2013). 978-1484097984

EFG: One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings (2014). 978-1502396105

SARIG: Sarigthersa (2015). 978-1512137149

1) Myatt, David (2012). *Concerning The Development Of The Numinous Way*. The essay is included as an appendix in Myatt's autobiography, *Myngath*, published in 2013. (978-1484110744)

2) *The Way Of Pathei-Mathos - A Précis*. EFG.

It should be noted that all four printed books detailing Myatt's philosophy are idiosyncratic in terms of size, being 8.5 x 11 inches which is larger than the standard paperback size of 6 x 9 inches.

It should also be noted that Myatt idiosyncratically uses the term "denotatum" - from the Latin *denotare* - not only as meaning 'to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer to that which is so named or so denoted,' but also as an Anglicized term implying, depending on context, singular or plural instances. As an Anglicized term there is generally no need to use the inflected plural *denotata*." *Physis And Being - An Introduction To The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos*, included here as Appendix VI

3) *The Nature and Knowledge of Empathy*. NWPM.

4) *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*. NWPM.

5) *The Way of Pathei-Mathos: A Philosophical Compendiary*. NWPM.

6) Myatt's frequent and somewhat idiosyncratic use of the term Hellenic requires some explanation. As the context often suggests, he generally means the culture of ancient Greece in general, from the time of Homer to

the time of Euclid, Aristotle, and beyond. He is not therefore referring to what has academically come to be termed the later Hellenistic (Greco-Roman) period distinguished as that period is, somewhat artificially, from the earlier culture of classical Greece.

That said, he does rather confusingly and on occasion make such a distinction - as in his essay *Towards Understanding Physis* [SARIG], and in his translation of and commentary on the Pymander tractate - between classical Greece and Hellenistic (Greco-Roman) Greece.

7) *Pathei-Mathos as Authority and Way*. NWPM.

8) *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*. SARIG.

Myatt technically defines 'the culture of pathei-mathos' as

"the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals, world-wide, over thousands of years, as (i) described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts; as (ii) have inspired particular works of literature or poetry or drama; as (iii) expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and as (iv) manifest in more recent times by 'art-forms' such as films and documentaries." *Education And The Culture Of Pathei-Mathos*. EFG.

9) *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*. NWPM.

10) Included in *Sarigthersa*.

11) Myatt's translation of, and extensive commentary on, the Pymander tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum was included in his 2017 book *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, 978-1976452369, and which book also includes translations of and commentaries on tractates II, IV, VI, VIII, XI, XII, XIII.

12) In his *Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos* (included in NWPM) Myatt defines masculous and muliebral as follows:

Masculous is a term, a descriptor, used to refer to certain traits, abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with men, such as competitiveness, aggression, a certain harshness, the desire to organize/control, and a desire for adventure and/or for conflict/war/violence/competition over and above personal love and culture. Extremist ideologies manifest an unbalanced, an excessive, masculous nature.

The term muliebral derives from the classical Latin word muliebris, and in the context the philosophy of Pathei-Mathos refers to those positive traits, abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with women, such as empathy, sensitivity, gentleness, compassion, and a desire to love and be loved over and

above a desire for conflict/adventure/war.

13) *Some Conjectures Concerning Our Nexible Physis*. SARIG. See also his answer to the question in his *Some Questions For DWM*, included in EFG, which question begins: "In your book 'Understanding and Rejecting Extremism: A Very Strange Peregrination' you wrote that extremists have or they develop an inflexible masculine character, often excessively so; and a character which expresses the masculine nature, the masculine ethos, of extremism..."

14) *Some Conjectures Concerning Our Nexible Physis*. SARIG.

15) *The Consolation Of A Viator*. EFG.

16) EFG.

17) *Good, Evil, and The Criteria of Progress*. REPM.

18) *Morality, Virtues, and Way of Life*. NWPM.

19) *Numinous Expiation*. REPM.

20) Raine, Susan. *The Devil's Party* (Book review). *Religion*, Volume 44, Issue 3, July 2014, pp. 529-533.

21) Jon B. Perdue: *The War of All the People: The Nexus of Latin American Radicalism and Middle Eastern Terrorism*. Potomac Books, 2012. p.70-71.
9781597977043

22) Michael, George. *The New Media and the Rise of Exhortatory Terrorism*. *Strategic Studies Quarterly* (USAF), Volume 7 Issue 1, Spring 2013.

23) Michael, George. (2006) *The Enemy of My Enemy: The Alarming Convergence of Militant Islam and the Extreme Right*. University Press of Kansas, p. 142.

24) Author Martin Amis several times described Myatt as "a fierce Jihadist". For instance, in his book *The Second Plane*. Jonathan Cape, 2008, p.157.

According to Professor Wistrich, when a Muslim Myatt was a staunch advocate of "Jihad, suicide missions and killing Jews..." and also "an ardent defender of bin Laden." Wistrich, Robert S, *A Lethal Obsession: Anti-Semitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad*, Random House, 2010.
978-1-4000-6097-9.

See also the report of a UNESCO conference in 2003 [Simon Wiesenthal Center: *Response*, Summer 2003, Vol 24, #2] where it was stated that "David Myatt, the leading hardline Nazi intellectual in Britain since the 1960s [...] has converted to Islam, praises bin Laden and al Qaeda, calls the 9/11 attacks 'acts of heroism,' and urges the killing of Jews. Myatt, under the

name Abdul Aziz Ibn Myatt supports suicide missions and urges young Muslims to take up Jihad."

25) Kaplan, Jeffrey (2000). *Encyclopedia of white power: a sourcebook on the radical racist right*. Rowman & Littlefield, p. 216ff; p.512f

26) *A Philosophical Compendiary*. NWPM.

27) 978-1484854266.

II. A Modern Pagan Philosophy

It is my contention that the philosophy - the weltanschauung - advanced by David Myatt between 2012 and 2015 {1}, and named by him as 'the philosophy of pathei-mathos', is not only a modern expression of the Western mystical tradition {2} but also a pagan philosophy.

In respect of mysticism, a mystic is a person (i) who by means such as contemplation desires a selfless awareness of God or of Reality, 'the cosmic order', or (ii) who accepts that there is a spiritual apprehension of certain truths which transcend the temporal. This apprehension certainly applies to Myatt's philosophy, based as it is on what Myatt terms 'the acausal knowing' resulting from empathy and pathei-mathos.

In respect of paganism, it is generally defined - from the classical Latin *paganus*, and ignoring the modern re-interpretation of the word by self-described contemporary pagans - as meaning "of or belonging to a rural community" in contrast to belonging to an urban or a more organized community (such as a religious Church), from whence derived the later (c. 1440 CE, post Morte Arthure) description of a pagan as a non-Christian, a 'heathen' (Old English *hæðen*), and thus as describing a person who holds a religious belief which is neither Christian, Jewish, nor Muslim.

Myatt however provides his own, rather more philosophical, definition, relating as his definition does to the paganism of the Western, Greco-Roman, tradition. Thus Myatt - paraphrasing a passage from Cicero's *De Natura Deorum* and quoting the original Latin - defines paganism as

"an apprehension of the complete unity (a cosmic order, κόσμος, mundus) beyond the apparent parts of that unity, together with the perceivation that we mortals - albeit a mere and fallible part of the unity - have been gifted with our existence so that we may perceive and understand this unity, and, having so perceived, may ourselves seek to be whole, and thus become as balanced

(perfectus), as harmonious, as the unity itself: Neque enim est quicquam aliud praeter mundum quoui nihil absit quodque undique aptum atque perfectum expletumque sit omnibus suis numeris et partibus [...] ipse autem homo ortus est ad mundum contemplandum et imitandum - nullo modo perfectus, sed est quaedam particula perfecti." {3}

Which apprehension of the κόσμος certainly describes Myatt's philosophy where

"there is a perceivation of our φύσις; of us as - and not separate from - the Cosmos: a knowledge of ourselves as the Cosmos presenced (embodied, incarnated) in a particular time and place and in a particular way. Of how we affect or can affect other effluvia, other livings beings, in either a harmful or a non-harming manner. An apprehension, that is, of the genesis of suffering and of how we, as human beings possessed of the faculties of reason, of honour, and of empathy, have the ability to cease to harm other living beings. Furthermore, and in respect of the genesis of suffering, this particular perceivation provides an important insight about ourselves, as conscious beings; which insight is of the division we mistakenly but understandably make, and have made, consciously or unconsciously, between our own being - our ipseity - and that of other living beings, whereas such a distinction is only an illusion - appearance, hubris, a manufactured abstraction - and the genesis of such suffering as we have inflicted for millennia, and continue to inflict, on other life, human and otherwise." {4}

Furthermore, there is an emphasis in Myatt's philosophy on balancing within ourselves 'the masculous' with 'the muliebral' in order that we may not only perceive the unity beyond what Myatt terms 'the illusion of ipseity' {5} but also become as harmonious as that unity; a unity achievable - according to Myatt - be developing and using our faculty of empathy and by cultivating the virtue of personal honour, which virtue manifests, 'presences', that self-restraint - that moderation - described by the Greek term εὐταξία {4}.

Masculous And Muliebral

One of the unique features of Myatt's philosophy, and thus of his paganism, is the distinction he makes between the masculous and the muliebral aspects of our human nature. In *Some Conjectures Concerning Our Nexible Physis* he writes of the necessity of the muliebral virtues

"which, combined, manifest an enantiodromiacal change in our human physis and which change, which balancing of the masculous with the muliebral, consequently could evolve us beyond the patriarchal ethos, and the masculous societies, which have been such a feature of human life on this planet for the past three thousand years, genesis as that ethos and those societies have been of so much grieving." {6}

For according to Myatt

"it is the muliebral virtues which evolve us as conscious beings, which presence sustainable millennial change. Virtues such as empathy, compassion, humility, and that loyal shared personal love which humanizes those masculous talking-mammals of the Anthropocene, and which masculous talking-mammals have - thousand year following thousand year - caused so much suffering to, and killed, so many other living beings, human and otherwise." {7}

In effect Myatt is suggesting that the solution to the problem of suffering - the answer to the question of 'good and evil' - lies not in politics, nor in religion, nor in supra-personal social change, and certainly not in revolutions, invasions, and wars, but in ourselves by us as individuals valuing and cultivating the muliebral virtues. What this means in practical terms - although Myatt himself does not directly spell it out but rather implies it - is men appreciating women, treating them honourably and as equals, and cultivating in their own lives muliebral virtues such as εὐταξία, empathy, and compassion.

This emphasis on the muliebral, and thus on internal balance, distinguishes Myatt's philosophy from other philosophies, ancient and modern, most of which philosophies are imbued with a decidedly masculous ethos; and none of which emphasize personal virtues such as honour and empathy, and the ethics derived therefrom; and none of which have an ontology of causal and acausal being.

Which Myattian ontology is crucial to understanding such an emphasis on the muliebral and the enantiodromiacal change in our physis resulting from us perceiving and understanding (via empathy and pathei-mathos) the unity beyond the unnecessary division between the masculous and the muliebral and the other divisions we make based on abstractions, denotatum, and ipseity.

As Myatt explains,

"empathy and pathei-mathos incline us to suggest that ipseity is an illusion of perspective: that there is, fundamentally, no division between 'us' - as some individual sentient, mortal being - and what has hitherto been understood and named as the Unity, The One, God, The Eternal. That 'we' are not 'observers' but rather Being existing as Being exists and is presented in the Cosmos. That thus all our striving, individually and collectively when based on some ideal or on some form - some abstraction and what is derived therefrom, such as ideology and dogma - always is or becomes sad/tragic, and which recurrence of sadness/tragedy, generation following generation, is perhaps even inevitable unless and until we live according to the wordless knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal." {8}

A Modern Paganism

Contrary to contemporary neo-pagan revivalism - with its made-up beliefs, practices, romanticism, rituals, and lack of philosophical rigour - Myatt has not only produced a modern pagan philosophy with a unique epistemology, a unique ontology, and a unique theory of ethics {9} but also continued and creatively added to the classical - that is, Western, pre-Christian - pagan and mystical traditions.

For Myatt has asked

(i) if Being - whether denoted by terms such as acausal, born-less, θεός The One, The Divine, God, The Eternal, Μονάς - can be apprehended (or defined) by some-things which are causal (denoted by terms such as spatial, temporal, renewance), and (ii) whether this 'acausal Being' is the origin or the genesis or 'the artisan' or the creator of both causal being (including 'time', and 'change') and of causal living beings such as ourselves.

That is, (i) has causal spatially-existing being 'emerged from' - or been created by - acausal Being, and (ii) are causal beings - such as ourselves - an aspect or emanation of acausal Being? {8}

His answer:

"formulating such a question in such terms - causal/acausal; whole/parts; eternal/temporal; ipseity/unity; emergent from/genesis of - is a mis-apprehension of what-is because such denoting is 'us as observer' (i) positing, as Plato did, such things as a theory regarding 'the ideal', and/or (ii) constructing a form or abstraction (ἰδέα) which we then presume to project onto what is assumed to be 'external' to us, both of which present us with only an illusion of understanding and meaning because implicit in such theories and in all such constructed forms are (i) an opposite (an 'other') and (ii) the potentiality for discord (dialectical or otherwise) between such opposites and/or because of a pursuit of what is regarded as 'the ideal' of some-thing." {8}

Which led Myatt to suggest that Being, and our own physis, can be discovered - known and understood - by empathy and pathei-mathos which both by-pass abstractions, denotatum, and opposites, and enable us to appreciate the numinosity of Being.

What therefore is the wordless knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal? According to Myatt

"it is the knowing manifest in our human culture of pathei-mathos. The knowing communicated to us, for example, by art, music, literature, and manifest in the lives of those who presenced, in their living, compassion, love, and honour. Germane to this

knowing is that - unlike a form or an abstraction - it is always personal (limited in its applicability) and can only be embodied in and presenced by some-thing or by some-one which or who lives. That is, it cannot be abstracted out of the living, the personal, moment of its presencing by someone or abstracted out from its living apprehension by others in the immediacy-of-the-moment, and thus cannot become 'an ideal' or form the foundation for some dogma or ideology or supra-personal faith." {8}

Which is a rather succinct description of the essence, the ethos, of the Western pagan and mystic traditions where each individual acquires a personal, non-dogmatic, apprehension of certain truths which transcend the temporal.

R. Parker
2016

{1} David Myatt's philosophy is outlined in four collections of essays published between 2013 and 2015. The works are as follows:

- i) *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. -13: 978-1484096642.
- ii) *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. -13: 978-1484097984.
- iii) *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*. 2014. -13: 978-1502396105.
- iv) *Sarigthersa: Some Recent Essays*. 2015. -13: 978-1512137149.

{2} The words 'mystical' and 'mysticism' are derived from the term mystic, the etymology and English usage of which are:

i) Etymology:

- ° Classical Latin *mysticus*, relating to sacred mysteries, mysterious;
- ° Post-classical Latin, in addition to the above: symbolic, allegorical;
- ° Ancient Greek *μυστικός*, relating to sacred mysteries;
- ° Hellenistic Greek *μυστικός*, initiate; plural, *μυστικοί*; also: symbolic, allegorical, spiritual, esoteric, mysterious, occult;
- ° Byzantine Greek (5th century CE) *μυστικόν*, mystical doctrine.

ii) English usage:

- ° noun: symbolic, allegorical (c. 1350);
- ° noun: an exponent or advocate of mystical theology;
- ° noun: a person who by means such as contemplation desires a selfless awareness of God or 'the cosmic order' (*mundus*), or who accepts that there is a spiritual apprehension of certain truths which transcend the temporal;
- ° adjective: esoteric, mysterious, [equivalent in usage to 'mystical']

° adjective: of or relating to esoteric rites [equivalent in usage to 'mystical']

{3} *Education And The Culture Of Pathei-Mathos*. The essay is included in Myatt's *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*.

{4} *The Way Of Pathei-Mathos - A Précis*. qv. Myatt's *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*.

{5} Myatt discusses 'the illusion of ipseity' in several of his essays, including *Towards Understanding The Acausal* (qv. *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*) and *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions* (qv. *Sarigthersa: Some Recent Essays*).

{6} qv. *Sarigthersa: Some Recent Essays*.

{7} *Some Questions For DWM* (2014). Included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*.

{8} *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*. qv. *Sarigthersa: Some Recent Essays*.

{9} His ontology, ethics, and epistemology are described by Myatt in *The Way Of Pathei-Mathos - A Précis* (qv. *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*).

III. Honour In The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos

Along with the faculty of empathy and pathei-mathos, central to David Myatt's philosophy {1} is what he terms the virtue of honour, writing that

"personal honour - which presences the virtues of fairness, tolerance, compassion, humility, and εὐταξία - [is] (i) a natural intuitive (wordless) expression of the numinous ('the good', δίκη, συμπάθεια) and (ii) of both what the culture of pathei-mathos and the acausal-knowing of empathy reveal we should do (or incline us toward doing) in the immediacy of the personal moment when personally confronted by what is unfair, unjust, and extreme.

Of how such honour - by its and our φύσις - is and can only ever be personal, and thus cannot be extracted out from the 'living moment' and our participation in the moment." {2}

Thus, like both empathy and pathei-mathos, Myatt conceives of honour not as an abstraction {3} - not in any idealistic way - but as "an expression of our own φύσις; and a person either has this 'faculty of honour' or they do not."

{4} Myatt goes on to suggest that such a faculty - like the faculty of empathy - can be consciously developed; that

"through such things as a personal study of the culture of pathei-mathos and the development of the faculty of empathy that a person who does not naturally possess the instinct for δίκη can develop what is essentially 'the human faculty of honour', and which faculty is often appreciated and/or discovered via our own personal pathei-mathos." {2}{5}

Myatt is at pains to point out, several times, not only that honour, empathy, and pathei-mathos, are related:

"What, therefore, is the wordless knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal? It is the knowing manifest in our human culture of pathei-mathos. The knowing communicated to us, for example, by art, music, literature, and manifest in the lives of those who presenced, in their living, compassion, love, and honour. Germane to this knowing is that – unlike a form [ἰδέα, εἶδος] or an abstraction – it is always personal (limited in its applicability) and can only be embodied in and presenced by some-thing or by some-one which or who lives. That is, it cannot be abstracted out of the living, the personal, moment of its presencing by someone or abstracted out from its living apprehension by others in the immediacy-of-the-moment, and thus cannot become 'an ideal' or form the foundation for some dogma or ideology or supra-personal faith." {6}

but also that what is revealed, known, and understood, and sometimes acted upon, is always personal; with empathy, pathei-mathos, and honour emphasizing

"the importance of living in the "immediacy of the personal, living, moment", sans the pursuit of some ideal or of some assumed perfection; with what is 'good' being not some abstraction denoted by some faith, dogma, ideal, ideology, or by some collocation of words, but rather is a function of, a wordless revealing by, our personal, our individual, empathic horizon, by our pathei-mathos, and by the collected human pathei-mathos of millennia manifest as that is in the culture of pathei-mathos. Which revealing is that what-lives is more important than any ideal, than any abstraction or form, with 'the good' simply being that which does not cause suffering to, or which can alleviate the suffering of, what-lives, human and otherwise.

Thus the 'meaning' of our physis, of our living, so revealed, is just that of a certain way of living; a non-defined, non-definable, very personal way of living, only relevant to us as an individual where we – appreciating our human culture of pathei-mathos, and thus appreciative of art, music, literature, and other emanations of the numinous – incline toward not causing suffering and incline (by means of empathy, compassion, and honour) toward alleviating such suffering as we may personally encounter in the "immediacy of the personal, living, moment". {6}

Honour In Practice

What all this amounts to, in respect of honour, is that there can be no supra-personal 'code of honour' or 'code/theory of ethics' – written or oral – which an individual seeks to uphold and live by, since honour in Myatt's philosophy is not an ideal to be followed or aspired to. A person thus does what is honourable – in the "immediacy of the personal, living, moment" – because it is their nature, a wordless part of their way of life, to do so; to behave in such a manner that there is, in such a moment, a natural balancing of Life itself, since the personal virtue of honour is

"a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις [hubris], in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἀρμονίη [balance, harmony]." {7}

That is, the judgement regarding when and how to act is and can only be an individual one, in and of the moment. In addition, Myatt emphasizes several times that compassion – and the desire not to cause suffering – should be balanced, and are balanced, by and because of honour:

"This balancing of compassion – of the need not to cause suffering – by σωφρονεῖν [discernment] and δίκη is perhaps most obvious on that particular occasion when it may be judged necessary to cause suffering to another human being. That is, in honourable self-defence. For it is natural – part of our reasoned, fair, just, human nature – to defend ourselves when attacked and (in the immediacy of the personal moment) to valorously, with chivalry, act in defence of someone close-by who is unfairly attacked or dishonourably threatened or is being bullied by others, and to thus employ, if our personal judgement of the circumstances deem it necessary, lethal force.

This use of force is, importantly, crucially, restricted – by the individual nature of our judgement, and by the individual nature of our authority – to such personal situations of immediate self-defence and of valorous defence of others, and cannot be extended beyond that, for to so extend it, or attempt to extend it beyond the immediacy of the personal moment of an existing physical threat, is an arrogant presumption – an act of ὕβρις – which negates the fair, the human, presumption of innocence of those we do not personally know, we have no empathic knowledge of, and who present no direct, immediate, personal, threat to us or to others nearby us.

Such personal self-defence and such valorous defence of another in a personal situation are in effect a means to restore the natural balance which the unfair, the dishonourable, behaviour of others upsets." {7}

Honour therefore, in my view, humanizes Myatt's mystical philosophy,

making it an individual and quite practical and a decidedly pagan way of life {8} where the development of and the use of individual judgement – in respect of others and situations – is paramount. A development – a cultivation of discernment – by means of empathy, personal pathei-mathos, and learning from our human culture of pathei-mathos.

That Myatt has framed his philosophy in terms of Greco-Roman culture – so evident for instance in his use of Greek terms and his copious quotations from Greek and Roman authors – makes it a distinct modern philosophy which has not only "continued and creatively added to the classical – that is, Western, pre-Christian – pagan and mystical traditions" {9}, but has also, through the centrality of personal honour, of the muliebral virtues {10}, and of humility {11}, restored the Western ethic of gallantry.

R. Parker
2016

{1} The philosophy of pathei-mathos is described by David Myatt in the following four collections of essays:

- i) *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. -13: 978-1484096642.
- ii) *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. -13: 978-1484097984.
- iii) *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*. 2014. -13: 978-1502396105.
- iv) *Sarigthersa: Some Recent Essays*. 2015. -13: 978-1512137149.

{2} *The Way Of Pathei-Mathos – A Précis*. The essay is included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*.

{3} Myatt, in his *Towards Understanding Physis* (included in *Sarigthersa*), defines an abstraction as "a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median."

In later essays, such as *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*, he explains that denotatum – which he uses in accord with its general meaning, which is "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted" – and abstractions both conceal physis and thus prevent us from understanding our own being, our nature as mortals.

{4} *Some Questions For DWM* (2014). Included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*.

{5} Myatt, in his essay *Education And The Culture Of Pathei-Mathos*, included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*, defines 'the culture of pathei-mathos' as "the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals, world-wide, over thousands of years, as (i) described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts; as (ii) have inspired particular works of literature or

poetry or drama; as (iii) expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and as (iv) manifest in more recent times by 'art-forms' such as films and documentaries."

Of δίκη, Myatt, in his *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, writes:

"Depending on context, δίκη could be the judgement of an individual (or Judgement personified), or the natural and the necessary balance, or the correct/customary/ancestral way, or what is expected due to custom, or what is considered correct and natural, and so on. A personified Judgement – the Δίκη of Hesiod – is the goddess of the natural balance, evident in the ancestral customs, the ways, the way of life, the ethos, of a community, whose judgement, δίκη, is "in accord with", has the nature or the character of, what tends to restore such balance after some deed or deeds by an individual or individuals have upset or disrupted that balance. This sense of δίκη as one's ancestral customs is evident, for example, in Homer (*Odyssey*, III, 244)."

However, in several of his essays – such as *Some Conjectures Concerning Our Nexible Physis*, included in *Sarigthersa: Some Recent Essays*, Myatt also uses δίκη to mean 'fairness', quoting Hesiod and providing his own translation and which translation mentions both honour and a learning from adversity:

σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης, μὴδ' ὕβριν ὀφελλε:
ὑβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῷ βροτῷ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς
215 ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύναται, βαρύνθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς
ἐγκύρσας ἄτησιν: ὁδὸς δ' ἐτέρηφι παρελθεῖν
κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει
ἐς τέλος ἐξελθοῦσα: παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω

You should listen to [the goddess] Fairness and not oblige Hubris
Since Hubris harms unfortunate mortals while even the more fortunate
Are not equal to carrying that heavy a burden, meeting as they do with Mischief.
The best path to take is the opposite one: that of honour
For, in the end, Fairness is above Hubris
Which is something the young come to learn from adversity.

In his footnotes to his translation Myatt explains:

δίκη. The goddess of Fairness/Justice/Judgement, and – importantly – of Tradition (Ancestral Custom). In [*Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι*], as in *Θεογονία* (*Theogony*), Hesiod is recounting and explaining part of that tradition, one important aspect of which tradition is understanding the relation between the gods and mortals. Given both the antiquity of the text and the context, 'Fairness' – as the name of the goddess – is, in my view, more appropriate than the now common appellation 'Justice', considering the modern (oft times impersonal) connotations of the word 'justice' [...]

δίκαιος. Honour expresses the sense that is meant: of being fair; capable of doing the decent thing; of dutifully observing ancestral customs. A reasonable alternative for 'honour' would thus be 'decency', both preferable to words such as 'just' and 'justice' which are not only too impersonal but have too many inappropriate modern connotations.

{6} *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*. 2015. Note that here, as elsewhere in other quotations from Myatt's writings, I have provided – in square brackets [] – a translation of some of the Greek terms Myatt

uses.

{7} *The Numinous Balance of Honour*. Included in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*.

{8} I have outlined the pagan nature of Myatt's philosophy in *A Modern Pagan Philosophy*.

{9} R. Parker. *A Modern Pagan Philosophy*. e-text, 2016.

{10} See the *Masculous And Muliebral* section of my *A Modern Pagan Philosophy*.

{11} Humility is one of the personal virtues of Myatt's philosophy. Myatt in his 2012 essay *Pathei-Mathos - A Path To Humility* explains that he uses the term

"in a spiritual context to refer to that gentleness, that modest demeanour, that understanding, which derives from an appreciation of the numinous and also from one's own admitted uncertainty of knowing and one's acknowledgement of past mistakes. An uncertainty of knowing, an acknowledgement of mistakes, that often derive from πάθει μάθος.

Humility is thus the natural human balance that offsets the unbalance of hubris (ὕβρις) - the balance that offsets the unbalance of pride and arrogance, and the balance that offsets the unbalance of that certainty of knowing which is one basis for extremism, for extremist beliefs, for fanaticism and intolerance. That is, humility is a manifestation of the natural balance of Life; a restoration of ἁρμονίη, of δίκη, of σωφρονεῖν - of those qualities and virtues - that hubris and extremism, that ἔρις and πόλεμος, undermine, distance us from, and replace."

IV. An Overview of David Myatt's Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos

Part One

Anti-Racism, Extremism, Honour, and Culture

It is now generally acknowledged, by those who have studiously studied his post-2011 writings, that David Myatt - once renowned as an ideologue {1} and as a 'theoretician of terror' {2} - has rejected the extremism that dominated his life for some forty years, thirty of which years were spent as a neo-nazi activist and ten as a "fierce Jihadist" {3} and apologist for Al-Qaeda {4}.

According to his own account {5} this rejection was a consequence of pathei mathos - primarily, the suicide of his partner in 2006 - and which learning from grief resulted in him developing what he termed a philosophy of pathei-

mathos centred around personal virtues such as humility, compassion, empathy and personal honour {6}{7}. In addition he has written several interesting, if rather neglected, essays in which he discourses about culture and - politically relevant today - about topics such as extremism. In these discourses, which apply his philosophy to the topics discussed, he is at pains to point out that he presents only his "personal, fallible, opinion about such matters" and that these opinions derive from his decades of "experience of extremists and my decade of study and personal experience of, and involvement with, Islam." {8}

Culture, Civilization, and Politics

Given Myatt's predilection during his extremist decades, and especially as a neo-nazi ideologue, for pontificating about both 'culture' and 'civilization', his mature view of such things, resulting from his recent seven or so years of interior reflection following his learning from grief {9}, are of especial interest.

For he writes that:

"The very usage of the term civilization, for instance, implies a bias; a qualitative often pejorative, prejudiced, assessment and thence a division between something judged 'better than' - or 'superior to' or 'more advanced than' - something else, so that 'to civilize' denotes "the action or process of being made civilized" by something or someone believed or considered to be more distinguished, or better than, or superior to, or more advanced.

In common with some other writers, my view is that a clear distinction should be made between the terms culture, society, and civilization, for the terms culture and society - when, for example, applied to describe and distinguish between the customs and way of life of a group or people, and the codes of behaviour and the administrative organization and governance of those residing in a particular geographical area - are quantitative and descriptive rather than qualitative and judgemental. It is therefore in my view inappropriate to write and talk about a European or a Western 'civilization' [...]

[T]he essence, the nature, of all cultures is the same: to refine, and develop, the individual; to provide a moral guidance; to cultivate such skills as that of reasoning and learning and civility; to be a repository of the recorded/aural pathei-mathos, experiences, and empathic understanding of others (such as our ancestors) over decades, centuries, millennia, as manifest for example in literature, music, memoirs, poetry, history, Art, and often in the past in myths and legends and religious allegories. A recorded/aural pathei-mathos and empathic understanding - a human learning - which teach the same lessons, whatever the culture, whatever the people, whatever the time and whatever the place. The lesson of the

importance of a loyal love between two people; the lesson of the importance of virtues such as εὐταξία and honour; the lesson of the need to avoid committing the error of hubris. The lesson of hope, redemption, and change. And the lesson concerning our own nature [...]

Ultimately, the assumed or the perceived, the outer, differences do not matter, since what matters for us as human beings capable of reason and civility is our shared humanity and the wisdom that all cultures guide us toward: which wisdom is that it is what is moral - it is what keeps us as mortals balanced, aware of and respective of the numinous - that should guide us, determine our choices and be the basis of our deeds, for our interaction with other human beings, with society, and with the life with which we share this planet.

As outlined in my philosophy of pathei-mathos, my personal view is that the criteria of assessment and judgement are the individual ones of empathy, reason, and the presumption of innocence; which means that abstractions, ideations, theories, and categories, of whatever kind - and whether deemed to be political, religious, or social - are considered unimportant. That what matters, what is moral, is a very personal knowing in the immediacy-of-the-moment so that what is beyond the purview of our empathy, of our personal knowing, knowledge, and experience, is something we rationally accept we do not know and so cannot judge or form a reasonable, a fair, a balanced, opinion about. Hence, and for example, individuals and people we do not know, of whatever faith, of whatever perceived ethnicity, sexual orientation, or perceived or assumed or proclaimed culture - whom we have no personal experience of and have had no interaction with over a period of causal time - are unjudged by us and thus given the benefit of the doubt; that is, regarded as innocent, assumed to be good, unless or until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, as individuals, proves otherwise [...]

What matters are our own moral character, our interior life, our appreciation of the numinous, and the individual human beings we interact with on the personal level; so that our horizon is to refine ourselves into cultured beings who are civil, reasoned, empathic, non-judgemental, unbiased, and who will, in the words of one guide to what is moral, Ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ." {8}

Myatt's emphasis is thus on the individual; on their interior life, and their personal interaction with others in what he terms, in his philosophy of pathei-mathos, the immediacy of the personal moment:

"Since the range of our faculty of empathy is limited to the immediacy-of-the-moment and to personal interactions, and since the learning wrought by pathei-mathos and pathei-mathos itself is

and are direct and personal, then the knowledge, the understanding, that empathy and *pathei-mathos* reveal and provide is of the empathic scale of things and of our limitations of personal knowing and personal understanding. That is, what is so revealed is not some grand or grandiose theory or praxis or philosophy which is considered applicable to others, or which it is believed can or should be developed to be applicable to others or developed to offer guidance beyond the individual in political and/or social and/or religious and/or ideological terms; but rather a very personal, individual, spiritual and thus interior, way. A way of tolerance and humility, where there is an acceptance of the unwisdom, the hubris, the unbalance, of arrogantly, pejoratively, making assumptions about who and what are beyond the range of our empathy and outside of our personal experience." {10}

There is, therefore, a rejection of involvement with politics:

"Given that the concern of the philosophy of *pathei-mathos* is the individual and their interior, their spiritual, life, and given that (due to the nature of empathy and *pathei-mathos*) there is respect for individual judgement, the philosophy of *pathei-mathos* is apolitical, and thus not concerned with such matters as the theory and practice of governance, nor with changing or reforming society by political means." {11}

In line with the virtues of his philosophy, Myatt is scathing regarding extremism in general:

"One of the worst consequences of the extremism of extremists - of modern hubris in general - is, or seems to me to be, the loss of what is personal, and thus what is human; the loss of the empathic, the human, scale of things; with what is personal, human, empathic, being or becoming displaced, scorned, forgotten, obscured, or a target for destruction and (often violent) replacement by something supra-personal such as some abstract political/religious notion or concept, or some ideal, or by some prejudice and some often violent intolerance regarding human beings we do not personally know because beyond the range of our empathy.

That is, the human, the personal, the empathic, the natural, the immediate, scale of things - a tolerant and a fair acceptance of *what-is* - is lost and replaced by an artificial scale posited by some ideology or manufactured by some *τύραννος*; a scale in which the suffering of individuals, and strife, are regarded as inevitable, even necessary, in order for 'victory to be achieved' or for some ideal or plan or agenda or manifesto to be implemented. Thus the good, the stability, that exists within society is ignored, with the problems of society - real, imagined, or manufactured by propaganda - trumpeted. There is then incitement to disaffection, with harshness and violent change of and within society regarded as desirable or

necessary in order to achieve preset, predetermined, and always 'urgent' goals and aims, since slow personal reform and change in society - that which appreciates and accepts the good in an existing society and in people over and above the problems and the bad - is anathema to extremists, anathema to their harsh intolerant empathy-lacking nature and to their hubriatic striving." {12}

All this amounts to viewing matters - events in the external world, and our relation to other humans - in terms of two principles rather than in terms of politics, ideology, dogma, or revolutionary social change. The first principle is personal honour; the second what Myatt terms 'the cosmic perspective', of which perspective Myatt writes:

"The Cosmic Perspective reveals a particular truth not only about the Anthropocene (and thus about our φύσις as human beings) but also about how sustainable millennial change has occurred and can occur. Which change is via the progression, the evolution - the development of the faculties and the consciousness - of individuals individually. This is the interior, the a-causal, change of individuals wrought by a scholarly learning of and from our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos, by our own pathei-mathos, and by that personal appreciation of the numinous that both the Cosmic Perspective and the muliebral virtues incline us toward. This aeonic change voids what we now describe by the terms politics and religion and direct social activism of the violent type.

There is thus a shift from identifying with the communal, the collective - from identifying with a particular contemporary or a past society or some particular national culture or some particular causal form such as a State or nation or empire or some -ism or some -ology - toward that-which has endured over centuries and millennia: our human culture of pathei-mathos. For the human culture of pathei-mathos records and transmits, in various ways, the pathei-mathos of individuals over thousands of years, manifest as this sustainable millennial culture is in literature, poetry, memoirs, aural stories, in non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and in the experiences - written, recorded, and aural - of those who over the centuries have appreciated the numinous, and those who endured suffering, conflict, disaster, tragedy, and war, and who were fundamentally, interiorly, changed by their experiences." {13}

Given this perspective, and given that personal honour "cannot be extracted out from the living moment and our participation in the moment" {7} and is a necessary virtue, then Myatt's philosophy, while somewhat redolent of Buddhism, Taoism, and the Catholic contemplative tradition, is rather unique in that the personal use of force (including lethal force) in the immediacy of the moment is justified in personal defence of one's self or of others, since

"the personal virtue of honour, and the cultivation of wu-wei, are - together - a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as

empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἀρμονίη. For personal honour is essentially a presencing, a grounding, of ψυχή – of Life, of our φύσις – occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη." {14}

Given the mention of wu-wei in many of Myatt's recent writings, it is no surprise that Myatt admits (or, rather, overstates) his debt to Taoism:

"According to my limited understanding and knowledge, I am not expressing anything new here. Indeed, I feel (and I use the word 'feel' intentionally) that I am only re-expressing what I intuitively (and possibly incorrectly) understood nearly half a century ago about Taoism when I lived in the Far East and was taught that ancient philosophy by someone who was also trying to instruct me in a particular Martial Art." {13}

It is therefore possible to speculate that the archetypal follower of Myatt's philosophy of pathei-mathos - if there were or could be such followers of such a personal philosophy of life - might be akin to one of the following: (i) a reclusive or wandering, or communal living, mystic, concerned only with their interior life and/or with scholarly study, yet prepared - in the immediacy of the moment and when confronted by someone or some group being dishonourable - to do what is honourable in defence of themselves or others even if that meant their own death; (ii) someone outwardly ordinary who was in, or who was seeking, a loving relationship, and who - compassionate and sensitive and cultured - was unconcerned with politics or conventional religion, and yet prepared - in the immediacy of the moment and when confronted by someone or some group being dishonourable - to do what is honourable in defence of themselves or others even if that meant their own death; (iii) someone with an interior sense of what is honourable whose occupation or career or way of life enables them, in a personal manner and within their milieu, to individually do what is honourable, fair, and just; and (iv) someone who - compassionate and empathic by nature - whose occupation or career or way of life enables them, in a personal manner and within their milieu, to individually do what is compassionate and who would - in the immediacy of the moment and when confronted by someone or some group being dishonourable - do what is honourable in defence of themselves or others even if that meant their own death.

In Myatt's view, such individuals would be acting in a wise way - in accord with the aforementioned cosmic perspective - since:

"The only effective, long-lasting, change and reform that does not cause suffering - that is not redolent of ὕβρις - is the one that changes human beings in an individual way by personal example and/or because of πάθει μάθος, and thus interiorly changes what, in them, predisposes them, or inclines them toward, doing or what urges them to do, what is dishonourable, undignified, unfair, and

uncompassionate. That is what, individually, changes or rebalances bad φύσις and thus brings-into-being, or restores, good φύσις." {15}

For:

"It is inner, personal, change - in individuals, of their nature, their character - that is is the ethical, the numinous, way to solve such personal and social problems as exist and arise. That such inner change of necessity comes before any striving for outer change by whatever means, whether such means be termed or classified as political, social, economic, religious. That the only effective, long-lasting, change and reform is understood as the one that evolves human beings and thus changes what, in them, predisposes them, or inclines them toward, doing or what urges them to do, what is dishonourable, undignified, unfair, and uncompassionate." {11}

Extremism, Racism, And Prejudice

In Myatt's philosophy, the personal knowing of others provided by empathy and the self-knowing that pathei-mathos reveals replace the categorizations by which we have assumed we can know and understand others and ourselves:

"Hitherto, the φύσις of beings and Being has most usually been apprehended, and understood, in one of three ways or by varied combinations of those three ways. The first such perceivation is that deriving from our known physical senses - by Phainómenon - and by what has been posited on the basis of Phainómenon, which has often meant the manufacture, by we human beings, of categories and abstract forms which beings (including living beings) are assigned to on the basis of some feature that has been outwardly observed or which has been assumed to be possessed by some beings or collocation of beings.

The second such perceivation derives from positing a 'primal cause' - often denoted by God, or a god or the gods, but sometimes denoted by some mechanism, or some apparently inscrutable means, such as 'karma' or 'fate' - and then understanding beings (especially living beings) in terms of that cause: for example as subject to, and/or as determined or influenced by or dependant on, that primal cause.

The third such perceivation derives from positing a human faculty of reason and certain rules of reasoning whereby it is possible to dispassionately examine collocations of words and symbols which relate, or which are said to relate, to what is correct (valid, true) or incorrect (invalid, false) and which collocations are considered to be - or which are regarded by their proponents as representative of - either knowledge or as a type of, a guide to,

knowing.

All three of these perceiverations, in essence, involve denotatum, with our being, for example, understood in relation to some-thing we or others have posited and then named and, importantly, consider or believe applies or can apply (i) to those who, by virtue of the assumption of ipseity, are not-us, and (ii) beyond the finite, the living, personal moment of the perceiveration.

Thus, in the case of Phainómenon we have, in assessing and trying to understand our own φύσις as a human being, assumed ipseity - a separation from others - as well as having assigned ourselves (or been assigned by others) to some supra-personal category on the basis of such things as place of birth, skin colour, occupation (or lack of one), familial origin or status (or wealth or religion), something termed 'intelligence', physical ability (or the lack thereof), our natural attraction to those of a different, or the same, gender; and so on." {16}

In Myatt's view, extremism - whether political or religious - makes some category an ideal to be strived for or returned to, since:

"All extremists accept - and all extremisms are founded on - the instinctive belief or the axiom that their cherished ideation(s) or abstraction(s) is or are more important, more valuable, than the individual and the feelings, desires, hopes, and happiness, of the individual. The extremist thus views and understands the world in terms of abstractions; in terms of a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed. Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future.

The abstractions of extremism are manifest in the ideology, which posits or which attempts to explain (however irrationally and intolerantly) some ideated form, some assumed or believed in perfect (ideal) form or category of some-thing, and which ideated form is or can be or should be (according to the ideology) contrasted with what is considered or assumed to be its opposite." {17}

Thus in racism individuals are assigned to, associated with, some 'race' with the various 'races' assigned a qualitative value - describing their 'worth' - based on what some ideology or some ideologue state or believe is their contribution to 'civilization' and on how useful or harmful they might be to those deeming themselves 'superior'.

This is immoral, according to Myatt, not only because it is dishonourable but because of the primacy of empathic, of personal, knowing:

"Everything others associate with an individual, or ascribe to an individual, or use to describe or to denote an individual, or even how an individual denotes or describes themselves, are not relevant, and have no bearing on our understanding, our knowledge, of that individual and thus - morally - should be ignored, for it is our personal knowing of them which is necessary, important, valid, fair. For assessment of another - by the nature of assessment and the nature of empathy - can only be personal, direct, individual. Anything else is biased prejudgement or prejudice or unproven assumption.

This means that we approach them - we view them - without any prejudice, without any expectations, and without having made any assumptions concerning them, and as a unique, still unknown, still undiscovered, individual person: as 'innocent' until proven, until revealed by their actions and behaviour to be, otherwise. Furthermore, empathy - the acausal perception/knowing and revealing of physis - knows nothing of temporal things and human manufactured abstractions/categories such as assumed or assigned ethnicity; nothing of gender; nothing of what is now often termed 'sexual preference/orientation'. Nothing of politics, or religion. Nothing of some disability someone may suffer from; nothing of social status or wealth; nothing regarding occupation (or lack of one). Nothing regarding the views, the opinions, of others concerning someone. For empathy is just empathy, a perception different from our other senses such as sight and hearing, and a perception which provides us, or which can provide us, with a unique perspective, a unique type of knowing, a unique (acausal) connexion to the external world and especially to other human beings.

Empathy - and the knowing that derives from it - thus transcends 'race', politics, religion, gender, sexual orientation, occupation, wealth (or lack of it), 'status', and all the other things and concepts often used to describe, to denote, to prejudge, to classify, a person; so that to judge someone - for example - by and because of their political views (real or assumed) or by their religion or by their sexual orientation is an act of hubris.

In practice, therefore, in the revealing of the physis of a person, the political views, the religion, the gender, the perceived ethnicity, of someone are irrelevant. It is a personal knowing of them, the perception of their physis by empathy, and an acceptance of them as - and getting to know them as - a unique individual which are important and considered moral; for they are one emanation of the Life of which we ourselves are but one other finite and fallible part." {12}

However, Myatt's analysis of extremism goes much further. Based on his forty years of personal experience he considers that the extremist is a particular type of person "by nature or becomes so through association with or because of the influence of others, or because of ideological indoctrination" and that

"it is in the nature of extremists that they disdain, and often despise, the muliebral virtues of empathy, sensitivity, humility, gentleness, forgiveness, compassion, and the desire to love and be loved over and above the desire for conflict, territorial identity, and for war. Thus we find in extremism a glorification of the masculine at the expense of the muliebral; a definite personal certitude of knowing; a glorification of toughness and aggression and war; an aggressive territorial pride; a tendency to believe, or the forthright assertion, that 'might is right' and *kampf* is necessary; the desire to organize/control; a prominent desire for adventure and/or for conflict/war and/or violence and competition." {17}

Thus, in Myatt's philosophy, the extremist is hubriatic: unbalanced because lacking in - or having rejected or suppressed - the muliebral virtues which are or which should be an essential part of our human nature and the genesis of all culture; with the need for such muliebral virtues, for such a balance, and the necessity of culture, among the important things that 'our culture of *pathei-mathos*' informs us about {18}. Little wonder, then, that

"it is [our] shared human culture of *pathei-mathos* that extremists of whatever kind, and those who advocate -isms and -ologies, scorn and so often try to suppress when, for however short a time, they have political or social or religious power and control over the lives of others. It is this human culture of *pathei-mathos* which - at least according to my experience, my musings, and my retrospection - reveals to us the genesis of wisdom: which is that it is the muliebral virtues which evolve us as conscious beings, which presence sustainable millennial change. Virtues such as empathy, compassion, humility, and that loyal shared personal love which humanizes those masculine talking-mammals of the Anthropocene, and which masculine talking-mammals have - thousand year following thousand year - caused so much suffering to, and killed, so many other living beings, human and otherwise." {13}

Furthermore, according to Myatt:

"Given the masculine nature and the masculine ethos of extremism, it is no surprise that the majority of extremists are men; and given that, in my own opinion, the predominant ethos of the last three millennia - especially within the societies of the West - has been a masculine, patriarchal, one it is no surprise that women were expected to be, and often had no option but to be, subservient, and no surprise therefore that a modern movement has arisen to try and correct the imbalance between the masculine

and the muliebral [...]

[Yet] it is only by using and developing our faculty of empathy, on an individual basis, that we can apprehend and thence understand the muliebral; [for] the muliebral can only be manifested, presenced, individually in our own lives according to that personal, individual, apprehension. Presenced, for example, in our compassion, in our honour, by a personal loyal love, and in that appreciation of innocence and of the numinous that inclines us, as individuals, to reject all prejudice and to distance ourselves from that pride, that certainty-of-knowing about ourselves and those presumptions we make about others, which are so redolent of, and which so presence and have so presenced, the patriarchal ethos." {13}

Extremism and racism, therefore, are understood in Myatt's philosophy in relation to hubris and enantiodromia:

"Enantiodromia is the term used, in the philosophy of pathei-mathos, to describe the revealing, the process, of perceiving, feeling, knowing, beyond causal appearance and the separation-of-otherness and thus when what has become separated – or has been incorrectly perceived as separated – returns to the wholeness, the unity, from whence it came forth. When, that is, beings are understood in their correct relation to Being, beyond the causal abstraction of different/conflicting ideated opposites, and when as a result, a reformation of the individual, occurs. A relation, an appreciation of the numinous, that empathy and pathei-mathos provide, and which relation and which appreciation the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals over millennia have made us aware of or tried to inform us or teach us about." {14}

"For what the culture of pathei-mathos reveals is that we human beings, are - personally - both the cause and the cure of suffering; and that our choice is whether or not we live, or try to live, in a manner which does not intentionally contribute to or which is not the genesis of new suffering. The choice, in effect, to choose the way of harmony - the natural balance - in preference to hubris." {19}

Conclusion

In his seminal and scholarly essay *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God* {19}, Myatt places the ethics of his philosophy in the context of the theories of ethics postulated by Christianity, by Islam, and by the proponents of the modern State. He concludes, in respect of his philosophy and its ethics, that:

"The alternative ontology, derived from the culture of pathei-mathos, suggests that the answer to the question regarding the meaning of our existence is simply to be that which we are. To be in

balance, in harmony, with Life; the balance that is love, compassion, humility, empathy, honour, tolerance, kindness, and wu-wei. This, by its nature, is a personal answer and a personal choice; an alternative way that compliments and is respectful of other answers, other choices, and of other ways of dealing with issues such as the suffering that afflicts others, the harm that humans do so often inflict and have for so long inflicted upon others. The personal non-judgemental way, of presumption of innocence and of wu-wei, balanced by, if required, a personal valourous, an honourable, intervention in a personal situation in the immediacy of the moment."

However, this answer is contingent on understanding, via empathy and *pathei-mathos*, not only 'the illusion of ipseity' {16} - the 'separation-of-otherness' - but also the cosmic perspective and thus the temporary nature of all our human manufactured forms, categories, and abstractions, for according to Myatt:

"There has been, as there still is, at least in my view, a failure to appreciate two things. Firstly, the causal (the mortal) nature of all forms: from institutions, governments, laws, States, nations, movements, societies, organizations, empires, to leaders and those embodying in some manner the authority, the *volksgeist*, the ideations, the principles, the aspirations, of their time. Secondly, and possibly most important of all, that what is muliebral cannot be embodied in some organization or movement, or in some *-ism*, or in any causal form - and certainly cannot be expressed via the medium of words, whether spoken or written - without changing it, distorting it, from what it is into some-thing else. For the muliebral by its very φύσις is personal, individual, in nature and only presenced in the immediacy-of-the-moment, and thus cannot be the object of a supra-personal aspiration and thus should not be 'idealized' or even be the subject of an endeavour to express it in some principles or principles (political or otherwise), or by some axiom or axioms, or by some dogma. For all such things - forms and words included - are manifestations, a presencing, of what is, in φύσις, masculous and temporal. Or, expressed more simply, the muliebral presences and manifests what is a-causal - what, in the past, has often inclined us to appreciate the numinous - while the masculous presences and manifests what is causal, temporal, and what in the past has often inclined us toward hubris and being egoistic." {13}

Myatt's comprehensive philosophy - propounded in various writings between 2012 and 2014 and which he recently described as being just his personal *weltanschauung* rather than a philosophy {20} - thus provides an interesting, intriguing, and insightful if iconoclastic, analysis of extremism and contemporary society as well as offering an understandable ethics centred on personal honour, a rather mystical ontology, and a somewhat mystical answer to the question of existence; and although his philosophy certainly deserves

to be more widely studied and more widely appreciated, it will doubtless - given Myatt's outré and controversial life - continue to be neglected for many, many, decades to come.

Notes

{1} (a) Barnett, Antony. *Right here, right now*, The Observer, February 9, 2003. (b) Michael, George. *The Enemy of My Enemy: The Alarming Convergence of Militant Islam and the Extreme Right*. University Press of Kansas, 2006, p. 142ff.

{2} *Searchlight*, July 2000.

{3} Amis, Martin. *The Second Plane*. Jonathan Cape, 2008, p.157

{4} (a) Simon Wiesenthal Center: *Response*, Summer 2003, Vol 24, #2. (b) Wistrich, Robert S. *A Lethal Obsession: Anti-Semitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad*, Random House, 2010.

{5} (a) Myatt, David. *Myngath - Some Recollections of a Wyrdful and Extremist Life*. 2013. 978-1484110744. (b) Myatt, David. *Understanding And Rejecting Extremism*. 2013. 978-1484854266

{6} Myatt's philosophy of pathei-mathos is described in the following three published collections of his essays: (a) *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. 978-1484096642. (b) *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*. 2014. 978-1502396105. (c) *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. 978-1484097984

The three collections of essays are also available, as of October 2014 and as pdf files, from his weblog at <http://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/>

{7} Of the virtue of personal honour, Myatt writes that it

"presences the virtues of fairness, tolerance, compassion, humility, and εὐταξία - as (i) a natural intuitive (wordless) expression of the numinous ('the good', δίκη, συμπάθεια) and (ii) of both what the culture of pathei-mathos and the acausal-knowing of empathy reveal we should do (or incline us toward doing) in the immediacy of the personal moment when personally confronted by what is unfair, unjust, and extreme [...]"

[For] such honour - by its and our φύσις - is and can only ever be personal, and thus cannot be extracted out from the 'living moment' and our participation in the moment; for it only through such things as a personal study of the culture of pathei-mathos and the development of the faculty of empathy that a person who does not naturally possess the instinct for δίκη can develop what is essentially 'the human faculty of honour', and which faculty is often appreciated and/or discovered via our own personal pathei-

mathos." *The Way Of Pathei-Mathos - A Précis*, in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*.

{8} Myatt, David. *Let Us Then Try What Love Can Do*. 2012. e-text.

{9} *The Development of the Numinous Way*. The essay is included, as an appendix, in the printed version of his autobiography *Myngath*, 978-1484110744

{10} *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*. 2012. The essay is included in Myatt's book *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, 978-1484096642

{11} *Society, Politics, Social Reform, and Pathei-Mathos*. 2012. The essay is included in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, 978-1484096642

{12} *Some Personal Musings On Empathy In Relation to the Philosophy of πάθει μάθος*. 2012. The essay is included in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, 978-1484096642

{13} *Some Questions For DWM*. 2014. The essay is included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*, 2014, 978-1502396105

{14} *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. 978-1484096642

{15} *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendium*. 2012. The essay is included in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, 978-1484096642

{16} See: (a) *Toward Understand The Acausal*, and (b) *The Way Of Pathei-Mathos - A Précis*. Both essays are included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*, 2014, 978-1502396105

{17} Myatt, David. *Understanding And Rejecting Extremism*. 2013. 978-1484854266

{18} Regarding 'the culture of pathei-mathos' - a key part of his philosophy - see Myatt's 2014 essay *Education And The Culture Of Pathei-Mathos*, which is included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*, 978-1502396105

{19} *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God*. 2013. The essay is included in *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*, 978-1484097984

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Part Two: Humility, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos

The prevailing character of David Myatt's philosophy of pathei-mathos is evident in one of his most recent essays, for he writes:

"What I have previously described as the 'philosophy of pathei-mathos' and the 'way of pathei-mathos' is simply my own weltanschauung, a weltanschauung developed over some years as a result of my own pathei-mathos. Thus, and despite whatever veracity it may or may not possess, it is only the personal insight of one very fallible individual, a fallibility proven by my decades of selfishness and by my decades of reprehensible extremism both political and religious. Furthermore, and according to my admittedly limited understanding and limited knowledge, this philosophy does not - in essence - express anything new. For I feel (and I use the word 'feel' intentionally) that I have only re-expressed what so many others, over millennia, have expressed as result of (i) their own pathei-mathos and/or (ii) their experiences/insights and/or (iii) their particular philosophical musings.

Indeed, the more I reflect upon my (perhaps pretentiously entitled) 'philosophy of pathei-mathos' the more I reminded of so many things..." {1}

The character is that of a person who, aware and accepting of their past mistakes, is presenting the conclusions of many years of personal contemplation about such metaphysical and personal matters as interest them, which conclusions they qualify with a proviso of fallibility. The ethos of Myatt's philosophy is therefore both in tone and in content redolent of the mystic, but of a mystic who - perhaps because of his extremist past - is well aware of the causes and consequences of suffering:

"For me, there is a knowing of how limited and fallible my knowledge and understanding are, combined with an intangible intimation of some-thing possibly existing which is so abstruse that any and all attempts - at least by me - to meld it into words, and thus form and confine it into some idea or ideas, would miss or distort its essence. An intimation of what terms such as 'acausal' and 'numinous' (and even θεός/θεοί) do little to describe, hinting as such terms do of externalities - of an 'out there' - whereas this some-thing is an intrinsic part of us, connecting us to all life, human, terran, and otherwise, and thus reveals our φύσις - our relation to beings and Being - behind the appearance that is our conception of our separate self. An intimation thus of our brief causality of mortal life being only one momentary microcosmic presencing of that-which we it seems have a faculty to apprehend, and a that-which which lives-on both before and after our brief moment of apprehended causal life.

Yet this some-thing that I sense is no mystical divinity of a supra-personal love to be sought individually and which, if found or gifted to us, eremitically removes us from the mortal pains and joys of life. Suffering, and the pain so caused, are real; and if we ourselves are unafflicted, others are not and may never be so unafflicted if we

humans do not or cannot fundamentally change." {2}

It is therefore not surprising, given this mysticism, that humility is one of the personal virtues of Myatt's philosophy. Of humility, Myatt writes that he is using the term

"in a spiritual context to refer to that gentleness, that modest demeanour, that understanding, which derives from an appreciation of the numinous and also from one's own admitted uncertainty of knowing and one's acknowledgement of past mistakes. An uncertainty of knowing, an acknowledgement of mistakes, that often derive from πάθει μάθος.

Humility is thus the natural human balance that offsets the unbalance of hubris (ὑβρις) - the balance that offsets the unbalance of pride and arrogance, and the balance that offsets the unbalance of that certainty of knowing which is one basis for extremism, for extremist beliefs, for fanaticism and intolerance. That is, humility is a manifestation of the natural balance of Life; a restoration of ἁρμονίη, of δίκη, of σωφρονεῖν - of those qualities and virtues - that hubris and extremism, that ἔρις and πόλεμος, undermine, distance us from, and replace." {3}

This passage is notable for two reasons. First, for the fact that the virtue of humility is - along with the other personal moral qualities of Myatt's philosophy - the result of that 'acausal knowing' that Myatt considers both pathei-mathos and empathy can provide; and second, for his use of ancient Greek terminology, a usage which hints that his mysticism - his philosophy - is influenced by, or is a modern manifestation of, an ancient paganism rather than part of the Christian mystical and contemplative traditions.

Myatt himself acknowledges this pagan influence:

"The philosophy of pathei-mathos is the result of my own pathei-mathos, my own learning from diverse - sometimes outré, sometimes radical and often practical - ways of life and experiences over some four decades; of my subsequent reasoned analysis, over a period of several years, of those ways and those experiences; of certain personal intuitions, spread over several decades, regarding the numinous; of an interior process of personal and moral reflexion, lasting several years and deriving from a personal tragedy; and of my life-long study and appreciation of Hellenic culture, an appreciation that led me to translate works by Sappho, Sophocles, Aeschylus and Homer, and involved me in a detailed consideration of the weltanschauung of individuals such as Heraclitus (insofar as such weltanschauungen are known from recorded sayings and surviving books).

Given this appreciation, and as the name suggests, the philosophy of πάθει μάθος has certain connexions to Hellenic culture and I tend therefore to use certain Greek words in order to try and

elucidate my meaning and/or to express certain philosophical principles regarded as important in - and for an understanding of - this philosophy; a usage of words which I have endeavoured to explain as and where necessary, sometimes by quoting passages from Hellenic literature or other works and by providing translations of such passages. For it would be correct to assume that the ethos of this philosophy is somewhat indebted to and yet - and importantly - is also a development of the ethos of Hellenic culture; an indebtedness obvious in notions such as δίκη, πάθει μάθος, avoidance of ὕβρις, and references to Heraclitus, Aeschylus, and others, and a development manifest in notions such as empathy and the importance attached to the virtue of compassion." {4}

Acausal Knowing and Pathei Mathos

In a recent précis of his philosophy Myatt enumerates the three fundamentals of his epistemology:

" a. The primacy of pathei-mathos: of a personal pathei-mathos being one of the primary means whereby we can come to know the true φύσις (physis) of Being, of beings, and of our own being; a knowing beyond 'abstractions', beyond the concealment implicit in manufactured opposites, by ipseity (the separation-of-otherness), and by denotatum.

b. Adding the 'acausal knowing' revealed by the (muliebral) faculty of empathy to the conventional, and causal (and somewhat masculous), knowing of science and logical philosophical speculation, with the proviso that what such 'acausal knowing' reveals is (i) of φύσις, the relation between beings, and between beings and Being, and thus of 'the separation-of-otherness', and (ii) the personal and numinous nature of such knowing in the immediacy-of-the-moment, and which empathic knowing thus cannot be abstracted out from that 'living moment' via denotatum: by (words written or spoken), or be named or described or expressed (become fixed or 'known') by any dogma or any -ism or any -ology, be such -isms or -ologies conventionally understood as political, religious, ideological, or social.

c. Describing a human, and world-wide and ancestral, 'culture of pathei-mathos', and which culture of pathei-mathos could form part of Studia Humanitatis and thus of that education that enables we human beings to better understand our own φύσις." {1}

Thus, for Myatt, knowledge and understanding of Reality - of beings and Being, and of our own relation to beings and Being - requires us to use or develop our faculty of empathy (of sympatheia with other living beings, human and otherwise) as well as both studying and appreciating our 'aeonic' human culture of pathei-mathos and learning via our own experiences,

suffering, and grief (our own pathei-mathos). The latter of which - that is, pathei-mathos - naturally not only cultivates a certain personal humility but also means that we cannot hope to know and understand Reality - we cannot discover wisdom - unless and until we ourselves have a certain experience of the vicissitudes of life.

Given (i) that the acausal knowing that empathy reveals,

"is a direct and personal - an individual - revealing of beings and Being which does not depend on denoting or naming or causality or the assumption of a primal cause, and which knowing, being individual in φύσις and concerned with living beings, cannot be abstracted out from the living personal moment of the perceivization. Thus, such a perceivization - in respect of other human beings - does not and cannot involve and does not and cannot lead to any of the following: (i) any personal claim regarding possessing 'the truth' about some-thing; (ii) no 'correct way or praxis' or dogma or ideology which are assumed or believed to be applicable to anyone else; (iii) no understanding of or assumption of knowledge about others on the basis of assigning those others to some category or to some abstract form. Instead, there is only an intuition of the moment concerning one's own φύσις and thus a wordless individual revealing of - a numinous knowing concerning - one's own being and of one's own relation to Being and to other living beings" {5}

and given (ii) the necessity of (a) pathei-mathos and (b) studying and learning from our aeonic human culture of pathei-mathos, and (ii) given the personal virtues - such as compassion, humility, and a personal honour - that are engendered by such acausal knowing {6}, such a study, and such a pathei-mathos, then it is my view that Myatt's whole philosophy can be summarized as a guide to living in an honourable, and a particular type of pagan, way.

For, of the knowing and understanding that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal, Myatt writes:

"Empathy is, and has been, the natural basis for a tradition which informs us, and reminds us - through Art, literature, myths, legends, the accumulated πάθει μάθος of individuals, and often through a religious-type awareness - of the need for a balance, for ἁρμονίη, achieved by not going beyond the numinous limits.

As a used and a developed faculty, the perception that empathy provides is of undivided ψυχή and of the emanations of ψυχή, of our place in the Cosmic Perspective: of how we are a connexion to other life; of how we are but one mortal fallible emanation of Life; of how we affect or can affect the well-being - the very being, ψυχή - of other mortals and other life; and how other mortals and other living beings interact with us and can affect us, in a good or a harmful way.

Empathy thus involves a translocation of ourselves and thus a knowing-of another living-being as that living-being *is*, without presumptions and sans all ideations, all projections. In a simple way, empathy involves a numinous sympathy with another living-being; a becoming – for a causal moment or moments – of that other-being, so that we know, can feel, can understand, the suffering or the joy of that living-being. In such moments, there is no distinction made between *them and us* – there is only the flow of life; only the presencing and the ultimate unity of Life itself." {4}

"The numinous sympathy - *συμπάθεια* (sympatheia, benignity) - with another living being that empathy provides naturally inclines us to treat other living beings as we ourselves would wish to be treated: with fairness, compassion, honour, and dignity. It also inclines us not to judge those whom we do not know; those beyond the purveu - beyond the range of - our faculty of empathy." {6}

For, regarding personal honour, Myatt writes that it:

"presences the virtues of fairness, tolerance, compassion, humility, and εὐταξία - as (i) a natural intuitive (wordless) expression of the numinous ('the good', δίκη, συμπάθεια) and (ii) of both what the culture of pathei-mathos and the acausal-knowing of empathy reveal we should do (or incline us toward doing) in the immediacy of the personal moment when personally confronted by what is unfair, unjust, and extreme [...]

Such honour - by its and our φύσις - is and can only ever be personal, and thus cannot be extracted out from the 'living moment' and our participation in the moment; for it only through such things as a personal study of the culture of pathei-mathos and the development of the faculty of empathy that a person who does not naturally possess the instinct for δίκη can develop what is essentially 'the human faculty of honour', and which faculty is often appreciated and/or discovered via our own personal pathei-mathos." {1}

For, regarding paganism, Myatt - quoting Cicero - writes that, correctly understood (that is, in the classical sense), it is:

"An apprehension of the complete unity (a cosmic order, κόσμος, mundus) beyond the apparent parts of that unity, together with the perceivance that we mortals – albeit a mere and fallible part of the unity – have been gifted with our existence so that we may perceive and understand this unity, and, having so perceived, may ourselves seek to be whole, and thus become as balanced (perfectus), as harmonious, as the unity itself." {7}

An Honourable, Paganus, And Cultured, Way of Life

What Myatt has developed in his philosophy of pathei-mathos is, essentially, a contemporary mystical 'paganus' philosophy in the classical tradition, and thus one which dispenses with all the unnecessary accretions, and misunderstandings, of the past century that have become attached to 'modern paganism'. For at the heart of Myatt's individualistic paganism are the virtues of personal honour, of learning, of education, of culture, of self-restraint [ἐνταξία] and of duty, for:

"this paganus natural balance implied an acceptance by the individual of certain communal responsibilities and duties; of such responsibilities and duties, and their cultivation, as a natural and necessary part of our existence as mortals." {7}

Which is why Myatt's paganus philosophy emphasises wu-wei {8}, and tolerance; and why it is (i) concerned, not with politics or reforming society through some -ism or -ology or via some revolution violent or otherwise, but rather with the individual - with their interior life, with their personal interaction with others, with the numinosity of love {9}, with honourable living - and (ii) concerned with the individual agreeing to Ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ {10}.

Thus:

"There is no desire and no need to use any confrontational means to directly challenge and confront the authority of existing States since numinous reform and change is personal, individual, non-political, and not organized beyond a limited local [communal] level of people personally known. That is, it is of and involves individuals who are personally known to each other working together based on the understanding that it is inner, personal, change - in individuals, of their nature, their character - that is is the ethical, the numinous, way to solve such personal and social problems as exist and arise. That such inner change of necessity comes before any striving for outer change by whatever means, whether such means be termed or classified as political, social, economic, religious. That the only effective, long-lasting, change and reform is understood as the one that evolves human beings and thus changes what, in them, predisposes them, or inclines them toward, doing or what urges them to do, what is dishonourable, undignified, unfair, and uncompassionate.

In practice, this evolution means, in the individual, the cultivation and use of the faculty of empathy, and acquiring the personal virtues of compassion, honour, and love. Which means the inner reformation of individuals, as individuals.

Hence the basis for numinous social change and reform is aiding, helping, assisting individuals in a direct and personal manner, and

in practical ways, with such help, assistance, and aid arising because we personally know or are personally concerned about or involved with those individuals or the situations those individuals find themselves in. In brief, being compassionate, empathic, understanding, sensitive, kind, and showing by personal example." {11}

In effect, therefore, Myatt's philosophy, with its specific (if not unique) epistemology, and its virtues such as that of a personal honour, leads to:

"An understanding of (i) how good and bad are not 'out there' and cannot be manifest or assumed to be manifest in some form, by some ideation, or in 'them' (the others), without causing or contributing to or being the genesis of suffering, but instead are within us as individuals, a part of our nature, our character, our φύσις, and often divergently expressed; and (ii) of how, in my view at least, personal honour and not a codified law, not a jurisprudence, is the best, the most excellent, way to define and manifest this 'good', with honour understood, as in my philosophy of pathei-mathos, as an instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous.

An honourable person is thus someone of manners, fairness, reasoned judgement, and valour; with honour being a means to live, to behave, in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις; in order try and avoid causing suffering, and in order to rediscover, to acquire, ἀρμονίη, that natural balance that presences the numinous (sans denotatum and sans dogma) and thus reveals what is important about life and about being human." {12}

For it is living in such an honourable way, with such an understanding, that can provide the individual with opportunities to experience, and thence learn from, of the vicissitudes of life because such a way of honourable living means - as I mentioned in Part One - the person being prepared in the immediacy of the moment, and when confronted by someone or some group being dishonourable, to do what is honourable in defence of themselves or others even if that means their own death.

Given that living in such an honourable way with such an understanding was, for thousands of years, the essence of paganism, Myatt is be commended for developing a contemporary mystical paganus philosophy.

R. Parker
2014

Notes

{1} *The Way Of Pathei-Mathos - A Précis*. 2014. The essay is included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical*

Musings. 978-1502396105

{2} *A Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*. 2014. The essay is included in the 2014 compilation whose title is taken from the title of that essay: *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*.

{3} *Pathei-Mathos - A Path To Humility*. 2012.

{4} *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendium*. 2012. The essay is included in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. 2013, 978-1484096642

It is obvious from Myatt's writings about his philosophy of pathei-mathos that by the term 'Hellenic culture' he sometimes means the culture of ancient Greece. He thus - perhaps pedantically, perhaps idiosyncratically - sometimes eschews the relatively modern division of ancient Greek culture into a 'classical' period and a 'Hellenistic' period, although - confusingly - in some of his writings he does make such a distinction. As often, what he means by Hellenic is provided by the context.

{5} *Toward Understand The Acausal*, 2014. The essay is included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*.

{6} *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*. 2012. The essay is included in Myatt's *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*.

{7} *Education And The Culture Of Pathei-Mathos*, 2014. The essay is included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*.

{8} In his *Vocabulary of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*, published in 2012, and included as an 'appendix of terms' in his book *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, Myatt writes:

"Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in *The Way of Pathei-Mathos* to refer to a personal 'letting-be' deriving from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, their φύσις, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive – that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous.

In practice, the knowledge, the understanding, the intuition, the insight that is wu-wei is a knowledge, an understanding, that can be acquired from empathy, πάθει μάθος, and by a knowing of and an appreciation of the numinous. This knowledge and

understanding is of wholeness, and that life, things/beings, change, flow, exist, in certain natural ways which we human beings cannot change however hard we might try; that such a hardness of human trying, a belief in such hardness, is unwise, un-natural, upsets the natural balance and can cause misfortune/suffering for us and/or for others, now or in the future. Thus success lies in discovering the inner nature (the physis) of things/beings/ourselves and gently, naturally, slowly, working with this inner nature, not striving against it."

{9} Myatt ends his autobiography, *Myngath*, by writing that "a shared, a loyal, love between two people is the most beautiful, the most numinous, the most valuable thing of all."

{10} Myatt approvingly quotes this saying - attributed to Jesus of Nazareth - in his 2013 essay *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God*. The essay is included in *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*, 978-1484097984

{11} *Society, Politics, Social Reform, and Pathei-Mathos*, in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. 2013, 978-1484096642

{12} *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God*. 2013. The essay is included in *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*, 978-1484097984

V. Classical Paganism And A New Metaphysics

In November of 2017 Myatt published his book *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* in which he described his view of the difference between Christianity and the paganism of Ancient Greece and Rome and set out to, in his words, develop that "paganism in a metaphysical way, beyond the deities of classical mythos."

This was followed a month later by his *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* and in which iconoclastic work he provided his answers to particular metaphysical questions such as whether Christianity really is a suitable presencing of the numinous. If it is not, "then what non-Christian alternatives - such as a paganus metaphysics - exist, and what is the foundation of such an alternative."

While these books are not expositions of his philosophy they nevertheless provide interesting and relevant insights into Christianity and classical paganism as well as illuminate particular aspects of his own philosophy. For instance, in *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* he writes that "the numinous is primarily a manifestation of the muliebral," and that revealed religions such as Christianity, Islam, and Judaism primarily manifest a presencing of the masculous. In *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* he writes that "the quintessence of such a weltanschauung, of the paganus ethos, is that

ethics are presented in and by particular living individuals, not in some written text whether philosophical or otherwise, not by some proposed schemata, and not in some revelation from some deity."

In both books he makes use of the Greek term καλὸς κάγαθός stating, in *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*, that this

"means those who conduct themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner and who thus manifest - because of their innate physis or through pathei-mathos or through a certain type of education or learning - nobility of character."

In *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* he writes that

"καλὸς κάγαθός is an awareness and acceptance of one's civic duties and responsibilities undertaken not because of any personal benefit (omni utilitate) that may result or be expected, and not because an omnipotent deity has, via some written texts, commanded it and will punish a refusal, but because it is the noble, the honourable - the gentlemanly, the lady-like, the human - thing to do [...]"

[T]he virtues of personal honour and manners, with their responsibilities, presence the fairness, the avoidance of hubris, the natural harmonious balance, the gender equality, the awareness and appreciation of the divine, that is the numinous."

Which in my view neatly sums up his philosophy of pathei-mathos, particularly given his statement that the numinous is primarily a manifestation of the muliebral, and that

"a muliebral presencing is or would be manifest [in] muliebral virtues, such as empathy, sensitivity, gentleness, compassion; and in the perception that personal love should triumph over and above adherence to abstractions. Considered exoterically - not interiorly, not esoterically - a muliebral presencing is manifest in a personal, varied, worship and devotion; in a personal weltanschauung and not in a religion; has no hierarchy; no creed, no article or articles of faith; and no texts whether written or aural."

As he notes in his short essay *From Mythoi To Empathy* {1}, "the faculty of empathy is the transition from mythoi and anthropomorphic deities (theos and theoi) to an appreciation of the numinous sans denotatum and sans religion."

He thus outlines a new 'pagan' metaphysics, or rather provides an understandable description of his own weltanschauung, which is

"of we human beings having a connexion to other living beings, a connexion to the cosmos beyond, and a connexion to the source of our existence, the source of the cosmos, and the source - the origin,

the genesis - of all living beings. Which source we cannot correctly describe in words, by any denotata, or define as some male 'god', or even as a collection of deities whether male or female, but which we can apprehend through the emanations of Being: through what is living, what is born, what unfolds in a natural manner, what is ordered and harmonious, what changes, and what physically - in its own species of Time - dies.

An awareness of all these connexions is awareness of, and a respect for, the numinous, for these connexions, being acausal, are affective: that is, we are inclined by our physis (whether we apprehend it or not) to have an influence on that which, or those whom, the connexion is to or from. For what we do or do not do, consciously or otherwise, affects or can affect the cosmos and thus the other living beings which exist in the cosmos, and it is a conscious awareness of connexions and acausal affects, with their causal consequences, which reason, perceivance, and empathy make us - or can make us - aware of. Which awareness may incline us toward acting, and living, in a noble way, with what is noble known or experienced, discovered, through and because of (i) the personal virtue of honour, evident as honour is in fairness, manners and a balanced demeanour, and (ii) the wordless knowing of empathy, manifest as empathy is in compassion and tolerance.

For Being is also, and importantly, presenced - manifest to us, as mortals possessed of reason, empathy, and perceivance - through certain types of individuals and thus through the particular ways of living that nurture or encourage such individuals. These types of individuals are those who have empathy and who live and if necessary die by honour and thus who have nobility of character."
{2}

Those "certain types of individuals" who presence Being are of course those who manifest καλὸς κἀγαθός, and thus those who, in Myatt's words, manifest chivalry, manners, gentrified romance; and the muliebral virtues, {3} which virtues include "empathy, sensitivity, gentleness, compassion" as well as "the perception that personal love should triumph over and above adherence to abstractions." {4}

JR Wright
2018

{1} The essay is included here as Appendix III.

{2} *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*, Epilogos.

{3} *From Mythoi To Empathy*.

{4} *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*, chapter III.

Appendix I

A Note On Greek Terms In The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos

As I mentioned in the *A Philosophical Compendiary* chapter of my book *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, my philosophy of pathei-mathos has connexions to the culture of ancient Greece, exemplified by the many Greek terms and phrases I use in an attempt to express certain philosophical concepts. Such use of such terms also serves to intimate that my philosophy has some connexion to the Graeco-Roman mystical, and paganus, traditions, one of which traditions is outlined in the Ἱερός Λόγος tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum where it is written that

"...every psyche - embodied in flesh - can
By the mirificence of the circumferent deities coursing the heavens
Apprehend the heavens, and honour, and physis presenced, and the works of
theos;
Can understand divine influence as wyrdful change
And thus, regarding what is good and what is bad, discover all the arts of
honour." [1]

Furthermore, I also - and perhaps (as you mention) somewhat confusingly - use certain Greek and Latin terms in a specific way, such that the meaning I assign to them is not necessarily identical to how they were understood in classical times or the same as the meaning ascribed to them in modern Greek and Latin lexicons. A few examples being συμπάθεια, δίκη, φύσις, ἁρμονία, perfectus, ἅγιος, and σωφρονεῖν.

Thus I understand ἅγιος - qv. my translation of and commentary on the Pœmandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum - not as the conventional 'holy'/sacred but rather as implying the numinous/numinosity, for I incline toward the view that the English words holy and sacred have too many modern connotations, Christian and otherwise, whereas numinous/numinosity still have the advantage of being religiously neutral and thus can intimate what an ancient paganus tradition may well have intimated. Hence also why and for example I in that tractate chose to translate ἀρχέτυπον εἶδος as 'quidditas of semblance' [2] rather than use (as some other translators have) an expression that included the word 'archetype' since that word has modern connotations that detract from (that can falsify) the meaning of the original Greek.

Another example, from the many, is φύσις which I use contextually to refer to not only its Homeric and later Aristotelian sense - of personal character, Nature, and the unfolding/change of being, respectively [3] - but also to what I have philosophically described as the unity (the being/Being) beyond the division of our φύσις, as individual mortals, into masculous and muliebral and a division we have made via abstractions (including 'forms'; the ἰδέα/εἶδος of Plato) and denotatum.

Yet another example is σωφρονεῖν which I use - in preference to σωφρονέω/σωφροσύνη - as a synonym for "a fair and balanced personal,

individual, judgement" (that is, thoughtful reasoning, or wisdom) whereas in classical and Hellenic terms the expression should be τὸ σωφρονεῖν/εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν which imply 'to be discreet (Ag. 1425), being moderate, having good judgement', and so on. Here, as with Δίκη (in preference to δίκη) I have used a form or variant of a specific Greek word in order to suggest a modern philosophical meaning (or principle) and differentiate it from the conventional lexicographic meaning. But it would perhaps, with the hindsight of some years, have been better to avoid confusion and instead given and then used transliterations - sophronein, Dika - as I did (following the example of Jung) with ἐναντιοδομίας/enantiodromia. That is, using the transliterations as Anglicized terms, as I do with my usage of πάθει μάθος - especially when the transliteration is employed - for such Anglicized terms do not follow the correct Greek grammatical (inflective) usage, with my writings thus employing expressions such as "a pathei-mathos", "that pathei-mathos", "which pathei-mathos", "our accumulated pathei-mathos", "my pathei-mathos", and of course "the philosophy of pathei-mathos".

In other words, my usage of some Greek terms - and the meaning I assign to some others - is somewhat idiosyncratic, often philosophical; and although I have endeavoured to explain my usage and meaning in essays and commentaries, obviously this has not always been successful or as pedantic as it perhaps should have been.

Thus when I, some years ago now, first published my translation of fragment 1 of Heraclitus - without commentary - it led to a Greek scholar, then in Oxford, to ask about my seeming neglect of ἀεὶ. In correspondence I explained my usage, later incorporating part of that correspondence into a brief commentary which I appended to the translation, writing in the commentary that "in my view, *tend* to captures the poetic sense of ἀεὶ here. That is, the literal - the bland, strident - 'always' is discarded in favour of a more Heraclitean expression of human beings having an apparently rather irreconcilable tendency - both now and as in the past - to ignore (or forget or not understand) certain things, even after matters have been explained to them (they have heard the explanation) and even after they have discovered certain truths for themselves." [4]

Therefore, and as I mentioned in the introduction to my *Poemandres*, some may well consider the words of Diogenes Laertius about Plato - *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 3.1 (64) - apposite in relation to my idiosyncratic use of some Greek terms:

χρῆται δὲ ὁ Πλάτων ἐνίοτε αὐτῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ κακοῦ: ἔστι δ' ὅτε καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ μικροῦ. πολλάκις δὲ καὶ διαφέρουσιν ὀνόμασιν ἐπὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ
σημαινομένου χρῆται.

David Myatt
2015

Extract from a letter to an academic correspondent, with footnotes added post scriptum.

[1] My translation, from *Ιερός Λόγος: An Esoteric Mythos. A Translation Of And A Commentary On The Third Tractate Of The Corpus Hermeticum*. Included in *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*. 2017. 978-1976452369.

[2] Quidditas being 11th/12th century post-classical Latin, from whence derived the scholastic term 'quiddity'.

[3] *Towards Understanding Physis*. The essay is included in *Sarigthersa: Some Recent Essays*. 2015.

[4] "Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done."

The translation - together with the Greek text and a brief commentary - is included as an appendix to *Towards Understanding Physis*.

Appendix II

Towards Understanding Ancestral Culture

As manifest in my weltanschauung, based as that weltanschauung is on pathei-mathos and an appreciation of Greco-Roman culture, the term Ancestral Culture is synonymous with Ancestral Custom, with Ancestral Custom represented in Ancient Greek mythoi by Δίκη, the goddess Fairness as described by Hesiod:

σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης, μηδ' ὕβριν ὄφελλε:
ὕβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῶ βροτῶ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς
215 ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύνатаι, βαρύθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς
ἐγκύρσας ἄτησιν: ὁδὸς δ' ἐτέρηφι παρελθεῖν
κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει
ἐς τέλος ἐξελθοῦσα: παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω

You should listen to Fairness and not oblige Hubris
Since Hubris harms unfortunate mortals while even the more fortunate
Are not equal to carrying that heavy a burden, meeting as they do with Mischief.
The best path to take is the opposite one: that of honour
For, in the end, Fairness is above Hubris
Which is something the young come to learn from adversity.

That Δίκη is generally described as the goddess of 'justice' - as 'Judgement' personified - is unfortunate given that the terms 'justice' and 'judgement' have modern, abstract, and legalistic, connotations which are inappropriate and which detract from understanding and appreciating the mythoi of Ancient Greece and Rome.

Correctly understood, Δίκη - and δίκη in general - represents the natural and the necessary balance manifest in ἁρμονίη (harmony) and thus not only in τὸ καλόν (the beautiful) but also in the Cosmic Order, κόσμος, with ourselves as human beings (at least when unaffected by hubris) a microcosmic re-presentation of such balance, κόσμον δὲ θείου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον [1]. A sentiment re-expressed centuries later by Marsilii Ficini:

Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora,
et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona.

How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned. [2]

This understanding and appreciation of ἁρμονίη and of κόσμος and of ourselves as a microcosm is perhaps most evident in the Greek phrase καλὸς κάγαθός, describing as it does those who are balanced within themselves, who - manifesting τὸ καλόν and τὸ ἀγαθόν - comport themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner, part of which comportment is living and if necessary dying in a honourable, a noble, manner. For personal honour presences τὸ καλόν and τὸ ἀγαθόν, and thus the numinous.

For in practice honour manifests the customary, the ancestral way, of those who are noble, those who presence fairness; those who restore balance; those who (even at some cost to themselves) are fair due to their innate physis or because they have been nurtured to be so. For this ancestral way - such ancestral custom - is what is expected in terms of personal behaviour based on past personal examples and thus often manifests the accumulated wisdom of previous generations.

Thus, an important - perhaps even ethos-defining - Ancestral Custom of Greco-Roman culture, and of Western culture born as Western culture was from medieval mythoi involving Knights and courtly romance and from the re-discovery of Greco-Roman culture that began the Renaissance, is chivalry and which personal virtue - presencing the numinous as it does and did - is not and cannot be subject to any qualifications or exceptions and cannot be confined to or manifest by anything so supra-personal as a particular religion or anything so supra-personal as a political dogma or ideology.

Hence, the modern paganus weltanschauung that I mentioned in my *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* as a means "to reconnect those

in the lands of the West, and those in Western émigré lands and former colonies of the West, with their ancestral ethos," is one founded on καλὸς κάγαθός. That is, on chivalry; on manners; on gentrified romance; and on the muliebral virtues, the gender equality, inherent in both chivalry and personal manners, consciously and rationally understood as chivalry and manners now are as a consequence of both our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos and of our empathic (wordless) and personal apprehension of the numinous.

David Myatt
January 2018

[1] "a cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings." Tractate IV:2. Corpus Hermeticum. Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς.

[2] De Vita Coelitus Comparanda. XXVI.

Appendix III

From Mythoi To Empathy Toward A New Appreciation Of The Numinous

Since the concept of the numinous is central to my weltanschauung - otherwise known as the 'philosophy of pathei-mathos' - it seems apposite to provide, as I did in respect of my use of the term physis, φύσις [1], a more detailed explanation of the concept, and my usage of it, than I have hitherto given, deriving as the term does from the classical Latin numen which denoted "a reverence for the divine; a divinity; divine power" with the word numen assimilated into English in the 15th century, with the English use of 'numinous' dating from the middle of the 17th century and used to signify "of or relating to a numen; revealing or indicating the presence of a divinity; divine, spiritual."

The term numinous was also used in a somewhat restrictive religious way [2] by Rudolf Otto over a century ago in his book *Das Heilige*.

In contrast to Otto et al, my understanding of the numinous is that it is primarily a perceivation, not a personal emotion or feeling, not a mysterium, and not an idea in the sense of Plato's εἶδος and thus is not similar to Kant's concept of *a priori*. As a perceivation, while it includes an apprehension of what is often referred to as 'the divine', 'the holy' - and sometimes thus is an apprehension of theos or theoi - it is not limited to such apprehensions, since as in the past it is often an intimation of, an intuition concerning,

"the natural balance of ψυχή; a balance which ὕβρις upsets. This natural balance – our being as human beings – is or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful." [3]

Where ψυχή is an intimation of, an intuition concerning Life *qua* being; of ourselves as a living existent considered as an emanation of ψυχή, howsoever ψυχή is described, as for example in mythoi - and thus in terms of theos, theoi, or 'Nature' - with ψυχή thus what 'animates' us and what gives us our φύσις as human beings. A physis classically perceived to be that of a mortal fallible being veering between σωφρονεῖν (thoughtful reasoning, and thus fairness) and ὕβρις. [4]

The particular apprehension of external reality that is the numinous is that provided by our natural faculty of empathy, ἐμπάθεια. When this particular faculty is developed and used then it is a specific and extended type of συμπάθεια. That is, it is a type of and a means to knowing and understanding another human being and/or other living beings. The type of 'knowing' - and thence the understanding - that empathy provides or can provide is different from, but supplementary and complimentary to, that knowing which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

Furthermore, since empathy is a natural and an individual human faculty, it

"is limited in range and application, just as our faculties of sight and hearing are limited in range and application. These limits extend to only what is direct, immediate, and involve personal interactions with other humans or with other living beings. There is therefore, for the philosophy of pathei-mathos, an 'empathic scale of things' and an acceptance of our limitations of personal knowing and personal understanding." [5]

That is, as I explained in my 2015 essay *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*, there is a 'local horizon of empathy'.

This local horizon and the fact that empathy is a human faculty mean that the apprehension is wordless and personal and cannot be extrapolated beyond, or abstracted out from, the individual without losing some or all of its numinosity since the process of denotatum - of abstraction - devolves around the meanings assigned to words, terms, and names, and which meanings can and do vary over causal time and may be (mis)interpreted by others often on the basis of some idea, or theory, or on some comparative exegesis.

It therefore follows that the numinous cannot be codified and that numinosity cannot be adequately, fully, presenced by anything doctrinal or which is organized beyond a small, a localized, and thus personal level; and that all such a supra-local organization can ever hope to do at best is provide a fallible intimation of the numinous, or perhaps some practical means to help others toward individually apprehending the numinous for themselves.

Which intimation, given the nature of empathy - with its συμπάθεια, with its wordless knowing of actually being for a moment or for moments 'the living other' - is of muliebral virtues such as compassion, manners, and a certain personal humility, and of how a shared, mutual, personal love can and does presence the numinous. Which intimation, which wisdom, which knowing, is exactly that of our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos, and which culture - with its personal recounting, and artistic renderings, of tragedy, love, loss, suffering, and war - is a far better guide to the numinous than conventional religions. [6]

All of which is why I wrote in my *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* that in my view "the numinous is primarily a manifestation of the muliebral," and that revealed religions such as Christianity, Islam, and Judaism primarily manifest a presencing of the masculous. Such religions - indeed all religions - therefore have not presenced, and do not and cannot presence, the numinous as the numinous can be presenced. Neither did Greco-Roman culture, for all its assimilation of some muliebral mythoi, adequately presence the numinous, and just as no modern organized paganus revival dependant on mythoi and anthropomorphic deities can adequately presence the numinous.

For the cultivation of the faculty of empathy is the transition from mythoi and anthropomorphic deities (theos and theoi) to an appreciation of the numinous sans denotatum and sans religion.

A New Appreciation Of The Numinous

How then can the faculty of empathy be cultivated? My own practical experience of various religions, as well as my own pathei-mathos, inclines me to favour the personal cultivation of muliebral virtues and a return to a more local, a less organized, way or ways of living based initially on a personal and mutual and loyal love between two individuals. A living of necessity balanced by personal honour given how the world is still replete with dishonourable hubriatic individuals who, devoid of empathy, are often motivated by the worst of intentions. For such a personal honour - in the immediacy of the personal moment - is a necessary restoration of the numinous balance that the dishonourable deeds of a hubriatic individual or individuals upsets [7].

For such a personal love, such a preparedness to restore the natural balance through honour, are - in my admittedly fallible view - far more adequate presencings of the numinous than any religious ritual, than any religious worship, or any type of contemplative (wordless) prayer.

David Myatt
January 2018

[1] *Toward Understanding Physis*. Included in the 2015 compilation *Sarigthersa*.

[2] I have endeavoured in recent years to make a distinction between a

religion and a spiritual 'way of life'. As noted in my 2013 text *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, Appendix II - Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, *Religion*,

"One of the differences being that a religion requires and manifests a codified ritual and doctrine and a certain expectation of conformity in terms of doctrine and ritual, as well as a certain organization beyond the local community level resulting in particular individuals assuming or being appointed to positions of authority in matters relating to that religion. In contrast, Ways are more diverse and more an expression of a spiritual ethos, of a customary, and often localized, way of doing certain spiritual things, with there generally being little or no organization beyond the community level and no individuals assuming - or being appointed by some organization - to positions of authority in matters relating to that ethos.

Religions thus tend to develop an organized regulatory and supra-local hierarchy which oversees and appoints those, such as priests or religious teachers, regarded as proficient in spiritual matters and in matters of doctrine and ritual, whereas adherents of Ways tend to locally and informally and communally, and out of respect and a personal knowing, accept certain individuals as having a detailed knowledge and an understanding of the ethos and the practices of that Way. Many spiritual Ways have evolved into religions."

Another difference is that religions tend to presence and be biased toward the masculine, while spiritual ways tend to be either more muliebral or incorporate muliebral virtues.

[3] Myatt, David. *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, 2017. Appendix II - Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, *The Numinous*.

[4] In my note *Concerning σωφρονεῖν* - included in my "revised 2455621.531" version of *The Balance of Physis - Notes on λόγος and ἀληθεία in Heraclitus. Part One, Fragment 112* - I mentioned that I use σωφρονεῖν (sophronein) in preference to σωφροσύνη (sophrosyne) since sophrosyne has acquired an English interpretation - "soundness of mind, moderation" - which in my view distorts the meaning of the original Greek. As with my use of the term πάθει μάθος (pathei-mathos) I use σωφρονεῖν in an Anglicized manner with there thus being no necessity to employ inflective forms.

[5] Myatt, *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. Appendix II - *Immediacy-of-the-Moment*.

[6] One aspect of the apprehension of the numinous that empathy provides - which I have briefly touched upon in various recent personal writings - is that personal love is personal love; personal, mutual, equal, and germane to the moment and to a person. It thus does not adhere to manufactured or assumed abstractive boundaries such as gender, social status, or nationality,

with enforced adherence to such presumptive boundaries - such as opposition to same gender love whether from religious or political beliefs - contrary to empathy and a cause of suffering.

[7] As mentioned in my *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*,

"The personal virtue of honour, and the cultivation of wu-wei, are - together - a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἀρμονίη.

For personal honour is essentially a presencing, a grounding, of ψυχή - of Life, of our φύσις - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη.

This balancing of compassion - of the need not to cause suffering - by σωφρονεῖν and δίκη is perhaps most obvious on that particular occasion when it may be judged necessary to cause suffering to another human being. That is, in honourable self-defence. For it is natural - part of our reasoned, fair, just, human nature - to defend ourselves when attacked and (in the immediacy of the personal moment) to valorously, with chivalry, act in defence of someone close-by who is unfairly attacked or dishonourably threatened or is being bullied by others, and to thus employ, if our personal judgement of the circumstances deem it necessary, lethal force.

This use of force is, importantly, crucially, restricted - by the individual nature of our judgement, and by the individual nature of our authority - to such personal situations of immediate self-defence and of valorous defence of others, and cannot be extended beyond that, for to so extend it, or attempt to extend it beyond the immediacy of the personal moment of an existing physical threat, is an arrogant presumption - an act of ὕβρις - which negates the fair, the human, presumption of innocence of those we do not personally know, we have no empathic knowledge of, and who present no direct, immediate, personal, threat to us or to others nearby us.

Such personal self-defence and such valorous defence of another in a personal situation are in effect a means to restore the natural balance which the unfair, the dishonourable, behaviour of others upsets. That is, such defence fairly, justly, and naturally in the immediacy of the moment corrects their error of ὕβρις resulting from their bad (their rotten) φύσις; a rotten character evident in their lack of the virtue, the skill, of σωφρονεῖν. For had they possessed that virtue, and if their character was not bad, they would not have undertaken such a dishonourable attack."

Appendix IV

Preface from *One Perceivation*

Following suggestions from several readers of both my translations of and commentaries on eight tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum [1] and my book *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, [2] I have collected here several essays of mine, published between 2012 and 2019, concerning my methodology in regard to translating and employing certain Ancient Greek words.

Hopefully this collection will go some way toward revealing to readers the reasoning behind why I, for example, use σωφρονεῖν in preference to σωφρονέω/σωφροσύνη and attribute to that Greek word a particular philosophical meaning - "a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement" (that is, thoughtful reasoning, or wisdom) - rather than the English meaning now associated with the transliteration sophrosyne which is "soundness of mind, moderation", thus avoiding the English word "mind" with all its post-classical and modern interpretations philosophical and otherwise.

Another example is pathei mathos - πάθει μάθος - which is used not in accord with Greek grammatical (inflective) usage, but in accord with the English language use of an expression, with my writings thus employing expressions such as "a pathei-mathos", "that pathei-mathos", "which pathei-mathos", "our accumulated pathei-mathos", "my pathei-mathos", and of course "the philosophy of pathei-mathos".

A further example is σοφόν in preference to σοφός, when the sense implied is not the usual "skilled", or "learned" or "wise" but rather what lies beyond and what was/is the genesis of those denotata: which is the quiddity, the physis, with the denotata (σοφός: skill, learning, wisdom) a presencing [3] in an individual of that wordless quiddity, [4] that physis. [5]

In these and other instances the words are used in an Anglicized, non-inflective, way to suggest a specific philosophical term or concept different from what the original Greek does or might suggest, ancient or modern, as in the matter of σωφρονέω/σωφροσύνη. That is, they are intended to be assimilated into the English language either in their transliterated form (for instance sophronein) or in their Greek form (for instance σωφρονεῖν) and refer not to some supra-personal "idea" or ideation - ἰδέα/εἶδος - or abstraction but rather to individuals.

I attempted to explain the philosophical principles behind my methodology and weltanschauung in my book *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, and in my two monographs *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* [6] and *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*. [7] Which principles are (i) emphasising the individual, the personal, the unique and empathic nature of perceivation - of apprehending and understanding Being and beings, and our own physis - over and above abstractions and ideations and thus over and above denotata

- and (ii) that the classical principles or virtues of τὸ καλόν, ἀρετή, and τὸ ἀγαθὸν related to and were defined by the deeds, the lives, of individuals and not to something supra-personal such as some idea or ideation or dogma or faith or ideology, and were well-expressed in the term καλὸς κάγαθός, which implies those who conduct themselves in a certain manner and who thus manifest - because of their innate physis or through pathei-mathos or through a certain type of education or learning - a particular personal character. But as I noted in one of the essays included here: does my idiosyncratic use of Ancient Greek and Latin terms make my philosophy confusing, difficult to understand and difficult to appreciate? Perhaps.

However, in regard to translations such as tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum and the Gospel of John, when I have used an original phrase - for example "quidditas of semblance" in the Poemandres tractate, and, in the Gospel of John, translated οὐρανός as Empyrean rather than the conventional Heaven, to give just two examples from the many - I have explained my interpretation in the associated commentary.

For reasons which the essays included here may make clear, I have [in the *One Perceiviation* compilation] added a slightly revised version of my *Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos: Vocabulary, Definitions, and Explanations*, and also the Introduction to my translation of and commentary on chapters I-V of the Gospel of John. [8]

David Myatt
2020
Second Edition

Source: <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/rejecting-extremism/one-perceiviation/>

[1] *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*. 2017, 978-1976452369

[2] *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. 978-1484096642

[3] Presencing: from the classical Latin praesentia - meaning "having or implying actual presence", as manifesting (as being presenced) in a locality or an individual. Qv. my commentary on ἱερός Λόγος 2, et sequentia, of the Corpus Hermeticum.

[4] The scholastic term quiddity derives from the 11th/12th century post-classical Latin quidditas, and avoids using the term "essence" (οὐσία) which has post-classical and modern connotations. As I noted in my commentary on tractate XI:2 of the Corpus Hermeticum,

In respect of οὐσία, qv. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book 5, 1015a: ἐκ δὴ τῶν εἰρημένων ἢ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἢ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὕλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικῇ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως

τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐνυπάρχουσά πως ἢ δυνάμει ἢ
ἐντελεχείᾳ.

Given the foregoing, then principally - and to be exact - physis denotes the quidditas of beings having change inherent within them; for substantia has been denoted by physis because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changes predicated on it. For physis is inherent change either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.

See also my *Some Notes on Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015α*, at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/aristotle-metaphysics-1015α/>

[5] In respect of physis, refer to my essay *The Concept Of Physis*,

[6] *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*. 2017. 978-1979599023

[7] *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*. 2017. 978-1982010935

[8] The translation of and commentary is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/gospel-according-to-john/>

Appendix VI

Physis And Being

An Introduction To The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos

The philosophy of pathei-mathos is based on four axioms: (i) that it is empathy and pathei-mathos which can wordlessly reveal the ontological reality both of our own physis [1] and of how we, as sentient beings, relate to other living beings and to Being itself; (ii) that it is denotatum [2] - and thus the abstractions deriving therefrom [3] - which, in respect of human beings, can and often do obscure our physis and our relation to other living beings and to Being; (iii) that denotatum and abstractions imply a dialectic of contradictory opposites and thus for we human beings a separation-of-otherness; and (iv) that this dialectic of opposites is, has been, and can be a cause of suffering for both ourselves, as sentient beings, and - as a causal human presenced effect - for the other life with which we share the planet named in English as Earth.

For, as mentioned in a previous essay,

"empathy and pathei-mathos incline us to suggest that ipseity is an

illusion of perspective: that there is, fundamentally, no division between 'us' - as some individual sentient, mortal being - and what has hitherto been understood and named as the Unity, The One, God, The Eternal. That 'we' are not 'observers' but rather Being existing as Being exists and is presented in the Cosmos. That thus all our striving, individually and collectively when based on some ideal or on some form - some abstraction and what is derived therefrom, such as ideology and dogma - always is or becomes sad/tragic, and which recurrence of sadness/tragedy, generation following generation, is perhaps even inevitable unless and until we live according to the wordless knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal." [4]

In essence, empathy and pathei-mathos lead us away from the abstractions we have constructed and manufactured and which abstractions we often tend to impose, or project, upon other human beings, upon ourselves, often in the belief that such abstractions can aid our understanding of others and of ourselves, with a feature of all abstractions being inclusion and exclusion; that is, certain individuals are considered as belonging to or as defined by a particular category while others are not.

Over millennia we have manufactured certain abstractions and their assumed opposites and classified many of them according to particular moral standards so that a particular abstraction is considered good and/or beneficial and/or as necessary and/or as healthy, while its assumed dialectical opposite is considered bad (or evil), or unnecessary, or unhealthy, and/or as unwarranted.

Thus in ancient Greece and Rome slavery was accepted by the majority, and considered by the ruling elite as natural and necessary, with human beings assigned to or included in the category 'slave' a commodity who could be traded with slaves regarded as necessary to the functioning of society. Over centuries, with the evolution of religions such as Christianity and with the development in Western societies of humanist weltanschauungen, the moral values of this particular abstraction, this particular category to which certain human beings assigned, changed such that for perhaps a majority slavery came to be regarded as morally repugnant. Similarly in respect of the abstraction designated in modern times by such terms as "the rôle of women in society" which rôle for millennia in the West was defined according to various masculous criteria - deriving from a ruling and an accepted patriarchy - but which rôle in the past century in Western societies has gradually been redefined.

Yet irrespective of such developments, such changes associated with certain abstractions, the abstractions themselves and the dialectic of moral opposites associated with them remain because, for perhaps a majority, abstractions and ipseity, as a criteria of judgment and/or as a human instinct, remain; as evident in the continuing violence against, the killing of, and the manipulation, of women by men, and in what has become described by terms such as "modern slavery" and "human trafficking".

In addition, we human beings have continued to manufacture abstractions and continue to assign individuals to them, a useful example being the abstraction denoted by the terms The State and The Nation-State [5] and which abstraction, with its government, its supra-personal authority, its laws, its economy, and its inclusion/exclusion (citizenship or lack of it) has come to dominate and influence the life of the majority of people in the West.

Ontologically, abstractions - ancient and modern - usurp our connexion to Being and to other living beings so that instead of using wordless empathy and *pathei-mathos* as a guide to Reality [6] we tend to define ourselves or are defined by others according to an abstraction or according to various abstractions. In the matter of the abstraction that is The State there is a tendency to define or to try to understand our relation to Reality by for example whether we belong, are a citizen of a particular State; by whether or not we have an acceptable standard of living because of the opportunities and employment and/or the assistance afforded by the economy and the policies of the State; by whether or not we agree or disagree with the policies of the government in power, and often by whether or not we have transgressed some State-made law or laws. Similarly, in the matter of belief in a revealed religion such as Christianity or Islam we tend to define or understand our relation to Reality by means of such an abstraction: that is, according to the revelation (or a particular interpretation of it) and its eschatology, and thus by how the promise of Heaven/Jannah may be personally obtained.

Empathy and *pathei-mathos*, however, wordlessly - sans denotatum, sans abstractions, sans a dialectic of contradictory opposites - uncover *physis*: our *physis*, that of other mortals, that of other living beings, and that of Being/Reality itself. Which *physis*, howsoever presented - in ourselves, in other living beings, in Being - is fluxive, a balance between the being that it now is, that it was, and that it has the inherent (the *acausal*) quality to be. [7]

This uncovering, such a revealing, is of a knowing beyond ipseity and thus beyond the separation-of-otherness which denotatum, abstractions, and a dialectic of opposites manufacture and presence. A knowing of ourselves as an affective connexion [8] to other living beings and to Being itself, with Being revealed as fluxive (as a *meson* - μέσον [9] - with the potentiality to change, to develope) and thus which (i) is not - as in the theology of revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam - a God who is Eternal, Unchanging, Omnipotent [10], and (ii) is affected or can be affected (in terms of *physis*) by what we do or do not do.

This awareness, this knowing, of such an affective connexion - our past, our current, our potentiality, to adversely affect, to have adversely affected, to cause, to having caused, suffering or harm to other living beings - also inclines us or can incline us toward benignity and humility, and thus incline us to live in a non-suffering causing way, appreciate of our thousands of years old culture of *pathei-mathos*. [11]

In terms of understanding Being and the divine, it inclines us or can incline us, as sentient beings, to apprehend Being as not only presenced in us but as capable of changing - unfolding, evolving - in a manner dependant on our physis and on how our physis is presenced by us, and by others, in the future. Which seems to imply a new ontology and one distinct from past and current theologies with their anthropomorphic θεός (god) and θεοὶ (gods).

An ontology of physis: of mortals, of livings beings, and of Being, as fluxive mesons. Of we mortals as a mortal microcosm of Being - the cosmic order, the κόσμος - itself [12] with the balance, the meson, that empathy and pathei-mathos incline us toward living presenced in the ancient Greek phrase καλὸς κάγαθός,

"which means those who conduct themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner and who thus manifest - because of their innate physis or through pathei-mathos or through a certain type of education or learning - nobility of character." [13]

Which personal conduct, in the modern world, might suggest a Ciceronian-inspired but new type of *civitas*, and one

"not based on some abstractive law but on a spiritual and interior (and thus not political) understanding and appreciation of our own Ancestral Culture and that of others; on our 'civic' duty to personally presence καλὸς κάγαθός and thus to act and to live in a noble way. For the virtues of personal honour and manners, with their responsibilities, presence the fairness, the avoidance of hubris, the natural harmonious balance, the gender equality, the awareness and appreciation of the divine, that is the numinous." [14]

With καλὸς κάγαθός, such personal conduct, and such a new *civitas*, summarising how the philosophy of pathei-mathos might, in one way, be presenced in a practical manner in the world.

David Myatt
2019

This essay is a revised and edited version of a reply sent to an academic who enquired about the philosophy of pathei-mathos

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Notes

[1] I use the term physis - φύσις - ontologically, in the Aristotelian sense, to refer to the 'natural' and the fluxive being (nature) of a being, which nature is often manifest, in we mortals, in our character (persona) and in our deeds. Qv. my essay *Towards Understanding Physis* (2015) and my translation of and commentary on the Poemandres tractate in *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates* (2017).

[2] As noted elsewhere, I use the term denotatum - from the Latin denotare - not only as meaning "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer to that which is so named or so denoted," but also as an Anglicized term implying, depending on context, singular or plural instances. As an Anglicized term there is generally no need to use the inflected plural *denotata*.

[3] In the context of the philosophy of pathei-mathos the term abstraction signifies a particular named and defined category or form (ἰδέα, εἶδος) and which category or form is a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing.

In respect of denotatum, in Kratylus 389d Plato has Socrates talk about 'true, ideal' naming (denotatum) - βλέποντα πρὸς αὐτὸ ἐκεῖνο ὃ ἔστιν ὄνομα, qv. my essay *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*, 2015.

[4] *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*.

[5] Contrary to modern convention I tend to write The State instead of "the state" because I consider The State/The Nation-State a particular abstraction; as an existent, an entity, which has been manufactured, by human beings, and which entity, like many such manufactured 'things', has been, in its design and function, changed and which can still be changed, and which has associated with it a presumption of a supra-personal (and often moral) authority.

In addition, written The State (or the State) it suggests some-thing which endures or which may endure beyond the limited lifespan of a mortal human being.

[6] 'Reality' in the philosophical sense of what (in terms of physis) is distinguished or distinguishable from what is apparent or external. In terms of ancient Hellenic and Western Renaissance mysticism the distinction is between the esoteric and the exoteric; between the physis of a being and some outer form (or appearance) including the outer form that is a useful tool or implement which can be used to craft or to manufacture some-thing such as other categories/abstractions. With the important ontological proviso that what is esoteric is not the 'essence' of something - as for example Plato's ἰδέα/εἶδος - but instead the physis of the being itself as explicated for instance by Aristotle in *Metaphysics*, Book 5, 1015α,

ἐκ δὴ τῶν εἰρημένων ἡ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἡ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὕλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικῇ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐνυπάρχουσά πως ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ

Given the foregoing, then principally - and to be exact - physis denotes the quidditas of beings having changement inherent within them; for substantia has been denoted by physis because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changements predicated on it. For physis is inherent changement either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.

That is, as I noted in my essay *Towards Understanding Physis*, it is a meson (μέσον) balanced between the being that-it-was and the being it has the potentiality to unfold to become.

In respect of "what is real" - τῶν ὄντων - cf. the Poemandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum and especially section 3,

φημι ἐγώ, Μαθεῖν θέλω τὰ ὄντα καὶ νοῆσαι τὴν τούτων φύσιν καὶ γινῶναι τὸν θεόν

I answered that I seek to learn what is real, to apprehend the physis of beings, and to have knowledge of theos [qv. *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, 2017]

[7] Qv. *Towards Understanding Physis*, 2015.

[8] I use term *affective* here, and in other writings, to mean "having the quality of affecting; tending to affect or influence."

[9] Qv. footnote [6]. In terms of ontology a meson is the balance, the median, existing between the being which-was and the being which-can-be.

[10] This understanding of Being as fluxive - as a changement - was prefigured in the mythos of Ancient Greece with the supreme deity - the chief of the gods - capable of being overthrown and replaced, as Zeus overthrew Kronos and as Kronos himself overthrew his own father.

[11] As explained in my 2014 essay *Education And The Culture of Pathei-Mathos*, the term describes "the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals, world-wide, over thousands of years, as (i) described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts; as (ii) have inspired particular works of literature or poetry or drama; as (iii) expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and as (iv) manifest in more recent times by 'art-forms' such as films and documentaries."

This culture remembers the suffering and the beauty and the killing and the hubris and the love and the compassion that we mortals have presenced and caused over millennia, and which culture

"thus includes not only traditional accounts of, or accounts inspired by, personal pathei-mathos, old and modern - such as the *With The Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa* by Eugene Sledge, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, and the

poetry of people as diverse as Sappho and Sylvia Plath - but also works or art-forms inspired by such *pathei-mathos*, whether personal or otherwise, and whether factually presented or fictionalized. Hence films such as *Monsieur Lazhar* and *Etz Limon* may poignantly express something about our φύσις as human beings and thus form part of the culture of *pathei-mathos*."

[12] κόσμον δὲ θείου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον, "a cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings." Tractate IV:2, *Corpus Hermeticum*.

Cf. Marsilii Ficini, *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda*, XXVI, published in 1489 CE,

Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona.

How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presented therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned.

Which is a philosophical restatement of the phrase "quod est inferius est sicut quod est superius" (what is above is as what is below) from the Latin version, published in 1541 CE, of the medieval Hermetic text known as *Tabula Smaragdina*.

[13] The quotation is from my *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*, 2017.

[14] The quotation is from my *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua: Christianity, The Johannine Weltanschauung, And Presencing The Numinous*, 2017.

Appendix V

Appreciating Classical Literature

Having read and once been in possession of a few of the printed published volumes of *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* [1] I seem to at last understand how that continuing scholarly endeavour, begun decades before the First World War, is emblematic of the importance of academic scholarship, and emblematic of the temporal nature of wars and especially of such national and regional conflicts as we have endured, and continue to be involved in, during the past one hundred and fifty years.

Wars, and conflicts, with their human suffering and their often civilian deaths which an appreciation of classical (Ancient Greek and Latin) literature can place into a necessary supra-personal and supra-national perspective.

For the *pathei-mathos* which such literature - and often the associated

mythoi – can impart is of our hubris and our need for the wisdom enshrined in the phrase καλὸς κἀγαθός. That is, in the melding of τὸ καλόν (the beautiful) and τὸ ἀγαθόν (the honourable) as in tractate XI:3 of the Corpus Hermeticum:

Ἡ δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ σοφία τί ἔστι;
Τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ καλὸν καὶ εὐδαιμονία καὶ ἡ πᾶσα ἀρετὴ καὶ ὁ αἰών.

But the Sophia of the theos is what?
The noble, the beautiful, good fortune, arête, and Aion. [2]

Where, however, τὸ καλόν refers, in terms of individuals, to not only physical beauty – the beautiful – but also to a particular demeanour indicative of a well-balanced, noble, personal character, as for example mentioned by Xenophon in *Hellenica*, Book V, 3.9,

πολλοὶ δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ τῶν περιοίκων ἐθελονταὶ καλοὶ κἀγαθοὶ
ἠκολούθουν, καὶ ξένοι τῶν τροφίμων καλουμένων, καὶ νόθοι τῶν
Σπαρτιατῶν, μάλα εὖειδεῖς τε καὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ πόλει καλῶν οὐκ
ἄπειροι

A personal character which Marcus Tullius Cicero also explained, in his *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*,

Honestum igitur id intellegimus, quod tale est, ut detracta omni utilitate sine ullis praemiis fructibusve per se ipsum possit iure laudari. quod quale sit, non tam definitione, qua sum usus, intellegi potest, quamquam aliquantum potest, quam communi omnium iudicio et optimi cuiusque studiis atque factis, qui permulta ob eam unam causam faciunt, quia decet, quia rectum, quia honestum est, etsi nullum consecuturum emolumentum vident. (II, 45f)

I am inclined to believe that it is unfortunate that the societies of the modern West no longer consider “a classical education” – the learning of Ancient Greek and Latin, and a study of Ancient Greek and Latin texts such as those of Cicero, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Aristotle – a necessity, as a way to wisdom, as a means to understanding our human physis.

That some individuals, such as the scholars engaged in endeavouring to complete *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, do still appreciate Ancient Greek and Latin texts provides this old man, in the twilight of his life, some comfort, some hope for our human future.

ἀθάνατοι θνητοί, θνητοὶ ἀθάνατοι, ζῶντες τὸν ἐκείνων θάνατον,
τὸν δὲ ἐκείνων βίον τεθνεῶτες

The deathless are deathful, the deathful deathless, with one living the other's dying with the other dying in that other's life. [3]

David Myatt
December 2019

[1] <https://www.thesaurus.badw.de/en/tll-digital/tll-open-access.html>

[2] As I have mentioned in several essays, and in my *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates: Translation and Commentary*, the theos – ὁ θεὸς – is the chief classical deity (such as Zeus in Ancient Greek mythoi) and should not be understood as equivalent to the monotheistic creator God of Christianity and of the ancient Hebrews. For ὁ θεὸς is not omnipotent, and can be overthrown, as Zeus overthrew Kronos and as Kronos himself overthrew his own father.

[3] Heraclitus, Fragment 62, Diels-Krantz.

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All translations by DWM

Appendix VII

The Concept of Physis

Towards Understanding Physis

Since the concept of physis - φύσις - is central to my philosophy of patheimathos, it seems apposite to offer a more detailed explanation of the concept, and my usage of it, than I have hitherto given, deriving as the term does from Ancient Greece and used as it is by Heraclitus, Aristotle, and others, and occurring as it does in texts such as the Poemandres and ἱερός Λόγος tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum.

As I mentioned in my translation of Aristotle, Metaphysics 1015α [1] - and elsewhere - physis is usually translated as either 'Nature' (as if 'the natural world', and the physical cosmos beyond, are meant) or as the character (the nature) of a person. However, while the context - of the original Greek text - may suggest (as often, for example, in Homer and Herodotus) such a meaning as such English words impute, physis philosophically (as, for example, in Heraclitus and Aristotle and the Corpus Hermeticum) has specific ontological meanings. Meanings which are lost, or glossed over, when physis is simply translated either as 'Nature' or - in terms of mortals - as (personal) character.

Ontologically, as Aristotle makes clear [2], physis denotes the being of those beings who or which have the potentiality (the being) to change, be changed, or to develop. That is, to become, or to move or be moved; as for example in the motion (of 'things') and the 'natural unfolding' or growth, sans an external cause, that living beings demonstrate.

However, and crucially, physis is not - for human beings - some abstract 'essence' (qv. Plato's ἰδέα/εἶδος) but rather a balance between the being that it is, it was, and potentially might yet be. That is, in Aristotelian terms, it is a meson - μέσον - of being and 'not being'; and 'not being' in the sense of not yet having become what it could be, and not now being what it used to be. Hence why, for Aristotle, a manifestation of physis - in terms of the being of mortals - such as arête (ἀρετή) is a meson, a balance of things, and not, as it is for Plato, some fixed 'form' - some idea, ideal - which as Plato wrote "always exists, and has no genesis. It does not die, does not grow, does not decay." [3]

According to my understanding of Heraclitus, physis also suggests - as in Fragment 1 - the 'natural' being of a being which we mortals have a tendency to cover-up or conceal [4].

Furthermore, physis is one of the main themes in the Pōemandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, for the author seeks "to apprehend the physis of beings" [5] with physis often mystically personified:

"This is a mysterium esoteric even to this day. For Physis, having intimately joined with the human, produced a most wondrous wonder possessed of the physis of the harmonious seven I mentioned before, of Fire and pneuma. Physis did not tarry, giving birth to seven male-and-female humans with the physis of those viziers, and ætherean...

[For] those seven came into being in this way. Earth was muliebral, Water was lustful, and Fire maturing. From Æther, the pneuma, and with Physis bringing forth human-shaped bodies. Of Life and phaos, the human came to be of psyche and perceivation; from Life - psyche; from phaos - perceivation; and with everything in the observable cosmic order cyclic until its completion...

When the cycle was fulfilled, the connexions between all things were, by the deliberations of theos, unfastened. Living beings - all male-and-female then - were, including humans, rent asunder thus bringing into being portions that were masculous with the others muliebral." [6]

Physis is also personified in the Ἱερός Λόγος tractate:

"The divine is all of that mision: renewance of the cosmic order through Physis For Physis is presented in the divine." [7]

The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos

As mentioned elsewhere, what I have termed the philosophy of πάθει μάθος (pathei-mathos) is just my weltanschauung, developed between 2011 and 2013 after I had, upon reflexion, rejected much of and revised what then remained of my earlier (2006-2011) 'numinous way' [8].

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, physis is used contextually to refer to:

- (i) the ontology of beings, an ontology - a reality, a 'true nature' - that is often obscured by denotatum [9] and by abstractions [10], both of which conceal physis;
- (ii) the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being, which is of us - we mortals - as a nexion, an affective effluvium (or emanation) of Life (ψυχή) and thus of why 'the separation-of-otherness' [11] is a concealment of that relationship;
- (iii) the character, or persona, of human beings, and which character - sans denotatum - can be discovered (revealed, known) by the faculty of empathy;
- (iv) the unity - the being - beyond the division of our physis, as individual mortals, into masculous and muliebral;
- (v) that manifestation denoted by the concept Time, with Time considered to be an expression/manifestation of the physis of beings [12].

My concept of physis is therefore primarily ontological and rooted - as is my philosophy of pathei-mathos - in the pagan culture of classical, and Hellenic, Greece.

David Myatt
March 2015

Notes

[1] I have appended to this essay my translation of, and notes on, the relevant part of 1015α.

[2] See my *Some Notes on Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015α*, included in <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2021/04/pre-socratic-and-aristotle.pdf>, and also my *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*.

[3] πρῶτον μὲν αἰὲν ὄν καὶ οὔτε γιγνόμενον οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον οὔτε αὐξανόμενον οὔτε φθίνον (Symposium 210e - 211a).

[4] See *Some Notes on Heraclitus Fragment 1*, in <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2021/04/pre-socratic-and-aristotle.pdf>

[5] *Poemandres 3*; qv. my *Mercvrii Trismegisti Pymander de potestate et sapientia dei: A Translation and Commentary*, 2013.

[6] *Poemandres 16-18*.

[7] *Ἱερός Λόγος 3*; qv. my *Ἱερός Λόγος: An Esoteric Mythos. A Translation Of And A Commentary On The Third Tractate Of The Corpus Hermeticum*,

included in *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, 2017, 978-1976452369

[8] Refer to my *Concerning The Development Of The Numinous Way*, 2012.

[9] In my philosophy of pathei-mathos, I use the term denotatum - from the Latin, denotare - in accord with its general meaning which is "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted."

[10] An abstraction is a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from something, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed.

Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future. Abstractions are often assumed to provide some 'knowledge' or some 'understanding' of some-thing assigned to or described by a particular abstraction.

[11] Refer, for example, to my *The Error of The-Separation-of-Otherness in The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, fifth edition, 2018.

[12] *Time And The Separation Of Otherness - Part One*. 2012.

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Introduction

This compendium includes a selection of the post-2010 writings of David Myatt, including his latest one dated September 2023, regarding religion in general and Christianity in particular, as well as several personal writings which are spiritual in nature. For completeness we have included Myatt's translation of and extensive commentary on chapters one to five of the Gospel of John; and his translation of and commentary on eight of the tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum since they include extensive reference to Christianity.

The writings are followed by reviews by other hands which provide an overview of those writings by Myatt and how and perhaps why they have been assiduously neglected both by academics who have written about Myatt and especially by Myatt's former and current political enemies.

The compendium should therefore enable readers to make their own assessment of Myatt, as seems only fair and fitting. One caveat is that since both the reviews and Myatt's writings include multiple references to texts on his personal wordpress weblog, which being 'free' is unfortunately replete with advertisements, we advise using the Firefox browser with extensions such as 'noscript' and 'unblock origin' and with images disabled by changing, in Firefox, the preference 'permissions.default.image' in 'about:config' to 2 instead of 1.

A quotation from one of Myatt's writings included in the compendium perhaps illustrates his sentiments in respect of Christianity:

"Catholicism did manifest, and to an extent still does manifest, aspects of the numinous and therefore this particular guide to human living is one which I understand and appreciate as one style of earthly-harmony [...]

Catholicism (before the reforms imposed by the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican) represented, in my view, the original Way known as Christianity, and was – at least before those reforms – quite distinct from those schisms which are now known as Protestantism and Orthodox Christianity. Indeed, distinct enough – until those reforms – to be considered a different Way of Life, a Way evident, for example, in Catholic rites (such as the Tridentine Mass), in monasticism, in Papal authority, in the use of Latin, and in the reverence accorded The Blessed Virgin Mary.

Furthermore, it is my view that the schism now termed Protestantism was a classic example of the religious attitude predominating over numinosity – and thus that it is and was redolent of attempts to reduce The Numen to linear causal abstractions. Thus, Mysteriums such as the Tridentine Mass became replaced with recitation of Scripture in the vernacular and with attempts to rationally explain – according to some abstract causal theory – the mystery of the consecration." *Soli Deo Gloria*, 2011

In regard to God, Myatt has written several times about the equivalence of the fundamental message of the major religions:

"Pathei-mathos – the personal learning from grief, suffering, pain, adversity, and experience – directly connects us to and thus enables us to personally experience and appreciate the numinous, sans words, ideations, ideology, theology, and dogma. An experience and an appreciation outwardly and inwardly manifest in a personal humility; in the knowledge of ourselves as but one fallible, mortal, fragile, human emanation of and connexion to Being; and in an empathic understanding of how all religions and spiritual ways, in their genesis and in their original emanations, express – or try to express – the same wisdom: manifest in an appreciation of the numinous, and in our human necessity for the natural balance that is humility and a very personal honour. And, because of this spiritual and religious equivalence, it does not matter if the individual of pathei-mathos, having so touched and felt the numinous, develops their own weltanschauung or none, or leaves or finds an existing spiritual or religious one, although it is and often has been such pathei-mathos which reveals to individuals, or which enables them to rediscover, the essence of a particular religion or a particular spiritual way: that simple and similar numinous essence which schisms, harsh interpretations, dogma, and ideology, have so often and for so long obscured." *Exegesis and Translation: Some Personal Reflexions*, 2013

"[The] beautiful traditional music many employing Maqam modes [...] brought memories of a different plane of existence, far removed from the turmoil, the Machiavellian machinations, the egoism, the materialistic, and often godless, modern Western world. I was back in the Sahara Desert where as I once said I wordlessly had intimations of Being, of The Acausal, of The-Unity, of The One-The Only (τὸ ἓν), of The Monas (μονάς) which 'acausal' Being Muslims called Allah and Christians called God. I was back in Arabic – Muslim – lands where I had travelled and stayed and learnt. I was back as a novice in a Catholic monastery, wandering outside the Abbey in the contemplative period between chanting Matins and Lauds." *A Rare Moment*, 2023

Exegesis And Pathei-Mathos

In my recent (2023) essay *A Sacramental Link?* I mentioned that my interpretation of the Gospel of John inclined me suggest that Johannine Christianity was "the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from past moralistic interpretations." [1]

My interpenetration of that text is however just one of thousands over centuries with many of those other interpretations, of that and the other Gospels and the Scriptures in general, causing schisms, conflicts, and accusations of heresy as in the case of the Alexandrian priest Arius (born c.250, died 336 AD) who voiced an interpretation of the difference between the denotatum θεός and the denotatum ὁ θεός in, for instance the Gospel of John, leading to that interpretation being denounced as heretical.

Which returns us to the problems of exegesis and denotata, and the axioms of my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos which are:

- (i) that it is empathy and pathei-mathos which can wordlessly reveal the ontological reality both of our own physis and of how we, as sentient beings, relate to other living beings and to Being itself;
- (ii) that it is denotata - and thus the abstractions deriving therefrom - which, in respect of human beings, can and often do obscure our physis and our relation to other living beings and to Being;
- (iii) that denotata and abstractions imply a dialectic of contradictory opposites and thus for we human beings a separation-of-otherness; and
- (iv) that this dialectic of opposites is, has been, and can be a cause of suffering for both ourselves, as sentient beings, and - as a causal human presenced effect - for the other life with which we share our planet.

What is important about empathy and pathei-mathos is that they are directly personal perceiverations and experiences, and therefore have what I termed a 'personal horizon' meaning that they

"cannot be extrapolated from such a personal knowing into some-thing supra-personal be this some-thing denotata, including an ἰδέα/εἶδος, or an axiom (ἀρχή) or a source (αἴτιος) for some 'revelation' or ideology or similar manifestations constructed by and dependent on appellation." [2]

The knowing so revealed is only and always our personal fallible answer or answers, and which knowing is invariably a wordless empathic knowing that cannot be adequately expressed by words and terms (by denotata) without in some manner distorting it because words and terms depend on exegesis, which exegesis can and often does vary from century to century.

In practical terms this knowing implies a certain humility since empathy and pathei-mathos inform us that we are fallible beings, arising as this personal knowledge does from the intimations of the numinous that empathy and pathei-mathos almost invariably provide: of our connexion to other beings, human and otherwise; of our minute place in the Cosmos as one mortal, short-lived, being on one planet orbiting one star in one Galaxy in a Cosmos of billions of Galaxies; and of the suffering of so many human beings, century after century, often caused by wars and conflicts often based on some certitude of belief in some cause, or on some passion, or on some interpretation of some religion, or some ideology or notion or 'destiny' with such wars and conflicts generationally replaced by others based on other certitudes of belief or on the same old passions.

A forgetting of this humility, will-fully or otherwise, has however frequently occurred and still occurs with the individual seeking to make their pathei-mathos the basis for some -ism or -ology or more often some interpretation of some existing -ism or -ology. However, a remembering of such humility can often lead to the life of the reclusive mystic or to a life of compassionately seeking to alleviate in some non-confrontational and practical way at least some of the suffering of other life, human and otherwise.

As I noted in *Soli Deo Gloria*,

"all the diverse manifestations of the Numen, all the diverse answers, of the various numinous Ways and religions, have or may have their place, and all perhaps may serve the same ultimate purpose - that of bringing us closer to the ineffable beauty, the ineffable goodness, of life; that of transforming us, reminding us; that of giving us as individuals the chance to cease to cause suffering, to presence the good, to be part of the Numen itself. For what distinguishes a valuable, a good, a numinous Way or religion, is firstly this commitment, however expressed, to the cessation of suffering through means which do not cause more suffering; secondly, having some practical means whereby individuals can transform themselves for the better, and thirdly, possessing some way of presenting, manifesting, presencing what is sacred, what is numinous, thus reconnecting the individual to the source of their being, to their humanity.

In my fallible view, any Way or religion which manifests, which expresses, which guides individuals toward, the numinous humility we human beings need is good, and should not be stridently condemned. For such personal humility - that which prevents us from committing hubris, whatever the raison d'être, the theology, the philosophy - is a presencing of the numinous. Indeed, one might write and say that it is a personal humility - whatever the source - that expresses our true developed (that is, rational and empathic) human nature and which nature such Ways or religions or mythological allegories remind us of. Hence the formulae, the expression, *Soli Deo Gloria* being one Western cultural manifestation of a necessary truth, manifesting as it does one particular numinous allegory among many such historical and cultural and mythological

allegories. Just as, for example, the sight of King Louis IX walking barefoot to Sainte Chapelle was a symbol of the humility which the Christian faith, correctly understood, sought to cultivate in individuals. " [3]

A Personal View

While I appreciate how various Ways of living and codified religions can presence and often have presented the numinous and thus have been and are for many a conduit toward a personal humility and compassion, my personal perceivration has been for over a decade and remains my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos, which is just some recollections of my experiences and contemplations regarding the loss of loved ones, of working and living on farms in England, and of solitary walks along a sea-shore and in the hills and deciduous woods of rural English Shires.

Given the 'personal horizon' of these recollections and contemplations they cannot not, without removing from them their essence of a personal wordless experiencing of the numinous, form the basis for anything supra-personal be it a philosophy or a Way to guide others, just as the recollections and contemplations of others ancient and modern, and the authors themselves, should not be or become or be seen as a guide or even as a meritorious example.

As it says in Ayat 63 of Surah 25 of the Quran:

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ
الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا

"The 'Ibaad of Ar-Rahmaan are those who walk on earth in humility and, when the arrogant speak to them, they reply Salaam." [4]

As the poetess Sappho wrote:

ἔγω δὲ φίλημ' ἄβροσύναν [...] τοῦτο καί μοι
τὸ λάμπρον ἔρωσ ἀελίῳ καὶ τὸ κάλον λέλογχε [5]

I love delicate softness:
For me, love has brought the brightness
And the beauty of the Sun

As it says in the Beatitudes:

Μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.
μακάριοι οἱ πενθοῦντες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ παρακληθήσονται.
μακάριοι οἱ πραεῖς, ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσιν τὴν γῆν.
μακάριοι οἱ πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες τὴν δικαιοσύνην, ὅτι αὐτοὶ χορτασθήσονται.
μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται.
μακάριοι οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν θεὸν ὄψονται.
μακάριοι οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί, ὅτι αὐτοὶ υἱοὶ θεοῦ κληθήσονται.
μακάριοι οἱ δεδιωγμένοι ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

Fortunate, those humble with spiritus, for theirs is the Kingdom of Empyrean.
Fortunate, those who grieve, for they shall have solace.
Fortunate, the gentle, for they shall acquire the Earth.
Fortunate, those who hunger and thirst for fairness, for they shall be replete.
Fortunate, the compassionate, for they shall receive compassion.
Fortunate, the refined of heart, for they shall perceive Theos.
Fortunate, the peaceable, for they shall be called children of Theos.
Fortunate, those harassed due to their fairness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Empyrean. [6]

Which interpretations of mine illustrate the problems of exegesis, and why my preference, now and for over a decade, is and has been for the wordless perceivations of empathy and of a personal pathei-mathos.

David Myatt
October 24th, 2023

[1] The essay is included in www.davidmyatt.info/dwm-compilation-religion.pdf

[2] *Numinosity, Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition*, 2022. www.davidmyatt.info/dwm-denotata-empathy-v1b.pdf

[3] *Soli Deo Gloria*, 2011. Included in www.davidmyatt.info/dwm-compilation-religion.pdf

[4] Ar-Rahmaan is one of the names of Allah, signifying The Most Merciful. The 'Ibaad of Ar-Rahmaan are the Believers who follow the Word of Allah in the Quran and as manifest in the example of the Prophet Muhammad.

[5] P. Oxyrhynchus. XV (1922) nr. 1787 fr. 1 et 2

[6] The Gospel According To Matthew 5: 3-10. My translation and commentary of The Beatitudes is included in www.davidmyatt.info/dwm-compilation-religion.pdf

Since I have used unusual words - for example, the spiritus instead of the conventional 'the spirit', and Empyrean instead of 'heaven' - I append here extracts from my commentary.

μακάριος. A difficult word to translate since "blessed" has acquired particular (sometimes moralistic) meanings as a result of nearly two thousand years of exegesis, while "happy" is rather prosaic. The context - as in ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν - suggests "fortunate" [...]

πτωχός. Usually translated as "poor" which however has too many exegetical and modern connotations, and does not express the metaphorical sense here which implies being "humble" in respect of τὸ πνεῦμα.

τῷ πνεύματι [...] τῶν οὐρανῶν. In respect of τὸ πνεῦμα as the spiritus (rather than as the Spirit) and οὐρανός as Empyrean (rather than Heaven), qv. my commentary on John 1:32 from which this an extract:

οὐρανός here is always translated as 'heaven' although the term 'heaven' - used in the context of the Gospels - now has rather different connotations than the Greek οὐρανός, with the word 'heaven' now often implying something explained by almost two thousand years of exegesis and as depicted, for example, in medieval and Renaissance Christian art. However, those hearing or reading this particular Greek gospel for the first time in the formative years of Christianity would most probably have assumed the usual Greek usage of "the heavens" in the sense of the "the star-filled firmament above" or in the sense of "the sky" or as the abode of theos and/or of the gods, ἐν οὐρανῷ θεοί [...]

It therefore seems apposite to suggest a more neutral word than 'heaven' as a translation of οὐρανός and one which might not only be understood in various 'classical' ways by an audience of Greek speakers (such as the ways described above) but also be open to a new, and Christian, interpretation consistent with the milieu that existed when the Gospel of John was written and first heard. That is, before the exegesis of later centuries and long before post-Roman Christian iconography. Hence my suggestion of the post-classical Latin term Empyrean, which can bear the interpretation of the abode of theos and/or of the gods, of "the sky", of the "the star-filled firmament above"; and a Christian one suggested by Genesis 2.8 - παράδεισον ἐν Ἐδεμ (the Paradise of Eden) - and also by shamayim.

A Sacramental Link?



Would being connected again to the 'source of grace' through the Catholic sacrament of confession and Holy Communion provide expiation for past transgressions and be cathartic? Possibly, given that certain passages from the gospel of John have somewhat resonated with me since I began the task, in 2017, of translating that Gospel.

Among the passages were, in my translation, "aware as he [Jesus] was of the person within" (2:25) and "receive the Halig Spiritus [Holy Spirit]. If you release anyone from their errors, they are released; if you hold onto them, they are held onto," 20:22-23. [1] [2] With, according to my fallible understanding, the second quotation the genesis of one of the founding principles of the Roman Catholic Church: of an ordained Priest having the religious authority to give absolution for the errors [1] a person has committed, and the authority to specify what penance is required for expiation. There is thus a sacramental, a living, link to the message of Jesus.

Which reminds me of what you mentioned in previous correspondence about the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church toward a having a partner of the same gender. In my experience, the attitude at the Parish and monastic level is often more understanding and compassionate than some past or ancient announcement or some work emanating from the Vatican perhaps suggested and suggests.

Having endeavoured to translate the gospel of John what I found was, to quote what I wrote in the *Introduction* to my translation of chapters 1-5 of the Gospel of John, that

"it imparts something important regarding the teachings, and the life, of Jesus of Nazareth: something quite human, something rather different from a stern preacher preaching about 'sin'; something which seems to express what the Beatitudes express, and something which individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox and William Penn many centuries later tried to say and write about Christianity and about the teachings and the life of Jesus of Nazareth."

Which is that it is the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from past moralistic interpretations based on inflexible notions of 'sin' and hence on what is considered 'good' and what is considered 'evil'.

It seems that such an appreciation - perhaps more correctly, re-appreciation - of this is slowly permeating, at the Parish level and around most of the world, the Roman Catholic Church.

As for me, and in respect of Catholic sacraments, perhaps I am weakening as my last mortal days seem to near, just as the libertine and poet Earl Rochester confessed on his death-bed, and just as the character Lord Marchmain, portrayed by Laurence Olivier, symbolically did in his last moments in that wonderful 1981 adaptation of *Brideshead Revisited*.

David Myatt
September 2023

A slightly revised extract from a letter to a personal correspondent

[1] I translated ἁμαρτία not by the conventional *sin* but rather as 'error' or 'mistake' for reasons I attempted to explain in my commentary and in various essays such as *Exegesis and Translation*. One of the reasons relates to how Julian of Norwich perceived the teaching of Jesus; another to the c. 880 AD translation of the c. 525 AD text *Consolatio Philosophiae*; another to something Thomas Aquinas wrote.

As explained in my *Exegesis and Translation*,

One of the prevalent English words used in translations of the New Testament, and one of the words now commonly associated with revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam, is sin. A word which now imputes and for centuries has imputed a particular and at times somewhat strident if not harsh moral

attitude, with sinners starkly contrasted with the righteous, the saved, and with sin, what is evil, what is perverse, to be shunned and shudderingly avoided.

One of the oldest usages of the word sin - so far discovered - is in the c. 880 CE translation of the c. 525 CE text *Consolatio Philosophiae*, a translation attributed to King Ælfred. Here, the Old English spelling of syn is used:

ƿæt is swiðe dyslic & swiðe micel syn ƿæt mon ƿæs wenan scyle be Gode

The context of the original Latin of Boethius [i] is *cogitare*, in relation to a dialogue about goodness and God, so that the sense of the Latin is that it is incorrect - an error, wrong - to postulate/claim/believe certain things about God. There is thus here, in Boethius, as in early English texts such as *Beowulf*, [ii] the sense of doing what was wrong, of committing an error, of making a mistake, of being at fault; at most of overstepping the bounds, of transgressing limits imposed by others, and thus being 'guilty' of such an infraction, a sense which the suggested etymology of the word syn implies: from the Latin sons, sontis.

Thus, this early usage of the English word syn seems to impart a sense somewhat different from what we now associate with the word sin, which is why in my translation of John, 8.7 [iii] I eschewed that much overused and pejorative word in order to try and convey something of the numinous original:

So, as they continued to ask [for an answer] he straightened himself, saying to them: Let he who has never made a mistake [Ἀναμαρτητος] throw the first stone at her.

ὥς δὲ ἐπέμενον ἐρωτῶντες αὐτόν, ἀνέκυψεν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὁ ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν πρῶτος ἐπ' αὐτὴν βαλέτω λίθον.

Jesus here is not, in my view, sermonizing about sin, as a puritan preacher might, and as if he is morally superior to and has judged the sinners. Instead, he is rather gently and as a human pointing out an obvious truth about our human nature; explaining, in v.11, that he has not judged her conduct:

ἡ δὲ εἶπεν· οὐδεὶς, κύριε. εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· οὐδὲ ἐγὼ σε κατακρίνω· πορεύου, ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε

[And] she answered, No one, my Lord. Whereupon Jesus replied "Neither do I judge [κατακρίνω] you, therefore go, and avoid errors such as those". [iv]

Such a translation avoids the rather contradictory nature of most other translations which have Jesus clearly stating that he also does not judge her but then have him go on to say that she should 'sin no more' with the obvious implication that he has indeed judged her in that in his judgement she had indeed sinned before.

Understood and appreciated thus, sans the now culturally-biased word sin, these passages from the gospel according to John - together with passages such as Luke 19.10 and Romans 13.10 [v] - perhaps usefully summarize the evangel of Jesus of Nazareth; the (in my view) rather human message of avoiding judging others because we ourselves are prone to error, the message of love, and the message of redemption (forgiveness) for those who in the past have made mistakes but who have thereafter tried to avoid making such mistakes again, those hitherto perhaps damaged or lost.

Footnotes:

[i] Quare quod a summo bono diversum est sui natura, id summum bonum non est; quod nefas est de eo cogitare, quo nihil constat esse praestantius. *Consolatio Philosophiae*, Liber Tertius, pr. x

[ii] *Beowulf*, 2470f, where the spelling synn is used:

eaferum laefde, swa deð eadig mon,
lond ond leodbyrig, ƿa he of life gewat.
ƿa wæs synn ond sacu Sweona ond Geata
ofer wid wæter, wroht gemæne,
herenið hearda, syððan Hreðel swealt

[ii] qv. Myatt, *Fifty Years of Diverse Peregrinations*. 2013

[iv] The conventional interpretation of ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε is "from now on sin no more".

[v] (a} Luke 19.10:

ἦλθεν γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ζητῆσαι καὶ σῶσαι τὸ ἀπολωλός. "The arrivance [ἔρχομαι] of the Son of Man was to seek and to save what was lost.

However, a more interesting interpretation is:

The arrivance of the Son of Man was to seek and to repair [σώζω] what had been damaged [ἀπόλλυμι]

and which interpretation is suggested by (i) the sense of σώζω: keep safe, preserve, maintain -

whence repair, and (ii) the sense of ἀπόλλυμι: destroy, ruin, kill, demolish, and - metaphorically - damaged, lost, and die.

(b) Romans 13.10:

ἡ ἀγάπη τῷ πλησίον κακὸν οὐκ ἐργάζεται· πλήρωμα οὖν νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη

love brings no harm to the neighbour; love is the completion of the law

[2] As I noted in my commentary on John 1:33 regarding the Holy Spirit, which I translated as Halig Spiritus:

ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ. *in Halig Spiritus*. I have here used the Old English word Halig - as for example found in the version of John 17.11 in the Lindisfarne Gospel, 'Du halig fæder' - to translate ἅγιος rather than the later word 'holy' derived as that is from halig and used as it was by Wycliffe in his 1389 translation of this phrase, "in the Hooly Gost", which itself echoes the ASV, "on Halgum Gaste."

The unique phrase *in Halig Spiritus* - in place of the conventional 'with the Holy Spirit' - may thus express something of the numinosity, and the newness, of the original Gospel, especially as the word 'holy' has been much overused, imputes particular meanings from over a thousand years of exegesis, and, latterly in common parlance, has become somewhat trivialized. In respect of ἐν, while most translators have opted here (as in respect of 1.26 ff) for "with", I have opted for "in", given that John baptized "in water" - for example, in Aenon - and given that Jesus baptizes "in, with" (in the name of) Halig Spiritus.

Related:

The Gospel According To John

Chapter 1 - 5

Translation and Commentary

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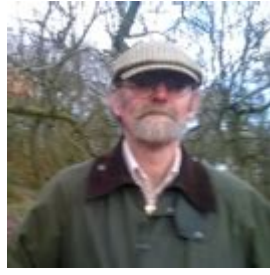
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Icon of Jesus Pantocrator, Δέησις Mosaic
Hagia Sophia, c. 1260 CE

A Few Minor Missives 2023



Missa Pro Defunctis

What have we in over four and a half centuries to compare, in terms of presencing the numinous, with *Missa pro defunctis* by Francisco Guerrero? Perhaps some music by JS Bach?

Here I am almost half a century since I as part of a choir sang in a public performance of Mozart's Requiem having possibly in those intervening years learnt some things about myself and about our human nature. Who reads, who even cares about such pathei-mathos? Yet such numinous music remains to remind, if only a few, while we en masse as a species seemingly move on to new diversions which betake us further and further from such presencings of the numinous as may ineluctably change and rebirth us as individuals.

September 2023

Memory Of A Beautiful World

One of the pleasures I have found in old age – beyond my three score years and ten – is recalling alone or reminiscing to others about times past. One especial memory is of when a younger version of me was cycling home from work one Summer in Shropshire [1] when I chanced upon someone – a celebrated cycling time-trial champion whom I seem to recall at one time held every RTTC record from 25 miles to 12 hours – while he was out training. We chatted as the comradeship of cycling decreed, and together cycled along together for many miles at over 20mph. A pace I intuitively knew from years of competing in local club and RTTC Time Trials.

But then he gradually increased the pace up to almost 30mph until after a few miles I made some excuse and turned left onto some minor road to collapse onto the grass verge. But it was wonderful, lying there, in the quiet isolation of a country English lane with only the breeze rustling trees and birdsong for company. Then, in those moments, that was my simple, my entire, life. If only – if only – it had lasted; if only – if only – I had somehow in some way managed to make it last so that it and similar moments became my life thereafter.

But it was not alas then to be, for I soon, so soon, returned to the world of extremism, of causal abstractions with its dialectic of opposites which so engendered a supra-personal certitude of knowing and the inevitable suffering of others. And it would take some twenty years for me to recall that – and similar – moments again following the most traumatic incident of my life: the unexpected suicide of my then fiancée, genesis as that incident was of my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos.

Mea Culpa; Mea Culpa, Mea Maxima Culpa. But even now saying that, and Κύριε ἐλέησον, out loud does not help in these twilight years of my life. For there seems to be no expiation for my extremist past with its certitude of knowing. A certitude of knowing which is glorified even unto this day by others with their -isms and -ologies and the causal abstractions, the often suffering causing dialectic, on which they are based.

May 2023

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[1] I was riding my hack work-bike; a Mercian 531 frame, Cinelli bars and stem; TA double-chainset; Mavic G40 rims with Campag Record hubs; and – a concession to comfort – a leather well-broken in saddle.

A Rare Moment

There are few moments that I believed could surprise this somewhat world-weary man beyond his three score and ten mortal years. But some information received from a middle-Eastern contact was one of them.

Knowing my love of classical Arabic music and of how I used to (badly) play the Persian Daf, the information was regarding the Syrian Takht Ensemble whose beautiful traditional music – many employing Maqam modes – and their innovations of such music, brought memories of a different plane of existence, far removed from the turmoil, the

Machiavellian machinations, the egoism, the materialistic, and often godless, modern Western world.

I was back in the Sahara Desert where as I once said I wordlessly had intimations of Being, of The Acausal, of The-Unity, of The One-The Only (τὸ ἓν), of The Monas (μονάς) which 'acausal' Being Muslims called Allah and Christians called God. I was back in Arabic – Muslim – lands where I had travelled and stayed and learnt. I was back as a novice in a Catholic monastery, wandering outside the Abbey in the contemplative period between chanting Matins and Lauds.

Such a waste for over forty years of such experiencing, such wordless knowing. There are no excuses; for the fault, the hubris, was mine. All I have to offer in recompense, in expiation, is my wordfull weltanschauung of pathei-mathos, which compared to such wordless personal experiencing and such Arabic music is so woefully inadequate.

August 2023

One Tree Among Many

Beside the stone wall that marks one of the boundaries of what has for several years been my home is an evergreen Oak; almost a dome of spreading branches and so tall it might well be an hundred or so years in age. The tallest tree around from near where several other and various and tallish specimens of arboreal life provide perches for those whose Dawn Chorus becomes, was, is, a hymnal to such natural Life as has for centuries pleased us.

Two months ago, the Oak was sad; with leaves dry and dying and infested. But now, as clouds break to reveal sky-blue, bringer of early Summer warmth: the tree has that light green of leaf rebirth, and catkins heralds of acorns an English season hence. So there is joy within as this aged man "his foliage drying up and no stronger than a child, with three feet to guide him on his travels, wanders – appearing a shadow in the light of day." [1]

Would that he might hear one more Dawn Chorus to so remember those, these, simple natural beauties of life which he as so many others so easily forgot enwrapped as he, they, were in believed in, in felt, selfish concerns which all will, must, die with us while the Sun again warms each year as it warms and life-sprouting rain seeds rebirth without any interference from us at all.

So I sit, windows of sky and trees to enlighten again my life, listening to a heartbreaking, suspended moment in my measured out so very limited timespan of causal life: the 12th century Cistercian *Répons de Matines pour la fête de saint Bernard*.

6th June 2023

[1] τό θ' ὑπέργηρων φυλλάδος ἤδη κατακαρφομένης τρίποδας μὲν ὁδοὺς στείχει, παιδὸς δ' οὐδὲν ἀρείων ὄναρ ἡμερόφαντον ἀλαίνει. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 79-82. My translation.

Tenebrae

The liturgical season of The Passion is upon us again and I find myself appreciating once more how the numinous allegory of The Passion was presented in liturgical music from the Graduale *Christus Factus Est* to Vittoria's *Popule meus, quid feci tibi* – Ἅγιος ὁ Θεός, Ἅγιος ἰσχυρός, Ἅγιος ἀθάνατος, ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς – to Scarlatti's Stabat Mater to JS Bach's St John and Matthew Passions. And I reminded so movingly of – when a monk – singing Tenebrae amid the flickering then extinguished light of candles...

So much human suffering for so many millennia which the allegory of The Passion of Jesus of Nazareth reminded so many of, century after century; as it reminded me several times in the depths of my decades of extremism. In comparison with such numinous music, liturgical and otherwise, what is my own wordy weltanschauung of pathei-mathos worth?

Very little it now seems to me, if anything at all.

April 2023

The Hour Before Dawn

It is the hour before Dawn on the Spring Equinox, dark outside, with the Blackbird in the tree at the edge of the garden already singing. No other sounds, as yet, and there arises within me questions I have felt several times in the past few years.

Which are: is what we in a land such as this – a modern Western land such as England as Spring dawns even within, upon, urban conurbations – have acquired, developed, manufactured over the past few hundred years worth the

suffering that has been inflicted upon other human beings, upon our forebears, and upon Nature? Is that suffering the price of such societies as we have developed and now seek to maintain?

Numerous overseas conflicts; two World Wars with millions upon millions dead, injured, traumatized, and cities, towns, Nature, destroyed. Numerous invasions and wars since then. Poverty, homelessness, injustice, inequality, crime, still within our lands. Has anything in terms of our humanity, of we being self-controlled, rational, honest and honourable – of ourselves as causes and vectors of suffering – really changed?

It is not as if I am exempt from having caused suffering. My past decades long suffering-causing deeds are my burden and will be until I die.

My personal, fallible, answers born of my pathei-mathos, is that unfortunately we as individuals have not as yet *en masse* changed sufficiently so as to cease to be a cause and a vector of suffering. Tethered as we still apparently are to causal abstractions, to -isms and -ologies, and thus to denotata and the dialectic of opposites, to the conflict that such denotata is the genesis of.

Perhaps we need another hundred, two hundred, or more years. Our perhaps we will continue, *en masse*, as we mostly now are, the eventual extinction of our sometimes stable causal societies of human beings acausally inevitable, fated; until the planet we call Earth finally meets its Cosmic end as all planets do, with we human beings never making real the visionary dream of a few to venture forth and colonize the stars. And even if we did somehow realize that dream, would we venture forth as the still savage, dishonourable, war-mongering species we still are?

Yet all I have in answer, in expiation for my own past suffering-causing deeds, is my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos; so insufficient in so many ways.

March 2023

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DW Myatt 2023

Soli Deo Gloria

Being extracts from a letter written in reply
to someone enquiring about the philosophy of The Numinous Way.

Since you enquire about the veracity of my Numinous Way, I should perhaps emphasize – as I have mentioned several times over the past few years – that this Way represents only my own fallible answers born from my own pathei-mathos, and that I am acutely aware that the answers of many other Ways, such as Buddhism and the answers of conventional religions such as Catholicism, also in their own particular harmonious manner express something of the numinous and may thus for many people provide a guide to living in a more numinous way.

As I wrote many years ago:

The Numinous Way is but one answer to the questions about existence, [and] does not have some monopoly on truth, nor does it claim any prominence, accepting that all the diverse manifestations of the Numen, all the diverse answers, of the various numinous Ways and religions, have or may have their place, and all perhaps may serve the same ultimate purpose – that of bringing us closer to the ineffable beauty, the ineffable goodness, of life; that of transforming us, reminding us; that of giving us as individuals the chance to cease to cause suffering, to presence the good, to be part of the Numen itself. For what distinguishes a valuable, a good, a numinous Way or religion, is firstly this commitment, however expressed, to the cessation of suffering through means which do not cause more suffering; secondly, having some practical means whereby individuals can transform themselves for the better, and thirdly, possessing some way of presenting, manifesting, presencing what is sacred, what is numinous, thus reconnecting the individual to the source of their being, to their humanity.

In my fallible view, any Way or religion which manifests, which expresses, which guides individuals toward, the numinous humility we human beings need is good, and should not be stridently condemned.

For such personal humility – that which prevents us from committing hubris, whatever the raison d'être, the theology, the philosophy – is a presencing of the numinous. Indeed, one might write and say that it is a personal humility – whatever the source – that expresses our true developed (that is, rational and empathic) human nature and which nature such Ways or religions or mythological allegories remind us of. Hence the formulae, the expression, *Soli Deo Gloria* being one Western cultural manifestation of a necessary truth, manifesting as it does one particular numinous allegory among many such historical and cultural and mythological allegories. Just as, for example, the sight of King Louis IX walking barefoot to Sainte Chapelle was a symbol of the humility which the Christian faith, correctly understood, sought to cultivate in individuals.

As I mentioned in my essay *Humility, Abstractions, and Belief*,

One of the great advantages – a manifestation of humanity – of a Way such as Islam and Christianity and Buddhism is that they provide, or can provide, us with the supra-personal perspective, and thus the humility, we human beings require to prevent us veering into and becoming subsumed with the error of hubris.

As it says in the Rule of Saint Benedict:

" The peak of our endeavour is to achieve profound humility..." Chapter 7, *The Value of Humility*

As it says in the Quran:

" The '*Ibaad* of Ar-Rahman [Allah] are those who walk on earth in humility." 25:63

As it says in the Dhammapada:

" Yo bâlo maññati bâlyae paúóitovâpi tena so bâlo ca paúóitamânî sa ve bâloti vuccati."

" Accepting of themselves, the simple person in their simplicity is wise, although if they pride themselves they are wise, they are simply full of pride. "

Furthermore, such Ways provide such a supra-personal perspective in a manner which is living – that is, these Ways are presented to us as something which has a historical genesis and which lives among us, in our own times, in and through those devoted to them in that dignified manner which makes such people living examples of those tenets, of those Ways. That is, the dignified people who follow such Ways – who are inspired by those Ways to practice humility in their own lives – thus manifest the numinous, the sacred, among us, and so can provide us with practical, and personal, guidance, and a sense of belonging.

Thus, I now have, partly from practical experience, come to apprehend a certain unity, a certain common insight, behind many outwardly differing Ways and religious forms, to the extent that I personally have been considered by some people to be some kind of Buddhist-Taoist-Muslim-Sufi-Catholic-NuminousWay-pagan-mystic hybrid. But in truth, I am merely someone who as a result of pathei-mathos knows their limitations, their fallibility, and thus who empathically resonates with past and present emanations of the numinous, often because of struggling to answer certain questions about our human nature, about our mortal existence, and about the nature of Reality which many others over millennia have also sought to answer.

Since you especially ask about Catholicism in relation to the Numinous Way, all I can say in my experience – having been raised a Catholic and having spent some time as a Catholic monk – is that Catholicism did manifest, and to an

extent still does manifest, aspects of the numinous and therefore this particular guide to human living is one which I understand and appreciate as one style of earthly-harmony.

As I wrote a year or so ago:

"The Latin Tridentine Mass of the Catholic Church [...] evolved over a certain period of causal time, and became, for many Catholics, the main ritual, or rite, which imbued their ordinary lives with a certain numinosity – a certain awareness of the sacred, with attendance at this rite involving certain customs, such as modest and clean dress, and women covering their heads with a veil. This rite was, in essence, a *Mysterium* – that is, it embodied not only something holy and somewhat mysterious (such as the Consecration and Communion) but also was wordlessly un-mundane and so re-presented to most of those attending the rite, almost another world, with this re-presentation aided by such things as the use of incense, the ringing of the Sanctus bell, and the genuflexions. In addition, and importantly, the language of this rite was not that of everyday speech, and was not even, any longer, a living changing language, but rather had in many ways become the sacred language of that particular Way.

The Catholic rite endured for centuries and, indeed, to attend this particular rite marked, affirmed and re-affirmed one as a Catholic, as a particular follower of a particular Way, and a Way quite distinct from the schism that became Protestantism [1], a fact which explained, for instance, the decision, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth the First of England, to punish by fine or imprisonment those who attended this rite, and to persecute, accuse of treason, and often execute, those who performed this rite.

However, the reforms imposed by the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican replaced this numinous rite, this *Mysterium*, with rites and practices redolent of un-numinous Protestantism. Why? Most probably because those involved in such planning and producing and implementing such reforms were swayed by the causal abstractions of "progress" and "relevancy" – desiring as they did and do to be in accord with the causal, material, *Zeitgeist* of the modern West where numbers of adherents, and conformity to trendy ideas and theories, are regarded as more important than presencing The Numen in a numinous manner. When, that is, some profane causal abstractions come to be regarded as more relevant than experiencing and manifesting the sacred as the sacred.

Yet this does not mean that Catholicism, before the reforms imposed by the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, was or remained a Way, *per se*. Only that, of all the variants of what are now termed Christianity, it retained a certain numinosity expressed by the original Way; that, through its *Mysteriums* such as the Tridentine Mass, it still presenced something of The Numen; and that it managed to avoid the worst excesses of the religious attitude, maintaining as it did a monasticism which by its own particular way of life encouraged the cultivation of a genuine, non-dogmatic, humility." Source – *Concerning The Nature of Religion and The Nature of The Numinous Way*

As that quotation – and the associated footnote – make clear, it is my personal opinion that traditional Catholicism, with its Tridentine Mass and its particular conservative traditions, was a somewhat better, more harmonious, expression of the numinous (a necessary and relevant expression of the numinous), than both Protestantism and the reforms introduced by the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, and which reforms served only to undermine the numinous, to untwist the threads that held together its "hidden soul of harmony".

However, what really matters in my view in respect of considering how we judge and evaluate other Ways and other styles of earthly-harmony (that is, what are often regarded as religious expressions of the numinous), is not so much their veracity as perceived and/or assumed by us during one span or certain spans of causal Time, but rather how those Ways, those expressions, affect people and predispose them toward or guide them toward living in a more numinous manner. That is, by criteria such as humility, avoidance of hubris, compassion, fairness toward others: by those things which express, which manifest, the numinous in us, in terms of our character, our behaviour. Not, that is, by some abstract criteria which we posit and which we with arrogance use to condemn or malign, often based on some vainglorious assumption or need that our own beliefs, our own answers, are the correct ones.

There is thus a tolerance, a respect; a desire not to stridently condemn; an awareness of our own fallibility deriving from our own *pathei-mathos* and from the numinous perspective, the silent wordless clarity, that such a personal learning from the suffering of experience brings.

All I have tried to do in respect of The Numinous Way is present what I hope is an alternative style of earthly-harmony, and sought to clarify how this alternative differs from others. For instance, in the matter of empathy, of honour, and of seeking to avoid the dogma arising from some causal abstraction or other. As to the veracity of my personal answers, I admit I do not know.

David Myatt
June 2011 CE

Footnotes:

[1] Catholicism (before the reforms imposed by the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican) represented, in my view, the original Way known as Christianity, and was – at least before those reforms – quite distinct from those schisms which are now known as Protestantism and Orthodox Christianity. Indeed, distinct enough – until those reforms – to be considered a different Way of Life, a Way evident, for example, in Catholic rites (such as the Tridentine Mass), in monasticism, in Papal authority, in the use of Latin, and in the reverence accorded The Blessed Virgin Mary.

Furthermore, it is my view that the schism now termed Protestantism was a classic example of the religious attitude predominating over numinosity – and thus that it is and was redolent of attempts to reduce The Numen to linear causal abstractions. Thus, Mysteries such as the Tridentine Mass became replaced with recitation of Scripture in the vernacular and with attempts to rationally explain – according to some abstract causal theory – the mystery of the consecration.

Catholic Still In Spirit?

Perhaps I remain, partially at least, a Catholic in spirit – in my heart – though not, most of the time, in words and deeds. For while I intellectually and empathically disagree with the teachings of the Catholic Church on many matters – such as homosexuality, contraception, and on divorcées who have remarried being excluded from Holy Communion (unless they have resorted to a Papal Annulment) – I still find myself in my inner weakness not only sometimes frequenting the Lady Chapel of my nearest RC Church – lighting a candle, kneeling, and in reverent silent contemplative prayer remembering, in the felt presence of The Blessed Virgin Mary, those now dead loved ones such as my mother and father and Sue and Francis, and those other women hurt by my selfishness – but also traveling several times a year to where Gregorian chant is sung and where the Tridentine Mass is celebrated, bringing as such Latin chant and such a Latin Mass still do, in me, a renewed awareness of the numinous and a renewal of such humility as I strive – and sometimes still so often fail – to remember and feel.

There seems to me no intricate and difficult interior problem here derived from my somewhat pagan way of pathei-mathos, for that way is essentially – for me, even born as it is from my own pathei-mathos – rather intellectual, a perceivization, lacking as it does something outward, practical, supra-personal, and communal, to presence the numinous and thus affect one's very being in a spiritual way. So I seem to now exist – and have for several years existed – between two worlds: apparently emotionally needing something practical, living, and spiritual beyond myself and my intellectualism, and yet knowing in a rather unemotional manner that it is the way of pathei-mathos, and not Catholicism, which is my weltanschauung.

No intricate and difficult interior problem, no inner dichotomy, because I know the many flaws in my weltanschauung and in myself; and one cannot intellectually create some-thing – manufacture some-thing devoid of ψυχή – to presence the numinous. For it seems to me that such a presencing has to evolve, organically, over causal time, because it has been wordlessly presenced in other mortals and then kept alive because also felt by some of a newer generation. Will – can – such a presencing of the numinous arise from that way of pathei-mathos? Most probably not, intellectual and so very personal as it is.

So the need for some inner, numinous, sustenance remains; for fulfilling as a lot of classical music – such as the Cantatas of JS Bach – is and are, and fulfilling as walks alone in wild and rural Nature are, I sense a yearning in me for something more: some wordless intimation of the Divine which betakes me so far away from my still egoistic self that I am both awed and humbled again, as I often was in Winter wandering a darkened cloister as a monk in that quiet contemplative time between Matins and Lauds.

David Myatt
2015

Extract From A Letter To A Friend

Persecution And War

A Remembering

Reared as a Roman Catholic, educated for a while at a Catholic preparatory school and then – again for a while – at a Catholic boarding school, I remember the history taught by our teachers and Priests of the centuries-long persecution of English and Irish Catholics that began in the 16th century. There were stories of martyrs; of recusants; of secret Masses; of anti-Catholic polemics and propaganda; and of the monks who – after the suppression of the monasteries, the theft of monastic lands and wealth, begun by a tyrannos named Henry – escaped to France and founded monasteries such as the one at Dieulouard in Lorraine.

There thus was engendered in we Catholic children a feeling of difference, aided by the fact that our Mass was in Latin, by our sacrament of confession, by the practice of Gregorian chant, and by the singing of hymns such as Faith Of Our Fathers with its memorable verses

Faith of our Fathers living still
In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword [...]
We will be true to thee till death [...]

Our Fathers, chained in prisons dark,
Were still in heart and conscience free [...]
Faith of our Fathers, Mary's prayers
Shall win our country back to thee

This feeling of difference was forcefully remembered when I in the early 1970's – during The Troubles – ventured to visit Northern Ireland; when I in the mid-1970's and as a Catholic monk spent several weeks staying at a Presbytery in Dublin; and when I in the mid-1990's – before the Good Friday Agreement – visited Derry.

Forcefully remembered because I listened to accounts of the burning of Catholic homes by Protestant mobs in 1969 and the subsequent flight of hundreds of Catholic families to the Irish Republic where they were housed in refugee camps; listened to witness accounts of the killing of eleven Catholics, including a Priest, by the British Army in Ballymurphy in 1971; listened to witness accounts of the killing of fourteen Catholics, again by the British Army, in Derry in 1972; and listened to stories of the persecution of Irish Catholics under British rule.

Such a remembering, such a childhood feeling of difference, formed part of the years-long personal and philosophical reflexion that occupied me for several years as I, between 2006 and 2009, developed my 'numinous way' and then between 2011 and 2012 gradually refined it into the 'way of pathei-mathos', with the core of that reflexion concerning matters such as extremism, my own extremist past, war, prejudice, intolerance, and persecution.

War And Combat

Familiar as I was with ancient works by Thucydides, Herodotus, Livy, and others; with many works concerning more recent European history by modern historians, as well as with personal accounts of those who had fought for both the Allies and the Axis during World War Two, I recalled some words of Cicero:

"Aliis ego te virtutibus, continentiae, gravitatis, iustitiae, fidei, ceteris omnibus."

"because of your other virtues of self-restraint, of dignity, of fairness, of honesty, and all other such qualities..." [1]

Which led me to consider making a distinction between war and a more personal combat, between a modern *krieg* and the Old Germanic *werra*, given that war, from my reading of and admittedly fallible understanding of history, seemed to me to involve – by its very nature of necessitating killing and causing injury – intolerance, hatred, a divisive sense of difference often involving "us" believing we were "better" (or more civilized) than them, our enemies, thus leading to a dehumanization of "the enemy". A divisive sense of difference and a dehumanization often aided (particularly in modern times) by polemics, rumour, and propaganda; and a divisive sense of difference, a dehumanization, together with polemics, rumour, and propaganda, which I knew from my own decades of political and religious activism formed a core part of all types of extremism.

The distinction I considered was that personal combat unlike war did not involve large armies fighting against each other because of some diktat or personal agenda by some tyrannos or because of some ideology or religion or policy of some State or government. Instead, combat involved small groups – such as clans or tribes or neighbours – fighting because of some personal quarrel or some wrong or some perceived grievance.

But the more I considered this supposed distinction between combat and war the more I realized that in practice there was no such distinction since both involved principles similar to those of the Ancient Roman *Leges Regiae* – qv. the *Jus Papirianum* attributed to Sextus Papirius – where someone or some many possess or have acquired (through for example force of arms) or have assumed authority over others, and who by the use of violence and/or by the threat of punishment and/or by oratory or propaganda, are able to force or persuade others to accept such authority and obey the commands of such authority.

This acceptance by individuals of a supra-personal authority – or, more often, the demand by some supra-personal authority that individuals accept such a supra-personal authority – was manifest in the Christian writings of Augustine (b.354 CE, d.430 CE), such as his *De Civitate Dei contra Paganos* where in Book XIX, chapter xiii, he wrote of the necessity of a hierarchy in which God is the supreme authority, with peace between human beings and God requiring

obedience to that authority; with peace between human beings, and civil peace, also of necessity requiring obedience to an order in which each person has their allotted place, "Ordo est parium dispariumque rerum sua cuique loca tribuens dispositio."

Which hierarchy and acceptance of authority led Augustine to describe – in book XXII of *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* – the concept that war requires the authority of a person (such as a monarch) who has such "necessary" authority over others. This concept regarding war has remained a guiding principle of modern Western nations where the authority to inaugurate and prosecute a war against perceived enemies resides in the State, and thus in modern potentates who have seized power or in elected governments and their representatives such as Presidents and Prime Ministers.

Authority And Society

In the nations of the West, such a hierarchy of authority applies not only to war and its prosecution but also to changes, to reform, in society [2] for there is, as I mentioned in *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*,

"a hierarchy of judgement involved, whatever political 'flavour' the government is assigned to, is assumed to represent, or claims it represents; with this hierarchy of necessity requiring the individual in society to either (i) relinquish their own judgement, being accepting of or acquiescing in (from whatever reason or motive such as desire to avoid punishment) the judgement of these others, or (ii) to oppose this 'judgement of others' either actively through some group, association, or movement (political, social, religious) or individually, with there being the possibility that some so opposing this 'judgement of others' may resort to using violent means against the established order." [3]

In the way of pathei-mathos authority is personal, based on individual empathy and a personal pathei-mathos; both of which have a local horizon so that what is

"beyond our personal empathic knowing of others, beyond our knowledge and our experience [our pathei-mathos], beyond the limited (local) range of our empathy and that personal (local) knowledge of ourselves which pathei-mathos reveals – is something we rationally, we humbly, accept we do not know and so cannot judge or form a reasonable, a fair, a balanced, opinion about. For empathy, like pathei-mathos, lives within us; manifesting, as both empathy and pathei-mathos do, the always limited nature, the horizon, of our own knowledge and understanding." [4]

In practical terms this means trying to cultivate within ourselves the virtues mentioned by Cicero – self-restraint, dignity, fairness, honesty – and implies we have no concern for or we seek to cultivate no concern for supra-personal hierarchies and supra-personal authority – whether political, religious, or otherwise – and thus move away from, try to distance ourselves from, the consequences of such supra-personal hierarchies and supra-personal authority manifest as the consequences are and have been, throughout our history, in war, prejudice, intolerance, unfairness, extremism, and persecution in the name of some ideology, some religion, or because someone has commanded us to persecute those that they and others have declared are "our" enemies, and which war and persecutions are often, especially in modern times, accompanied by propaganda and lies.

Thus in the case of my Catholic remembering, those soldiers in Ballymurphy and in Derry shot and killed civilians, women included, because those soldiers believed them to be "enemies", because propaganda had dehumanized those enemies; because those soldiers were part of and obeyed a hierarchical, supra-personal, chain-of-command by being there armed and prepared to use deadly force and violence against individuals they did not personally know; and because in the aftermath of those killings, and for years afterwards, they were not honest and hence did not contradict the propaganda stories, the lies, about those events which some of their superiors and others circulated in an attempt to justify such acts of inhumanity.

Yet for me the real tragedy is that events similar to those of my very personal remembering have occurred on a vaster scale millennia after millennia and are still occurring, again on a vaster scale and world-wide, despite us having access to the wisdom of the past, manifest as such wisdom is, for those reared in the West, in the Agamemnon of Aeschylus, in the Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles, in the mythos of Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες [5], in many of the writings of Cicero, in Τὰ εἰς ἑαυτὸν by Marcus Aurelius, in the numinous beauty of Gregorian chant, in the music of JS Bach, and in so many, many, other writers and artists ancient and modern.

Đa sceolde se hearpere weorðan swa sarig
þæt he ne meahte ongemong oðrum mannum bion
(XXXV, 6)

David Myatt
9.ix.18

[1] M. Tullius Cicero, *Pro Murena Oratio*, 23. My translation.

[2] By 'society' in the context of this essay and the way of pathei-mathos is meant a collection of individuals who dwell, who live, in a particular area and who are subject to the same laws and the same institutions of authority. Modern society is thus a manifestation of some State, and States are predicated on individuals actively or passively accepting some supra-personal authority, be it governmental (national) or regional (county), or more usually both.

[3] *Society, Politics, Social Reform, and Pathei-Mathos. The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*. Seventh edition.
<https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

[4] *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*. 2015. <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/dwm-some-metaphysical-questions-v5b.pdf>

[5] "Trimorphed Moirai with their ever-heedful Furies." Aeschylus (attributed), *Prometheus Bound*, 516. My translation.

The Beatitudes

The Learning On The Hillside

Τὸ κατὰ Ματθαῖον εὐαγγέλιον

The Gospel According To Matthew

5:1-10

Text

- 1 Ἰδὼν δὲ τοὺς ὄχλους ἀνέβη εἰς τὸ ὄρος, καὶ καθίσαντος αὐτοῦ προσῆλθαν αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ·
- 2 καὶ ἀνοίξας τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ ἐδίδασκεν αὐτοὺς λέγων·
- 3 Μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.
- 4 μακάριοι οἱ πενθοῦντες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ παρακληθήσονται.
- 5 μακάριοι οἱ πραεῖς, ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσιν τὴν γῆν.
- 6 μακάριοι οἱ πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες τὴν δικαιοσύνην, ὅτι αὐτοὶ χορτασθήσονται.
- 7 μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται.
- 8 μακάριοι οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν θεὸν ὄψονται.
- 9 μακάριοι οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί, ὅτι αὐτοὶ υἱοὶ θεοῦ κληθήσονται.
- 10 μακάριοι οἱ δεδιωγμένοι ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

Translation

- 1 Observing the multitudes, he ascended the hill and, having sat down, his disciples approached him.
- 2 Then, a revelation, for he instructed those there by saying this:
- 3 Fortunate, those humble with spiritus, for theirs is the Kingdom of Empyrean.
- 4 Fortunate, those who grieve, for they shall have solace.
- 5 Fortunate, the gentle, for they shall acquire the Earth.
- 6 Fortunate, those who hunger and thirst for fairness, for they shall be replete.
- 7 Fortunate, the compassionate, for they shall receive compassion.
- 8 Fortunate, the refined of heart, for they shall perceive Theos.
- 9 Fortunate, the peaceable, for they shall be called children of Theos.
- 10 Fortunate, those harassed due to their fairness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Empyrean.

Commentary

1. ὄρος. Here a hill, rather than a mountain.

2.

ἀνοίξας τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ. I take this metaphorically as in a disclosing or a revealing, not literally as in "opening his mouth."

those there. Although the Greek text does not explicitly state the fact, the context suggests that Jesus addressed both the multitude and his disciples.

3.

μακάριος. A difficult word to translate since "blessed" has acquired particular (sometimes moralistic) meanings as a result of nearly two thousand years of exegesis, while "happy" is rather prosaic. The context - as in ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν - suggests "fortunate".

On a pedantic note, English translations invariably add "are" after μακάριος whereas the Greek - μακάριοι οἱ - reads "fortunate, the..."

πτωχός. Usually translated as "poor" which however has too many exegetical and modern connotations, and does not express the metaphorical sense here which implies being "humble" in respect of τὸ πνεῦμα.

τῷ πνεύματι [...] τῶν οὐρανῶν. In respect of τὸ πνεῦμα as the spiritus (rather than as the Spirit) and οὐρανός as Empyrean (rather than Heaven), qv. my commentary on John 1:32, [1] from which this an extract:

οὐρανός here is always translated as 'heaven' although the term 'heaven' - used in the context of the Gospels - now has rather different connotations than the Greek οὐρανός, with the word 'heaven' now often implying something explained by almost two thousand years of exegesis and as depicted, for example, in medieval and Renaissance Christian art. However, those hearing or reading this particular Greek gospel for the first time in the formative years of Christianity would most probably have assumed the usual Greek usage of "the heavens" in the sense of the "the star-filled firmament above" or in the sense of "the sky" or as the abode of theos and/or of the gods, ἐν οὐρανῷ θεοί [...]

It therefore seems apposite to suggest a more neutral word than 'heaven' as a translation of οὐρανός and one which might not only be understood in various 'classical' ways by an audience of Greek speakers (such as the ways described above) but also be open to a new, and Christian, interpretation consistent with the milieu that

existed when the Gospel of John was written and first heard. That is, before the exegesis of later centuries and long before post-Roman Christian iconography. Hence my suggestion of the post-classical Latin term Empyrean, which can bear the interpretation of the abode of theos and/or of the gods, of "the sky", of the "the star-filled firmament above"; and a Christian one suggested by Genesis 2.8 - παράδεισον ἐν Ἐδεμ (the Paradise of Eden) - and also by shamayim, שָׁמַיִם

5. πραῖος. Gentle - in the sense of mild, balanced, temperament - rather than "meek".

6. δικαιοσύνη. Fairness. Not some abstract, legalistic, "justice", and not "righteousness" which word has over centuries acquired sometimes strident and disputable moralistic meanings as well as implying a certain conformity to accepted (and disputable or dogmatic) standards.

7. ἐλεήμων. The classical Latin term misericordia - used by Jerome, and the origin of the English word miséricordious - expresses the sense well, which is of συμπάθεια (sympatheia, benignity) resulting in compassion. Cf. Luke 11.41 (πλὴν τὰ ἐνόντα δότε ἐλεημοσύνην, καὶ ἰδοὺ πάντα καθαρά ὑμῖν ἐστίν), Acts 10:2, κτλ.

8.

οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ. Literally, those whose hearts are clean, in the physical sense, as in having undertaken a ritual cleansing of the body. Cf. Corpus Hermeticum, Poemandres 22, [2] where as in Luke 11.41 - qv. ἐλεήμων in v. 7 here - it occurs in relation to compassion, the compassionate:

παραγίνομαι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ὁ Νοῦς τοῖς ὁσίοις καὶ ἀγαθοῖς καὶ καθαροῖς
καὶ ἐλεήμοσι, τοῖς εὐσεβοῦσι, καὶ ἡ παρουσία μου γίνεται βοήθεια,
καὶ εὐθὺς τὰ πάντα γνωρίζουσι καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἰλάσκονται
ἀγαπητικῶς καὶ εὐχαριστοῦσιν εὐλογοῦντες καὶ ὑμνοῦντες
τεταγμένως πρὸς αὐτὸν τῇ στοργῇ

I, perceiviation, attend to those of respectful deeds, the honourable, the refined, the compassionate, those aware of the numinous; to whom my being is a help so that they soon acquire knowledge of the whole and are affectionately gracious toward the father, fondly celebrating in song his position.

In respect of καθαροῖς, I prefer *refined* here - as in the Corpus Hermeticum - rather than 'pure' given the disputable nature of the term 'pure' and the connotations acquired over centuries be they religious, sanctimonious, political, or otherwise.

θεὸς. For reasons explained in my commentary on verse I of chapter one of The Gospel According To John - and in my commentaries on tractates from the Corpus Hermeticum [2] - I transliterate θεὸς.

9. οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί. The peaceable ones, which includes pacificators - those who are pacificatory, and thus who are conciliatory and who actively seek peace - and those who have a peaceable disposition.

10. διώκω. Harass, rather than "persecuted" which has acquired too many modern and especially political connotations. Cf. John 5:16, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐδίωκον οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τὸν Ἰησοῦν, ὅτι ταῦτα ἐποίει ἐν σαββάτῳ, "and thus did the Judaeans harass Jesus because he was doing such things on the Sabbath."

My interpretation, based on John 5:16, is that those who are harassed are so on account of (ἔνεκα) their fairness, not because those who are harassing them disparage or hate fairness in general.

David Myatt
30.iii.18

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Notes

[1] My translation and commentary - of chapters 1-5 - is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/gospel-according-to-john/>

[2] D. Myatt. *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*. Translations And Commentaries. CreateSpace. 2017. ISBN 978-1976452369.

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The Way Of Jesus of Nazareth

A Question Of Hermeneutics?

As my translation of and commentary on the *Gospel According To John* so very slowly progresses [1] what I am (re)discovering is how different the 'way of Jesus of Nazareth' – as presented in and by that particular Gospel over two thousand years ago – seems to me to be from what has so often been preached by so many and for so long regarding that religion which has become known as Christianity, dependant as such preaching so often is and has been on interpretations, and translations, of the Greek texts that form the 'New Testament'.

What emerges from my own translation – that is, from my particular 'interpretation of meaning' of the Gospel According To John – is rather reminiscent of what individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox, and William Penn wrote and said about Jesus and the spiritual way that the Gospels in particular revealed. This is the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from supra-personal moralistic interpretations based on inflexible notions of 'sin' and thus on what is considered 'good' and what is considered 'evil'.

A difference evident in many passages from the Gospel of John, such as the following two, one of which involves the Greek word πιστεύω, and which word is perhaps a relevant hermeneutical example. The conventional interpretation of meaning, in respect of New Testament texts, is 'believe', 'have faith in', so that John 3:16 is interpreted along the following lines:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (King James Bible)

Similarly in respect of other verses where πιστεύω occurs, so that the impression is of the necessity of believing, of having or acquiring faith.

Yet, and in regard to the aforementioned verse, if one interprets that particular (and another) Greek word in a more Hellenistic – a more Greek – way, then one has:

Theos so loved the world that he offered up his only begotten son so that all those trusting in him would not perish but might have life everlasting.

Not only is this personal, direct – as in personally trusting someone as opposed to a 'blind believing' – but there are no prior hermeneutic assumptions about 'God', derived as such assumptions are from over two thousand years of scriptural exegesis and preaching.

Example One. Chapter Three, 16-21

DWM:

Theos so loved the world that he offered up his only begotten son so that all those trusting in him would not perish but might have life everlasting. For Theos did not dispatch his son to the world to condemn the world, but rather that the world might be rescued through him. Whosoever trusts in him is not condemned while whomsoever does not trust is condemned for he has not trusted in the Nomen of the only begotten son of Theos.

And this is the condemnation: That the Phaos arrived in the world but mortals loved the darkness more than the Phaos, for their deeds were harmful. For anyone who does what is mean dislikes the Phaos and does not come near the Phaos lest their deeds be exposed. But whomsoever practices disclosure goes to the Phaos so that their deeds might be manifest as having been done through Theos. [2]

King James Bible:

God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

Example Two. Chapter Five, 1-16

DWM:

Following this, there was a Judaeen feast and Jesus went to Jerusalem. And there is in Jerusalem by the place of the sheep a pool, named in the language of the Hebrews as Bethesda, which has five colonnades in which were a large number of the infirm – the blind, the limping, the withered – awaiting a change in the water since on occasion an Envoy of Theos descended into the pool, stirring the water, and whomsoever after that stirring of the water was first to enter became complete, the burden of their affliction removed.

And there was a man there who for eight and thirty years had been infirm. Jesus, seeing him lying there and knowing of that lengthy duration, said to him: "Do you seek to be complete?"

The infirm one replied: "Sir, I do not have someone who when the water is stirred could place me in that pool, and, when I go, someone else has descended before me."

Jesus said to him: "Arise. Take your bedroll, and walk."

And, directly, the man became complete, took up his bedroll and walked around. And it was the day of the Sabbath.

Thus did the Judaeans say to the one who had been treated: "It is the Sabbath and it is not permitted for you to carry your bedroll."

To them he answered: "It was he who made me complete who said for me to take my bedroll and to walk around."

So they asked him: "Who is the man who said for you to take the bedroll and walk?"

But the healed one did not know, for there was a crowd there with Jesus having betaken himself away.

Following this, Jesus discovered him in the temple and said to him: "Behold, you are complete. No more missteps, lest something worse befalls you."

The man then went away and informed the Judaeans that it was Jesus who had made him complete, and thus did the Judaeans harass Jesus because he was doing such things on the Sabbath. [3][4]

King James Bible:

After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.

And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.

Conclusion

The first example seems to me to be revealing of the personal nature of the 'way of Jesus of Nazareth' – of a personal trust in a particular person, in this instance a trust in Jesus because of how he and his life are recounted by the Evangelist – contrasting with a rather impersonal demand to believe, to have faith, based on doctrine as codified by someone else or by some organized regulatory and supra-local hierarchy.

The second example seems to me to be revealing of the contrast between the then organized supra-personal religion of the Judaeans – with its doctrinal forbiddance, sometimes on pain of death, of certain personal deeds – and the empathy and compassion of an individual, as evident in Jesus in the immediacy of the moment healing a long-suffering infirm man and bidding him to take up and carry his bedroll, undoubtedly aware as Jesus was that he was doing and inciting what was forbidden because for him empathy and compassion were more important than some established doctrine.

Is this contrast between what seems to be a particular dogmatism, a particular religious (hubriatic) intolerance by the Judaeans, and an individual being empathic and compassionate in the immediacy of the moment, still relevant today? Personally, I do believe it is, leading me to conclude that τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον – The Gospel According To John – contains certain truths not only about our physis as human beings but also about our relation to Being, to the divine, to the numinous. For, as described in tractate III of the Corpus Hermeticum,

The numen of all beings is theos: numinal, and of numinal physis. The origin of what exists is theos, who is Perceivation and Physis and Substance: the sapientia which is a revealing of all beings. For the numinal is the origin: physis, vigour, incumbency, accomplishment, renewance [...]

The divine is all of that mision: renewance of the cosmic order through Physis, for Physis is presenced in the divine. [5]

David Myatt
October 2017

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Footnotes

[1] Volume I (chapters 1-5) of my translation of and commentary on the Gospel According To John is available at <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2023/08/myatt-gospel-john-1-5.pdf>

[2] A (slightly edited) extract from my commentary on John 3:16-21.

° *Nomos*. νόμος. A transliteration since as with 'logos' a particular metaphysical principle is implied and one which requires contextual interpretation; a sense somewhat lost if the English word 'law' is used especially given what the word 'law' often now imputes.

° *Phaos*. Given that φάος metaphorically (qv. Iliad, Odyssey, Hesiod, etcetera) implies the being, the life, 'the spark', of mortals, and, generally, either (i) the illumination, the light, that arises because of the Sun and distinguishes the day from the night, or (ii) any brightness that provides illumination and thus enables things to be seen, I am inclined to avoid the vague English word 'light' which all other translations use and which, as in the case of God, has, in the context of the evangel of Jesus of Nazareth, acquired particular meanings mostly as a result of centuries of exegesis and which therefore conveys or might convey something that the Greek word, as used by the author of this particular Greek text, might not have done.

Hence my transliteration – using the Homeric φάος instead of φῶς – and which transliteration requires the reader to pause and consider what phaos may, or may not, mean, suggest, or imply. As in the matter of logos, it is most probably not some sort of philosophical principle, neo-Platonist or otherwise.

Interestingly, φῶς occurs in conjunction with ζωή and θεός and ἐγένετο and Ἄνθρωπος in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, thus echoing the evangel of John:

φῶς καὶ ζωή ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατήρ, ἐξ οὗ ἐγένετο ὁ Ἄνθρωπος (Poemandres, 1.21)

Life and phaos are [both] of Theos, The Father, Who brought human beings into existence

° *For their deeds were harmful*. ἦν γὰρ αὐτῶν πονηρὰ τὰ ἔργα. Harmful: that is, caused pain and suffering. To impute to πονηρός here the meaning of a moral abstract 'evil' is, in my view, mistaken. Similarly with the following φαῦλος in v.20 which imparts the sense of being 'mean', indifferent.

Since the Phaos is Jesus, those who are mean, those who do harm, avoid Jesus because (qv. 2.25) he – as the only begotten son of Theos – knows the person within and all their deeds. Thus, fearing being exposed, they avoid him, and thus cannot put their trust in him and so are condemned and therefore lose the opportunity of eternal life.

° *whomsoever practices disclosure*. ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν. Literally, 'they practising the disclosing.' That is, those who disclose – who do not hide – who they are and what deeds they have done, and who thus have no reason to fear exposure. Here, as in vv.19-20, the meaning is personal – about the character of people – and not about abstractions such as "evil" and "truth", just as in previous verses it is about trusting in the character of Jesus. Hence why here ἀλήθεια is 'sincerity', a disclosing, a revealing – the opposite of lying and of being deceitful – and not some impersonal 'truth'.

[3] Note how Jesus does not disapprovingly preach about – does not even mention – the apparently superstitious practice of infirm individuals waiting by a 'miraculous' pool in order to be cured.

[4] A (slightly edited) extract from my commentary on John 5:1-16.

° *the place of the sheep*. Since the Greek προβατικός means "of or relating to sheep" and there is no mention of a 'gate' (or of anything specific such as a market) I prefer a more literal translation. It is a reasonable assumption that the sheep were, and had in previous times been, kept there prior to being offered as sacrifices, as for example sheep are still so held in particular places in Mecca during Eid al-Adha, the Muslim feast of sacrifice.

° *named in the language of the Hebrews*. ἐπιλεγομένη Ἑβραϊστὶ.

° *the infirm*. The Greek word ἀσθενέω implies those lacking normal physical strength.

° *awaiting a change in the water*. Reading ἐκδεχομένων τὴν τοῦ ὕδατος κίνησιν with the Textus Receptus, omitted by NA28, but included in ASV, Tyndale, and Wycliffe.

° *Envoy of Theos*. Reading ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου κατὰ καιρῶν κατέβαινεν (qv. Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on John, Book II, V, 1-4, Migne Patrologia Graeca 73) and ἐν τῇ κολυμβήθρᾳ, καὶ ἐτάρασσεν τὸ ὕδωρ· ὁ οὖν πρῶτος ἐμβὰς μετὰ τὴν ταραχὴν τοῦ ὕδατος, ὑγιὴς ἐγένετο, ᾧ δῆποτε κατειχετο νοσήματι with the Textus Receptus. The verse is omitted

by NA28, but included in ASV, Tyndale, and Wycliffe.

a) *envoy*. As noted in the commentary on 1:51, interpreting ἄγγελος as 'envoy' (of theos) and not as 'angel', particularly given the much later Christian iconography associated with the term 'angel'.

b) *Theos*. Regarding ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου, qv. Matthew 28.2 ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου καταβὰς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, "an envoy of [the] Lord/Master descended from Empyrean/the heavens." Since here κύριος implies Theos (cf. John 20.28 where it is used in reference to Jesus), an interpretation such as "envoy of Theos" avoids both the phrase "envoy of the Master" - which is unsuitable given the modern connotations of the word 'master' - and the exegetical phrase "angel/envoy of the Lord" with all its associated and much later iconography both literal, by means of Art, and figurative, in terms of archetypes and one's imagination. An alternative expression would be "envoy of the Domine," with Domine (from the Latin Dominus) used in English as both a respectful form of address and as signifying the authority of the person or a deity.

c) *became complete*. ὑγιὴς ἐγένετο. The suggestion is of the person becoming 'whole', complete, *sanus*, and thus ceasing to be 'broken', incomplete, infirm.

° *bedroll*. κράβατος (Latin, grabatus) has no suitable equivalent in English since in context it refers to the portable bed and bedding of the infirm. The nearest English approximation is bedroll.

° *And, directly, the man became complete*. καὶ εὐθέως ἐγένετο ὑγιὴς ὁ ἄνθρωπος. Metaphysically, the Evangelist is implying that 'completeness' - wholeness - for both the healthy and the infirm (whether infirm because of sickness or a physical infirmity) arises because of and through Jesus.

° *treated*. Taking the literal sense of θεραπεύω here. Hence: cared for, treated, attended to. As a healer or a physician might care for, treat, or attend to, someone.

° *no more missteps*. μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε. That is, make no more mistakes in judgement or in deeds. Qv. the Introduction [to Volume I of the translation] regarding translating ἀμαρτία in a theologically neutral way as 'mistake' or 'error' instead of by the now exegetical English word 'sin'. Cf. 1.29, 8.7, et seq.

° *Judaeans*. Qv. my essay *A Note On The Term Jews In The Gospel of John*, available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/07/05/a-note-on-the-term-jews-in-the-gospel-of-john/>

° *harass*. διώκω. Cf. the Latin *persequor*, for the implication is of continually 'following' and pursuing him in order to not only try and worry or distress him but also (as becomes evident) to find what they regard is evidence against him in order to have him killed, qv. 5.18, 7.1, 7.19 et seq.

[5] *Ἰερός Λόγος: An Esoteric Mythos*. Included in: David Myatt, *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates: Translation and Commentary*, 2017. ISBN 978-1976452369

All translations by DW Myatt

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Questions Of Hermeneutics And Exegesis

For over twenty years questions of hermeneutics and exegesis in relation to religions, ideologies, and philosophies have interested and concerned me, leading to my conjecture that the use of denotata to express a revelation, a spirituality, an idea, an ideal, or a philosophy, results in not only a dialectic of opposites - for example in the Gospels of Christianity ἁμαρτία (conventionally interpreted in Gospel translations as sin) contrasted with 'righteousness' (and being saved, rewarded by God with everlasting life in Heaven) and φαῦλος (conventionally in interpreted in Gospel translations as evil) contrasted with 'good' - but also in problems of exegesis: as in how Hellenistic Greek is expounded in terms of a modern language such as English. Thus, is the interpretation of 'sin' from the Hellenistic Greek ἁμαρτία imposing a meaning that may not have been germane to the milieu of such an ancient period in all or certain instances? [1]

In the matter of the Gospels of John did the author use ἁμαρτία to express, to expound, something - 'sin' - which might well have been a foreign concept to speakers of the Greek of that time when there was a common belief among many of them in a hierarchy of pagan deities and of propitiation (such as offering gifts or a sacrifice to the gods) for misdeeds or for 'offending' a god or gods or to ask for their help?

Consider the tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum some arguably written around the time or not long after that Gospel, with the Poemandres tractate centred around θεός as in this from v.3:

φημι ἐγώ, Μαθεῖν θέλω τὰ ὄντα καὶ νοῆσαι τὴν τούτων φύσιν καὶ γνῶναι τὸν θεόν·

"I answered that I seek to learn what is real, to apprehend the physis of beings, and to have knowledge of theos." [2]

Is theos here the Jehovah of the Hebrews and the God of Christianity? Or is it better to understand theos in a non-anthropomorphic way as Being, the source of beings, mortal and otherwise? If the interpretation is 'God' then this tractate, and many of the others, arguable express early Christian weltanschauungen with an implicit dialectic of opposites, unlike the neutral, non-anthropomorphic Being which can metaphysically be understood as 'the divine', the numinous. [3]

Such a dialectic, as I have previously endeavoured to explain, [4] invariably leads to conflict both internal, within some individuals, and external between individuals and entities, such as religious or political groups or factions who or which claim to have the correct or a better interpretation or understanding of their beliefs or ideology. Hence extremism [5] and the suffering that such extremism causes.

My personal experiences, over some four decades, and my subsequent reflexion on that experience, have led me to conclude that, rather than denotata, the personal experiencing of the numinous through empathy and pathei-mathos is of fundamental importance in understanding both our physis (φύσις) - and thus our relation to Being and to beings - and Being, the numinous, itself. [6]

To illustrate the dialectic of denotata and the subsequent suffering caused there is the National Socialism of Germany between 1933 and 1945. This was a way of life centred around denotata such as kampf, nation, and ethnic identity, with individuals judged by, and expected to judge others by, the primary criterion of ethnicity, with particular ethnicities assigned a certain value (high or low), and each individual judged by how well they adhered to the duty they were expected to do in respect of their nation (their land) and the ethnicity they were said to belong to or believed they belonged to. In addition, kampf between individuals, ethnicities, and nations was considered healthy and necessary, with such struggle revealing the worth of individuals and thus those considered fit to lead and assume positions of authority.

This German National Socialist way of life was therefore a collective, supra-personal, one with the empathy and pathei-mathos of individuals, and the personal judgement and compassion derived from them, ignored or suppressed in favour of obedience to the 'will of the collective' (the folk, the nation) embodied by Der Führer and through the führerprinzip and with disobedience not only disapproved of but liable to be punished. This dialectic of opposites - of certain types of individuals or ways of behaviour being better than others and with The Third Reich having a particular destiny achievable through kampf - naturally led to the impersonal harshness of the Nürnberger Gesetze, as well as to the invasion of Poland and thence to the Second World War with the attendant deaths and suffering of millions of human beings. German National Socialism was thus from its beginnings to its ending in 1945 an extremism whose principles, causes, and characteristics promoted and incited harsh, uncompassionate, actions.

In contrast, the personal empathy and pathei-mathos of individuals provides a natural balance devoid of denotata, expressed or implied, and can only promote individual actions consistent with compassion. It cannot be extrapolated from the individual lexierencing to form anything supra-personal expressed by a denotatum or by some denotata such as an -ism or an -ology be such religious, ideological, or political or otherwise, since in doing so its individual physis, its natural nameless balance, is replaced sooner or later by a dialectic of opposites.

In practical terms this implies the mortal individual could, at best, be a fallible example or inspiration for some others, since to claim or to be perceived by others as other than fallible and mortal, and other than a possible and personal inspiration, is ὕβρις (hubris) and a contradiction of the nameless balance that for centuries we have, according to my

understanding, erroneously denoted by appellations such as θεός, ὁ θεός, and God with the inevitable dialectic of exegesis and conflict and of suffering.

In relation to hubris,

σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης, μὴ δ' ὕβριν ὀφελλε:
ὕβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῷ βροτῷ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς
ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύναται, βαρύνθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς
ἐγκύρσας ἄτησιν: ὁδὸς δ' ἐτέρηφι παρελθεῖν
κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει
ἐς τέλος ἐξελθοῦσα: παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω

Hesiod, Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι, vv 213-218

You should listen to [the goddess] Fairness and not oblige Hubris
Since Hubris harms unfortunate mortals while even the more fortunate
Are not equal to carrying that heavy a burden, meeting as they do with Mischief.
The best path to take is the opposite one: that of honour
For, in the end, Fairness is above Hubris
Which is something the young come to learn from adversity. [7]

ἐξ ὧν δὲ ἡ γένεσις ἐστὶ τοῖς οὖσι, καὶ τὴν φθορὰν εἰς ταῦτα γίνεσθαι κατὰ τὸ χρεῶν· διδόναι γὰρ αὐτὰ
δίκην καὶ τίσιν ἀλλήλοις τῆς ἀδικίας κατὰ τὴν τοῦ χρόνου τάξιν. Anaximander [8]

Where beings have their origin there also they cease to exist: offering payment to balance, one to another,
their unbalance for such is the arrangement of what is passing. [9]

David Myatt
July 2023

[1] I expounded on the matter of the word sin in *Interpretation and The Question of Sin* which forms part of my 2013 essay *Exegesis and Translation, Some Personal Reflexions*. <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/exegesis-and-translation-partsone-two.pdf>

[2] My translation, from *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

[3] From *Mythoi To Empathy: A New Appreciation Of The Numinous*, appendix II of *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

[4] In Part Seven, *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*, of *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>; and in the essay *Numinosity, Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/03/dwm-denotata-empathy-v1b.pdf>

[5] In *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism* I defined extremism and an extremist thus:

"By extreme I mean to be harsh, so that my understanding of an extremist is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious nature. Here, harsh is: rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic.

Hence extremism is considered to be: (1) the result of such harshness, and (2) the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists. In addition, a fanatic is considered to be someone with a surfeit of zeal or whose enthusiasm for some objective, or for some cause, is intemperate.

In the philosophical terms of my weltanschauung, an extremist is someone who commits the error of hubris." <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/david-myatt-rejecting-extremism.pdf>

[6] My conclusions are outlined in two works: *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>, and *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/david-myatt-rejecting-extremism.pdf>

[7] Notes on my translation:

a. δίκη. The goddess of Fairness/Justice/Judgement, and – importantly – of Tradition (Ancestral Custom). In Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι, as in Θεογονία (Theogony), Hesiod is recounting and explaining part of that tradition, one important aspect of which tradition is understanding the relation between the gods and mortals. Given both the antiquity of the text and the context, 'Fairness' – as the name of the goddess – is, in my view, more appropriate than the now common

appellation 'Justice', considering the modern (oft times impersonal) connotations of the word 'justice'.

b. Μischief. The sense of ἄτησιν here is not of 'delusion' nor of 'calamities', per se, but rather of encountering that which or those whom (such as the goddess of mischief, Ἄτη) can bring mischief or misfortune into the 'fortunate life' of a 'fortunate mortal', and which encounters are, according to classical tradition, considered as having been instigated by the gods. Hence, of course, why Sophocles [Antigone, 1337-8] wrote ὥς πεπρωμένης οὐκ ἔστι θνητοῖς συμφορᾶς ἀπαλλαγὴ (mortals cannot be delivered from the misfortunes of their fate).

c. δίκαιος. Honour expresses the sense that is meant: of being fair; capable of doing the decent thing; of dutifully observing ancestral customs. A reasonable alternative for 'honour' would thus be 'decency', both preferable to words such as 'just' and 'justice' which are not only too impersonal but have too many inappropriate modern connotations.

d. νήπιος. Literal - 'young', 'uncultured' (i.e. un-schooled, un-educated in the ways of ancestral custom) - rather than metaphorical ('foolish', ignorant).

[8] Diels-Kranz, 12A9, B1

[9] In respect of χρόνος, it is not here a modern abstract measurable 'time' but 'the passing' of living or events as evident in the Agamemnon:

ποίου χρόνου δὲ καὶ πεπόρθηται πόλις 278

Then - how long has it been since the citadel was ravaged?

τίς δὲ πλὴν θεῶν ἅπαντ' ἀπήμων τὸν δι' αἰῶνος χρόνον 554-5

Who - except for the gods - passes their entire life without any injury at all?

In respect of ἀδικία, here it simply implies unbalance in contrast to the balance that is δίκη. The translation 'disorder' - like 'order' for δίκη - is too redolent of some modern or ancient morality designed to manifest 'order' in contrast to its dialectical opposite 'disorder'.

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All translations by DW Myatt

Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos

Spirituality, Humility, and A Learning From Grief

David Myatt

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Prefatory Note

This compilation is of some letters and essays of mine written during the past two years (2012 - 2013) dealing with questions of religion, redemption, expiation, humility, and spirituality in general, and thus compliments both the collection of my writings about the philosophy of pathei-mathos in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos* and my autobiography *Myngath*.

All translations, and interpretations of the meaning of texts (Quranic, poetic and otherwise), are mine, and, in the interests of clarity, I have included a glossary of terms and Greek words - taken from *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos* - given that (i) I tend to use certain Greek words to express my meaning, and (ii) I often have a particular philosophical interpretation or understanding of certain English terms.

David Myatt
2013

In Loving Remembrance of Sue, died 4th April 1993
In Loving Remembrance of Frances, died 29th May 2006

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I Numinous Expiation

One of the many problems regarding my own past which troubles me - and has troubled me for a while - is how can a person make reparation for suffering caused, inflicted, and/or dishonourable deeds done. For, in the person of empathy, of compassion, of honour, a knowledge and understanding of dishonour done, of the suffering one has caused - perhaps before one became such a person of compassion, honour, and empathy - is almost invariably the genesis of strong personal feelings such as remorse, grief, and sorrow. The type of strong feelings that Christopher Marlowe has Iarbus, King of Gaetulia, voice at the end of the play *The Tragedie of Dido Queene of Carthage*, written c.1587:

Cursed Iarbas, die to expiate
The grief that tires upon thine inward soul.

One of the many benefits of an organized theistic religion, such as Christianity or Islam or Judaism, is that mechanisms of personal expiation exist whereby such feelings can be placed in context and expiated by appeals to the supreme deity. In Judaism, there is Teshuvah culminating in Yom Kippur, the day of expiation/reconciliation. In Catholicism, there is the sacrament of confession and penance. In Islam, there is personal dua to, and reliance on, Allah Ar-Rahman, Ar-Raheem, As-Salaam.

Even pagan religions and ways had mechanisms of personal expiation for wrong deeds done, often in the form of propitiation; the offering of a sacrifice, perhaps, or compensation by the giving or the leaving of a valuable gift or votive offering at some numinous - some sacred and venerated - place or site.

One motivation, in the case of pagan religions and ways, for a person to seek expiation is fear of *wrake*; fear of the retribution or of the misfortune, that - from the gods - might befall them or their descendants in this life. Similarly, for those acceptive of an all-knowing, all-seeing supreme deity - or even of the Buddhist mechanism of karma - there is also fear of *wrake*; fear of the punishment, the retribution, the misfortune, that might await them in the next life; or, in the case of Buddhism, the type of life that might result when next they are reborn.

As the Owl explains in the mediæval English religious allegory *The Owl and the Nightingale*,

ich wat þar schal beo niþ & wrake

I can see when there shall be strife and retribution [1]

All such religious mechanisms of expiation, whatever the theology and regardless of the motivation of the individual in seeking such expiation, are or can be cathartic; restorative, healing. But if there is no personal belief in either a supreme deity or in deities, how then to numinously make reparation, propitiation, and thus to not only expiate such feelings as remorse, grief, and sorrow but also and importantly offset the damage one's wrong actions have caused, since by their very nature such suffering-causing actions are ὕβρις and not only result in harm, in people suffering, but also upset the natural balance.

In truth, I do not know the answer to the question how to so numinously make reparation, propitiation. I can only conject, surmise. One of my conjectures is enantiodromia; of the process, mentioned by Diogenes Laërtius and attributed to Heraclitus, of a wholeness arising both before and after discord and division [2]. This wholeness is the healthy, the numinous, interior, inward, and personal balance beyond the separation of beings - beyond πόλεμος and ὕβρις and thus beyond ἔρις; beyond the separation and thence the strife, the discord, which abstractions, ideations, encourage and indeed which they manufacture, bring-into-being. As Heraclitus intimated, according to another quotation attributed to him -

εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἔόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα [χρεών]

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord δίκη, and that beings are naturally born by discord. [3]

But what, then, in practical personal terms are this wholeness and this process termed enantiodromia? To me, this wholeness is a knowing and an acceptance of both the importance of the numinous principle of Δίκη [4] and the necessity of wu-wei [5] - and a knowing which empathy can provide - and thence a desire to live life in a non-interfering manner consistent with empathy, compassion, reason, honour, and humility. And it is this very knowing, this very desire to live in such a manner, which is enantiodromia; which is cathartic, restorative, healing; with a natural humility and the cultivation and practice of reason - σωφρονεῖν, a fair and balanced judgement - being the essence of this personal process, the essence of enantiodromia.

For the human virtue of humility is essential in us for us not to repeat our errors of ὕβρις, a humility which our πάθει μάθος makes us aware of, makes us feel, know, in a very personal sense. For we are aware of, we should remember, our fallibility, our mortality, our mistakes, our errors, our wrong deeds, the suffering we have caused, the harm we have done and inflicted; how much we personally have contributed to discord, strife, sorrow.

In addition, by and through humility, we do what we do not because we expect some reward, or some forgiveness, given by some supra-personal supreme Being, or have some idealized duty to such a Being or to some abstraction (such as some nation, some State) but because it is in our very nature to do an act of compassion, a deed of honour: to do something which is noble and selfless. That is, we act, not out of duty, not out of a desire for Heaven or Jannah, or enlightenment or some other “thing” we have posited – not from any emotion, desire or motive, not because some scripture or some revelation or some Buddha says we should – but because we have lost the illusion of our self-contained, personal, identity, lost our Earth-centric, human-centric, perspective, lost even the causal desire to be strive to something different, and instead just *are*: that is, we are just one microcosmic living mortal connexion between all life, on Earth, and in the Cosmos. For our very nature, as human beings, is a Cosmic nature – a natural part of the unfolding, of the naturally and numinously changing, Cosmos.

Thus a personal humility is the natural balance living within us; that is, we being or becoming or returning to the balance that does not give rise to ἔρις. Or, expressed simply, humility disposes us toward gentleness, toward kindness, toward love, toward peace; toward the virtues that are balance, that express our humanity.

This personal humility inclines us toward σωφρονεῖν; toward being fair, toward rational deliberation, toward a lack of haste. Toward a balanced judgement and thence toward a balanced life of humility, wu-wei, and a knowing of the wisdom of Δίκη.

There is nothing especially religious here, nor any given or necessary praxis. No techniques; no supplication to some-thing or to some posited Being. No expectation of reward, in this life or some posited next life. Only an interior personal change, an attempt to live in a certain gentle, quiet, way so as not to intentionally cause suffering, so as not to upset the natural balance of Life.

DWM
February 2012

Notes

[1] v.1194. The text is that of the Cotton Caligula MS in the British Library as transcribed by JWH Atkins in *The Owl and the Nightingale*, Cambridge University Press, 1922.

[2] The quotation from Diogenes Laërtius is: πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ’ εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα (ix. 7)

My translation is: *All by genesis is appropriately apportioned [separated into portions] with beings bound together again by enantiodromia.*

As I mentioned in my essay *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*:

I have used a transliteration of the compound Greek word - *ἐναντιοδρομίας* - rather than given a particular translation, since the term enantiodromia in my view suggests the uniqueness of expression of the original, and which original in my view is not adequately, and most certainly not accurately, described by a usual translation such as 'conflict of opposites'. Rather, what is suggested is 'confrontational contest' - that is, by facing up to the expected/planned/inevitable contest.

Interestingly, Carl Jung - who was familiar with the sayings of Heraclitus - used the term enantiodromia to describe the emergence of a trait (of character) to offset another trait and so restore a certain psychological balance within the individual.

[3] Fragment 80. qv. my *Heraclitus - Some Translations and Notes*

As I noted in *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*, it is interesting that:

"in the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, and in circulation at the time of Heraclitus, a personified *πόλεμος* (as the *δαίμων* of kindred strife) married a personified *ὑβρις* (as the *δαίμων* of arrogant pride) [8] and that it was a common folk belief that *πόλεμος* accompanied *ὑβρις* - that is, that Polemos followed Hubris around rather than vice versa, causing or bringing *ἔρις*."

[4] As mentioned in my *Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*, *Δίκη* is that noble, respectful, balance understood, for example, by Sophocles (among many others) - for instance, Antigone respects the natural balance, the customs and traditions of her own numinous culture, given by the gods, whereas Creon verges towards and finally commits, like Oedipus in *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the error of *ὑβρις* and is thus "taught a lesson" (just like Oedipus) by the gods because, as Aeschylus wrote -

*Δίκη δὲ τοῖς μὲν παθοῦσιν
μαθεῖν ἐπιρρέπει*

In respect of Δίκη, I write and spell it thus – in this modern way and with a capital Δ – to intimate a new, a particular and numinous, philosophical principle, and differentiate it from the more general δίκη. As a numinous principle, or axiom, Δίκη suggests what lies beyond and what was the genesis of δίκη personified as the goddess, Judgement – the goddess of natural balance, of the ancestral way and ancestral customs.

Thus, Δίκη implies the balance, the reasoned judgement, the thoughtful reasoning – σωφρονεῖν – that πάθει μάθος brings and restores, and which accumulated πάθει μάθος of a particular folk or πόλις forms the basis for their ancestral customs. δίκη is therefore, as the numinous principle Δίκη, what may be said to be a particular and a necessary balance between ἀρετή and ὕβρις – between the ὕβρις that often results when the personal, the natural, quest for ἀρετή becomes unbalanced and excessive.

[5] Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in my philosophy of The Numinous Way "to refer to a personal 'letting-be' deriving from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive – that is, is ὕβρις. In practice, this is the cultivation of a certain (an acausal, numinous) perspective – that life, things/beings, change, flow, exist, in certain natural ways which we human beings cannot change however hard we might try; that such a hardness of human trying, a belief in such hardness, is unwise, un-natural, upsets the natural balance and can cause misfortune/suffering for us and/or for others, now or in the future. Thus success lies in discovering the inner nature of things/beings/ourselves and gently, naturally, slowly, working with this inner nature, not striving against it."

I first became acquainted with the concept of wu-wei when, as a youth living in the Far East, I studied Taoism and a learnt a martial art based on Taoism. Thus it might be fair to assume that Taoism may well have influenced, to some degree, the development of my weltanschauung.

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II Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God Some Personal Musings

Introduction

For the past three or so years, as I developed my 'numinous way' and then last year refined it into the philosophy of pathei-mathos, I have reflected more and more on questions concerning good, evil, honour, God, and religion and ethics in general; related as these matters are (at least according to my fallible understanding) to our nature, and possible development, as human beings, and thence to matters such as society, culture, and the jurisprudence by which modern societies function, or endeavour or aspire to function; and manifesting, as answers to such questions should, at least some explanations concerning the evidence that we human beings possess, and have possessed for thousands upon thousands of years, a paradoxical character, capable of - and having done - both honourable and dishonourable deeds, of being both 'good' and 'bad'.

Thus some of the questions of concern are: (i) what is 'good' and 'bad'; (ii) have the definitions and thence the theology and epistemology and the morality of religions, over millennia, enabled more and more of us to avoid doing or causing what is 'bad'; (iii) what, if anything, can or perhaps should replace such definitions, such theology, such epistemology, such morality - such religions - for those who do not or cannot accept such religious answers and the guidance so offered; (iv) does jurisprudence - and thence The State - offer an acceptable alternative; and, perhaps most importantly, as I have endeavoured to intimate in some other recent musings, (v) can we as a species change, sans a belief in some reward or the threat of punishment - be such karmic, eschatological, or deriving from something such as a State - or "are we fated, under Sun, to squabble and bicker and hate and kill and destroy and exploit this planet and its life until we, a failed species, leave only dead detritic traces of our hubris?" [1]

Today - thousands of years after the births of Lao Tzu, of the Buddha, of Moses, of Jesus of Nazareth, of Muhammad - horrid things still happen every minute of every day to people who do not deserve them, who have done nothing dishonourable. Horrid things caused by other human beings, and it certainly

seems to me that we, as a species - en masse, world-wide - cannot seem to prevent ourselves from doing what is bad, here understanding and accepting, initially at least, 'the bad' as that which harms or kills or causes suffering to others. All we seem to have done is manufacture more excuses for ourselves and for others in order to try and justify the harm done, and the killings and the suffering caused, and thus

"...latterly, in the name of some country, or some nation, or some political ideal, or some cause, or on behalf of some-thing supra-personal we believed in, we sallied for to war or did deeds that caused suffering, death, destruction, and inflicted violence on others. Defending this, or attacking that. Invading here; or colonizing there. Dreaming of or determined to find glory. Always, always, using the excuse that our cause, our ideal, our country, our nation, our security, our prosperity, our 'way of life', our 'destiny', hallowed our deeds; believing that such suffering, death, destruction as we caused, and the violence we inflicted on others, were somehow justified because 'we' were right and 'they' our foes, were wrong or in some way not as 'civilized' or as 'just' as us since 'their cause' or their 'way of life' or way of doing things was, according to us, reprehensible." [2]

But is 'the bad' really that which harms or kills, or causes suffering to, others, and if so, is it necessary - moral - to qualify this understanding by appending 'without just cause' to it, and what, therefore - as others, from the *Jus Papirianum* attributed to Sextus Papirius to Augustine of Hippo to Thomas Aquinas and beyond, have sought to define - is a 'just cause' so that 'the bad' is then understood to be "that which harms or kills or causes suffering to others without just cause".

This essay presents some musings of mine regarding such questions.

DWM
April 2013

Part One

Good and Evil - An Early Christian Perspective

Given the influence of Christianity over individuals in the West during the past two millennia, especially in terms of eschatology and jurisprudence, it seems apposite to consider how the concepts of 'good' and 'evil' are presented in

Christian scripture.

In Genesis 3.5 it is written that:

ἦδει γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ὅτι ἐν ἧ ἅν ἡμέρᾳ φάγητε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, διανοιχθήσονται
ὕμῶν οἱ ὀφθαλμοί, καὶ ἔσεσθε ὡς θεοὶ γινώσκοντες καλὸν καὶ
πονηρόν. [3]

What, therefore, is meant by γινώσκοντες καλὸν καὶ πονηρόν? Most translations - modern and otherwise - provide something akin to "knowing good and evil" which we, after two thousand years, presume to associate with some theological ideation such as 'the forces/realm of good' contrasted with (or verses) 'the forces/realm of evil' as if both have or can have an existence independent of the physical world and independent of ourselves, an existence or a force associated, or seemingly associated, with a being described, in the Hebrew scriptures, as שָׁרָפִי - a serpent - and in LXX as ὄφις, a mythological creature familiar to readers of Hesiod's *Theogony* [4] and from myths and legends concerning the oracle at Delphi and the Πύθων, which is both curious and interesting given that שָׁרָפִי can signify divination (qv. Genesis 44.15, for example) and the whisper (the hiss) of a soothsayer or an enchantress.

But, in respect of this 'good and evil', might the Greek of LXX - and the Hebrew text - suggest something other than such a theological ideation? That is, how might the Greek text have been understood in its time?

The Greek of LXX contrasts κάλος with πονηρόν. Now, κάλος is classically understood (as often in Homer) as 'what is pleasing' (as in pleasing to look upon) and that which is considered beneficial and/or admirable (as in admirable deeds); whence what is beautiful/healthy and what is noble or honourable. Classically understood, πονηρόν is 'wearisome' (as in Hesiod, for instance in reference to the tasks that Hercules has to endure) and also what is considered dishonourable or cowardly, as in Sophocles, *Philoctetes* v.437 - πόλεμος οὐδέν' ἄνδρ' ἐκὼν αἰρεῖ πονηρόν, ἀλλὰ τοὺς χρηστοὺς αἰεὶ (battle does not willingly take cowards, but - as of old - the honourable).

The classical meaning of the Genesis text - of the Greek still understood at the time of LXX (c. 250 BCE) and before later interpretations [5] - might therefore seem to suggest some contrast between what is beneficial/admirable/beautiful/noble/honourable and what is wearisome/cowardly/dishonourable.

Interestingly, the sense of the Hebrew text of Genesis 3.5 seems to follow the sense of the Greek, or vice versa [6] - יָדַעַי טוֹב וְרָע . That is, "knowing tov and rah," with טוֹב suggesting pleasing, pleasant, beautiful; and רָע suggesting adversity, unpleasant, harmful, injurious.

In Genesis 8.21, πονηρόν also occurs, again usually translated as some abstract

'evil' - man's heart is evil from his youth, and so on - even though the classical/Hebrew understanding of the term suggests the former more personal sense of dishonourable/injurious, as does its occurrence in the New Testament, as, for example, in Luke 6.45 where it is - interestingly - contrasted not with κάλος but with ἀγαθός, and where the context - of a healthy (a good, κάλος) tree not bearing rotten/bad (σαπρός) fruit, καλὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν σαπρὸν - also suggests not some abstract (demonic) 'evil' but a dishonourable (a bad, cowardly) person bringing forth some-thing bad, burdensome, dishonourable, and thus unhealthy, as rotten fruit is unhealthy and harmful, and with Luke 6.43-5 therefore translated thus:

For no healthy tree brings forth rotten fruit just as a rotten tree cannot bring forth healthy fruit. For each tree is judged by its fruit. A good person from the store of good in their heart brings forth what is good, and a bad person from their bad store brings forth what is bad; for it is because of an overflowing heart that the mouth speaks.

Οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν δένδρον καλὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν σαπρὸν, οὐδὲ πάλιν δένδρον σαπρὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν καλόν, ἕκαστον γὰρ δένδρον ἐκ τοῦ ἰδίου καρποῦ γινώσκεται· ὁ ἀγαθὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ θησαυροῦ τῆς καρδίας προφέρει τὸ ἀγαθόν, καὶ ὁ πονηρὸς ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ προφέρει τὸ πονηρόν· ἐκ γὰρ περισσεύματος καρδίας λαλεῖ τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ

This 'healthy tree' and 'rotten fruit' make sense, for how can a tree be evil? Similarly, the contrast of πονηρόν with ἀγαθός also makes sense in referring to a bad person and good person, for ἀγαθός is classically understood as brave; honourable; well-bred (as often in Homer) and as implying a personal quality, such as prowess, excellence, in some-thing - or good at some-thing - as in The Agamemnon of Aeschylus:

ὅστις δ' ἀγαθὸς προβατογνώμων,
οὐκ ἔστι λαθεῖν ὄμματα φωτός,
τὰ δοκοῦντ' εὐφρονος ἐκ διανοίας
ὕδαρεϊ σαίνειν φιλότῃτι.

Yet to he who has a good knowledge of his herd
A person's eyes cannot conceal what is a feeble begging for friendship
Behind a pretence of reasoned good judgement. (vv. 795-798)

and as in Oedipus Tyrannus by Sophocles:

ὄρᾳς ἴν' ἤκεις, ἀγαθὸς ὦν γνώμην ἀνήρ,
τοῦμόν παριεῖς καὶ καταμβλύνων κέαρ;

Observe where you have come to with your prowess in reason
By me giving way and blunting my passion. (vv. 687-8)

The scriptural contrast of rottenness and health is also evident, for instance, in Romans 12.21:

μη νικῶ ὑπὸ τοῦ κακοῦ ἀλλὰ νίκα ἐν τῷ ἀγαθῷ τὸ κακόν

where ἀγαθός is contrasted with κακός rather than with πονηρόν. Although the verse is often translated along the lines of 'Do not let evil conquer you, instead conquer evil with good,' classically understood, κακός is what is 'bad' in the sense of some-thing rotten or unhealthy, or - the opposite of κάλος - what is displeasing to see. κακός is also what is unlucky, a misfortune, and/or injurious, as for example in The Agamemnon

τὸ μὲν γυναῖκα πρῶτον ἄρσενος δίχα
ῥῆσθαι δόμοις ἔρημον ἔκπαγλον κακόν

Primarily, for a lady to be separate from her mate -
To remain unprotected by family - is a harsh misfortune (vv. 862-3)

Given the sense of ἀγαθός previously mentioned (with reference for example to Luke 6.45) and this sense of κακός, then Romans 12.21 might suggest: "Do not let what is rotten win; instead, overpower what is rotten with what is good," and good in the sense of beneficial and healthy, so that an alternative would be "Do not let what is harmful win; instead, overpower what is harmful with what is healthy."

Similarly, Romans 12.17 - with its contrast of κακός and κάλος - would imply:

Do not render what is bad with what is bad; rather, show concern for what all see is good.

μηδενὶ κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἀποδιδόντες, προνοοῦμενοι καλὰ ἐνώπιον πάντων ἀνθρώπων·

Understood thus, the impression is not of 'fire and brimstone' preaching but of something rather gentle, something much more human and appealing and understanding of human nature; something evident, for example, in the well-known passage (Romans 13.10) ἡ ἀγάπη τῷ πλησίον κακὸν οὐκ ἐργάζεται· πλήρωμα οὖν νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη: love brings no harm to the neighbour; love is the completion of the law.

Furthermore, it is this love which is healthy and good; which can 'overpower what is harmful', what is bad.

What these examples reveal - and many other examples from Christian scripture could be adduced - is not abstract, impersonal, theological concepts of 'good' and 'evil' but rather something personal that individuals can relate to and understand, and it is tempting therefore to suggest that it was later, and theological, interpretations and interpolations which led to a harsh dichotomy,

an apocalyptic eschatology, a 'war' between an abstract 'good' and 'evil', and that with such interpretations and interpolations - much in evidence in the persecution of alleged heretics - the simple gospel message of the health of love was somehow lost for a while, to be, later on, re-expressed by people such as William Penn, who wrote, in his *Some Fruits of Solitude*, "Let us then try what love can do."

Notes

[1] *Blue Reflected Starlight*. 2012

[2] qv. *A Slowful Learning, Perhaps*. 2012

[3] Septuaginta - Vetus Testamentum. c. 250 BCE.

[4] qv. the Chimaera (vv. 319ff), described as having three heads, one of which - ἢ δ' ὄφις - was a serpent, a dragon: ὄμιθεν δὲ δράκων.

[5] The current consensus is that LXX was written around 250 BCE, give or take a few decades. This is the Hellenistic era of Euclid and Archimedes; a period when Homer was still recited, and the classic tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and others, some two or more centuries before, were still understood and appreciated, just as the language of Shakespeare - and his plays - are understood and appreciated today. This appreciation of classical Greek literature continued into the Roman era and beyond, with the cultured Cicero, for example, often explaining classical Greek terms for his Latin readers, and with Marcus Aurelius - Roman Emperor a century after the time of Jesus of Nazareth - writing his 'meditations', Τὰ εἰς ἑαυτὸν - in the same (possibly Attic derived) κοινή Greek as that of LXX and the New Testament.

It is therefore seems likely that the scribes of LXX - and possibly those of the New Testament - were also familiar with the earlier classical literature.

[6] The date of the Hebrew scriptures has been much discussed. The earliest fragments of extant texts of both LXX and the Hebrew scriptures currently known suggest that LXX is slightly (but not much) older than the written text of the Hebrew scriptures of which papyrus fragments survive. However, according to Jewish aural tradition the scrolls of the Torah were first written c. 1000 BCE and thus would predate LXX by many centuries.

Part Two

Good and Evil - A Muslim Perspective

The classical and the early Christian sense of a human, and a natural, and not an abstract, dogmatical, good and bad, briefly outlined in part one, is also found in Islam: in the Quran, in the Sunnah, and in Shariah. For the sense of 'the bad' - الْخَبِيثُ - is of what is rotten, unhealthy, dirty, unclean, defective; with the sense of 'the good', of 'good things' - الطَّيِّبَاتِ - being pleasing, pure, healthy, natural, beautiful, noble.

Consider, for example, Surah 5, Ayah 100 of the Quran:

قُلْ لَا يَسْتَوِي الْخَبِيثُ وَالطَّيِّبُ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ كَثْرَةُ
الْخَبِيثِ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَتَأُولَىٰ أَلَلْبَبِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

A fallible 'interpretation of meaning' [1] is:

"The dirty and the clean are not alike even though, being ubiquitous, what is dirty may entice [أَعْجَبَكَ] you." [2]

In Surah 61, Ayah 12, 'good' - طَيِّبَةً - is what is beautiful, pleasant:

يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَيُدْخِلْكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ وَمَسَاكِنَ طَيِّبَةً فِي جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ
الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٢﴾

" [Allah] will forgive your transgressions [ذُنُوبَكُمْ] and guide you to Jannah wherein are rivers, cascading down, and those beautiful dwellings set within perpetually-flowering gardens. And this is the success that matters." [Interpretation of meaning]

Consider also Surah 2, Ayah 267:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّا
 أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ۖ وَلَا تَيَمَّمُوا الْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ وَلَسْتُمْ
 بِآخِذِيهِ إِلَّا أَنْ تُغْمِضُوا فِيهِ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ ﴿٢١٧﴾

"From what We give you from the earth and from the good things you have earned - disburse; but do not look toward [تَيَمَّمُوا] disbursing those defective things, which you would never take [for yourself] unless your eyes were closed." [Interpretation of meaning]

As with the New Testament, what these examples reveal - and many other examples could be adduced - is not abstract concepts of 'good' and 'evil' but rather something that is understandable by individuals and related to themselves and the world around them [3].

Jurisprudence and Society

Islam and Christianity have both developed traditions relating to the scope, detail, intent, and the implementation, of the laws necessitated by a society [4] - a jurisprudence - as well as traditions, or doctrines, concerning the nature of the authority that has or asserts it has the power to enforce such laws, and which laws often seek to criminalize 'the bad' and thus offer an interpretation of 'the good' and 'the bad'.

The traditional Christian view, evident in the Catholic tradition, is one of not only canon law but of the exercise of spiritual influence, direct and indirect, over civil authority to the extent, for example, that the Code of Justinian of 529-534 CE begins with *In Nomine Domini Nostri Jesu Christi* and (i) enshrined in law the authority of the Church, (ii) enshrined in law the requirement that all persons subject to the jurisdiction of the code be Christian, and thus that society be a Christian one; and (iii) detailed in law what constituted heresy.

For Muslims, Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) - the textual sources of which are the Quran and Sunnah - is a legal and an ethical guide to what is good and what is bad; that is, to what is halal (beneficial) and what is haram (harmful) from the perspective of the only success that, for a Muslim, matters: the success of being guided by Allah to dwell in the perpetually-flowering Gardens of Paradise, wherein are rivers, cascading down.

Being a legal as well as an ethical guide, fiqh deals not only with religious worship but also with civil, business, and domestic, matters such as

transactions, ownership, funds, and inheritance, and thus provides a framework for a society whose aim is to assist Muslims who live together in a particular area to know and follow the precepts and the way of life revealed by Muhammad: to do and inspire what is good, and avoid and dissuade others from doing what is bad, تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ (Amr bil Maroof wa Nahi anil Munkar) [5].

However, it seems to me that the problem with jurisprudence, Muslim and Christian, is and was our fallible, human, understanding of the revelation, of the original message; a problem classically understood in Islam by the distinction made by Muslim scholars between fiqh - our fallible understanding and attempts at interpretation - and Shariah, the divine and perfect guidance given by Allah, based as fiqh (classical Islamic jurisprudence) is on the principles of acceptance of diversity (of scholarly opinion), on custom [6], and on reasoned deductions by individuals that are stated to be fallible and thus not immutable. A distinction that allows for reasoned change, accepts the necessity of diverse opinions, the necessity of individual independent scholarly judgement in trials, arbitrations, and determining penalties, and manifests both the non-hierarchical nature of the religion of Islam and the original understanding of the good and the bad.

In modern times, in the Muslim world, this necessary distinction between fiqh and Shariah, this allowance for reasoned change based on diverse scholarly opinion, and the necessity of individual independent scholarly judgement in trials, arbitrations, and determining penalties, often seems to be overlooked when attempts are made by governments in Muslim lands to introduce 'Shariah law' with the result that inflexible penal codes and immutable penalties are introduced backed by the claim, contrary to fiqh, that such governments have a mandate to impose and enforce such dogmatical interpretations as are an inevitable part of such government-sponsored codified law.

Even in the past this distinction between fiqh and Shariah, and the need for an acceptance of a diversity of scholarly and reasoned opinion, was often neglected, especially by powerful rulers or ruling cliques, leading to societies which were Muslim in name only where 'the good' came to be more the embodiment of the will or the desire or the need of the powerful, the privileged, than it was of the original religious revelation, and where 'the law' became inflexible, impersonal, and often corrupt, with regular conflict between the powerful, the privileged within a society and/or between societies, and which conflicts were sometimes justified by appeals to a particular religious interpretation. Similarly with Christianity, as shown by the tumultuous conflicts - religious and civil, and causing immense suffering - within the West since the time of Justinian.

Thus does the original meaning - the message - of the revelation seem to become somewhat lost; the message, in the case of Christianity, of love and

humility, of redemption through suffering (crucifixus), of Ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ [7]; the message, in the case of Islam, of an individual reliance only on Allah, of Adab [8], of respect for diversity and custom.

Which leads to the question as to whether a jurisprudence based on a spiritual revelation works, given the nature of such a religion and the fact that it seems that our paradoxical human nature and our societies were not effectively changed, and have not been effectively changed, by such jurisprudence, or at least not changed for long. Do these religions - does religion, spirituality, in general - require, demand, that the believers reform, or try to reform, the world? If so, is that contrary to such personal, human, notions of the good and the bad that have been described above? [9] Is two thousand years - in the case of Christianity - a sufficient time to judge such change, such societies, such jurisprudence? Is one and a half thousand years - in the case of Islam - a sufficient time to judge such change, such societies, such jurisprudence?

The problem seems to be that for revelatory religions such as Islam and Christianity the priority is salvation of the individual and thus the distinction made between this, our mortal, life and the next; a priority and a distinction that has, for centuries, been used to explain, and often justify - by individuals, governments, factions, and authorities - harsh deeds and practices, and harsh punishments and policies. Thus, what has tended to occur is that such salvation has become a 'just cause', used for century after century to justify or to try and justify (i) the persecution, torture, and killing of those deemed to be heretics, (ii) wars (bellum iustum), conflicts, and violent religious schisms; and (iii) the harsh treatment of 'non-believers'. All in the name of, for example, 'saving souls', and/or based on the belief, the interpretation, that this is what God has commanded; for such suffering and horrors that are caused or occur in this life are really of lesser importance than being admitted into Heaven. Hence the concepts of martyrdom and of us bearing our misfortunes, our pain, our suffering, the horrors inflicted by others and on others, because of the hope, the promise, the reward, of an everlasting life in eternal bliss.

The Modern State

Such an understanding - such questions and such answers regarding religion and religious jurisprudence - are not new, and led, centuries ago, to the idea of the secular State, to the theory of governance termed liberal democracy, and to a new or at least a revised jurisprudence [10]. That is, to such sentiments as are expressed in the 1776 Declaration of Independence:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted

among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."

The focus is not on salvation, not on Heaven or Jannah, but on Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. A focus, a governance, a jurisprudence, and a sentiment, that have certainly changed the West, and some other parts of the world, for the better. As I have mentioned elsewhere:

"The simple truth of the present and so evident to me now - in respect of the societies of the West, and especially of societies such as those currently existing in America and Britain - is that for all their problems and all their flaws they seem to be much better than those elsewhere, and certainly better than what existed in the past. That is, that there is, within them, a certain tolerance; a certain respect for the individual; a certain duty of care; and certainly still a freedom of life, of expression, as well as a standard of living which, for perhaps the majority, is better than elsewhere in the world and most certainly better than existed there and elsewhere in the past.

In addition, there are within their structures - such as their police forces, their governments, their social and governmental institutions - people of good will, of humanity, of fairness, who strive to do what is good, right. Indeed, far more good people in such places than bad people, so that a certain balance, the balance of goodness, is maintained even though occasionally (but not for long) that balance may seem to waver somewhat.

Furthermore, many or most of the flaws, the problems, within such societies are recognized and openly discussed, with a multitude of people of good will, of humanity, of fairness, dedicating themselves to helping those affected by such flaws, such problems. In addition, there are many others trying to improve those societies, and to trying find or implement solutions to such problems, in tolerant ways which do not cause conflict or involve the harshness, the violence, the hatred, of extremism." [11]

Interestingly, many of the 'multitude of people of good will, of humanity, of fairness' dedicated to helping those within such now secular societies, and many of those trying to improve those societies, are people of faith: Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist... Which perhaps explains, or partly explains, why Christianity and, to a lesser extent, Islam have begun, by the necessity of interaction and by social practicalities, to adapt to the changes that the modern State - with its liberal democracy and modern jurisprudence - has wrought over

the past two centuries; changes manifest, for example, not only in an increased standard of living for many (especially in the lands of the West) but also in attitudes, perception, and expectation, especially in relation to human rights. A change that has begun to lead many Christians, and some Muslims, to re-discover the simple message of their respective - and in many ways quite similar - revelations; a change that has led others to reject the more harsh interpretations of their faith and seek reform within their faith (Christian, Jewish, and Muslim); and a change which is leading others to question whether such messages of revelation are even compatible with the rights, the life, the liberty, and the happiness, of certain people, such as those whose love is for someone of the same gender.

Good and Evil - The Perspective of Pathei-Mathos

The pathei-mathos of individuals over thousands of years, often described in literature, poetry, memoirs, aural stories, and often expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, has resulted in an accumulation of insights; what we might with some justification describe as a culture, which, while often redolent of the spiritual, is not religious. That is, not doctrinal, not codified, not organized, and not presenting or manifesting a theology. A culture that is supra-national, containing as it does, among many other treasures, the observations of Lao Tzu, Siddhartha Gautama, Ovid, and Mohandas K. Gandhi; the thoughts of Aeschylus, Sappho, and Sophocles; the writings of Marcus Aurelius and Jane Austen; the allegory, the mystery, of Jesus of Nazareth; and, importantly, the experiences - written, recorded, and aural - of those who over the centuries have endured suffering, conflict, disaster, tragedy, and war, and who were forever changed by the experience.

As often in respect of a culture, as with a religion or a spiritual Way of Life, individuals may favour some insights over others, and may and probably will differ over how certain insights should be understood or interpreted. As for me, I find in this vast cultural treasure three important things.

First, an understanding of the impermanence of temporal things; of how abstract ideations - given some practical form and maintained via striving human beings - over decades and centuries always by their nature wreck havoc and cause or contribute to suffering often despite the decent intentions of those who brought them into being and maintain or maintained them; and of how all such forms, in the perspective of millennia, 'hath but a short time to live'.

Second, that even the modern State with its liberal democracy and its jurisprudence and its benefits and positive change, is not only impermanent but also, for some, a cause of suffering, of havoc, and that the benefits and the positive change do not necessarily offset such suffering, such havoc, as are caused, as have been caused, and as may continue to be caused; and that it is

for each one of us to decide how to, or whether to, engage with such an impermanent form, by and for example following the moral advice given some two millennia ago - Ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ - and/or by perhaps trying to improve those societies, "in tolerant ways which do not cause conflict or involve the harshness, the violence, the hatred, of extremism."

Third, that there is in this culture of pathei-mathos a particular ethos: the tone of harmony, ἁρμονίη; of a natural balance, or rather of how certain human actions are hubris - ὕβρις - and not only disrupt this needful harmony but also cause or contribute to suffering. Of the importance, and perhaps the primacy, of human love; of how Eris is the child of Polemos and Hubris, and of how a lovelorn Polemos follows Hubris around, never requited. Of how the truths of religions and spiritual ways are, in their genesis, basically simple, always numinous, and most probably the same: guides to living in such a way that we can rediscover the natural balance, appreciate the numinous, and avoid hubris.

All of which lead to an understanding of (i) how good and bad are not 'out there' and cannot be manifest or assumed to be manifest in some form, by some ideation, or in 'them' (the others), without causing or contributing to or being the genesis of suffering, but instead are within us as individuals, a part of our nature, our character, our φύσις, and often divergently expressed; and (ii) of how, in my view at least, personal honour and not a codified law, not a jurisprudence, is the best, the most excellent, way to define and manifest this 'good', with honour understood, as in my philosophy of pathei-mathos [12], as an instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous. An honourable person is thus someone of manners, fairness, reasoned judgement, and valour; with honour being a means to live, to behave, in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις; in order try and avoid causing suffering, and in order to rediscover, to acquire, ἁρμονίη, that natural balance that presences the numinous (sans denotatum and sans dogma) and thus reveals what is important about life and about being human.

For, in effect, the truths concerning honour and dishonour, and of our propensity for both honour and dishonour, are the essence of what we can learn from the supra-national, the living, and the thousands of years old, human culture of pathei-mathos.

Notes

[1] The fallible interpretations of meaning that are given here are mine.

[2] In respect of لَا تُعْجِبْكَ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَأَوْلَادُهُمْ - do not let أَعْجَبَكَ , qv. Surah 9, Ayah 85

their wealth and their children enchant you. That is, do not be impressed by their wealth and marvel at their (apparently fine) offspring.

[3] It is to be expected that some, or many, will find this conclusion of mine regarding good and evil in Christian scripture and/or in Islam a controversial one, as no doubt some will query my (fallible) interpretation of the texts, and which interpretations often avoid conventional readings, for three reasons.

First, to hopefully give some readers a sense - an intimation - of the vibrancy, the immediacy, that I find in the texts that I have endeavoured to translate/interpret here, and endeavoured in the past to translate/interpret elsewhere.

Second, as I noted in *Explanation Of Humility and The Need for Tolerance* with respect to the Quran and الرُّعْب :

My, admittedly fallible, view now - after some years of reflexion and study - is that, in an English interpretation of the meaning of a work as revered, and misunderstood, as the Quran, English words in common usage must be carefully chosen, with many common words avoided, and that it would sometimes be better to choose an unusual or even archaic word in order to try and convey something of the sense of the Arabic. Thus, with a careful interpretation common misunderstandings of the text - by non-Muslims unversed in Arabic - can possibly be avoided, especially if - as might be the case with unusual words - the reader has to pause to consider the meaning or make the effort to find the meaning, if only in a glossary appended to the interpretation. A pause and/or an effort that is suited to reading a work revered by millions of people around the world.

Hence why in the matter of Ayah 151 of Surah Al 'Imran, my interpretation of meaning, employing just such an unusual English word with a literary provenance, was:

Into the hearts of they who disbelieve We shall hurl redurre because they, without any authority revealed about such things, associate others with Allah; and for their home: The Fire, that harrowing resting place of the unjust.

Third, to perhaps inspire some to scholarly consider, again, both the text themselves and the accepted interpretation(s) given that in my view translation/interpretation of texts to English from an ancient (no longer spoken) language or from a text revered in the way the Quran is (i) not 'an exact science' but more akin to an art to be approached with (a) an artistic appreciation of what was (in the case of ancient texts) a living vibrant language and in the case of the Quran is a poetic and numinous language, (b) with a certain humility, and (c) with a lack of preconceptions about the accepted 'meaning' of certain words and which accepted meanings are often only the

attempts of others in the past to approximate an assumed meaning, and (ii) that the rich diversity, vibrancy, and flexibility of the English language has, in my view, been much underused, and an underuse that has sometimes led to bland interpretations of texts.

[4] Society is understood here, as elsewhere in my philosophy of *pathei-mathos*, as a collection of individuals who live in a particular area and who are subject to the same laws (or customs) - whether written or aural - and the same institutions of authority, however that authority has been obtained and is manifest.

Jurisprudence is understood here as describing a systematic (often codified) system of law - written or aural, and whether practical, implemented, or theorized - and the scope, nature, and intent of those laws. The *Jus Papirianum* attributed to Sextus Papirius and the Code of Justinian are thus examples of jurisprudence.

[5] Surah 3, Ayah 110.

[6] One of the five principle maxims of Islamic jurisprudence (which five principles are regarded as expressing the essence of *fiqh*) is *لعادة محكمة*. That is, that the customs of a society or culture are important and a factor to be considered if they do not conflict with the guidance of Quran and Sunnah.

[7] Matthew 22:21. Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God, the things that are God's.

[8] The importance of Muslim Adab - the manners, the morals, the culture, of Muslims - in defining and understanding Islam is something that many non-Muslims, especially those critical of Islam, are either ignorant of or dismiss.

An appreciation of Adab can be gleaned from reading Bukhari's book *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad* and also An-Nawawi's collection *Forty Ahadith*.

[9] qv. Part Three.

[10] Important parts of this jurisprudence concern international law and laws relating to human rights.

[11] *Notes on The Politics and Ideology of Hate* (2012)

[12] qv. *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos* and *Recuyle of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*.

Part Three

Religion, Law, and The Reformation of Individuals

The overview in parts one and two of how, in my view, good and evil are understood in the culture of pathei-mathos and by early Christianity and Islam presented several musings, based as that overview was and those musing are on my experiences, study, and reflexion, over some forty years. One of my musings was that, in the case of Islam and Christianity - two of the most influential spiritual ways of life in the last two millennia - the understanding of good and evil was not originally of some dogmatical and theological abstraction divorced from human life, but a more directly personal one related to the behaviour of individuals, with the promise that good behaviour - as outlined in the gospels and in the Quran and Sunnah - would most probably be rewarded with a place in Heaven or Paradise, and that the powerful and the leaders of governments are accountable to God [1].

In the case of the culture of pathei-mathos, it not only provides, as does the modern State, a perspective (and a teleology) unrelated to the judgement of a supreme deity and the promise of an after-life, but also points us toward answers rather different from those provided by proponents of the State, of liberal democracy, and of a jurisprudence concerned with international law and codifying and criminalizing what politicians, and/or some political theory, ideology, dogma, or agenda, deem to be bad. For what that culture provides is an understanding of how all forms - be they considered political [2], or codified ideologically [3] or in the form of a dogmatic hierarchical religion - have caused suffering, or do cause suffering sooner or later, because they are judgemental, supra-personal; and that such suffering is unjustified because it is individual human beings and indeed the other life with which we share this planet who and which are important; and that to alleviate and to prevent and remove the causes of suffering is necessary because a manifestation of what is good; that is, a manifestation of reasoned, balanced, compassionate, personal judgement, and of that learning, that knowledge, the insights, that personal experience of conflict, war, disaster, tragedy, havoc, violence, hatred, and pain, have taught and revealed to individuals for some three thousand years.

Thus it is that this culture contains the judgement, the insights, and the experience, of people as diverse in their origins, their life, and in some of their views, as Lao Tzu, Sappho, van Gogh, Solzhenitsyn, and Mohandas K. Gandhi. Sappho, for instance, moved by personal love, wrote over two and half thousand years ago that:

For some - it is horsemen; for others - it is infantry;
For some others - it is ships which are, on this black earth,

Visibly constant in their beauty. But for me,
It is that which you desire.

To all, it is easy to make this completely understood
For Helen - she who greatly surpassed other mortals in beauty -
Left her most noble man and sailed forth to Troy
Forgetting her beloved parents and her daughter
Because [the goddess] led her away [...]

Which makes me to see again Anactoria now far distant:
For I would rather behold her pleasing, graceful movement
And the radiant splendour of her face
Than your Lydian chariots and foot-soldiers in full armour... [4]

While Gandhi, motivated by a desire for communal change and a vision of the future, more recently wrote that civilization, correctly understood, does not mean and does not require cities and centralized government and vast industries - and thus a modern State - but rather means and requires a certain personal moral conduct, a "mastery over our mind and our passions" [5], non-violence, the simplicity of village life [6], and communities voluntarily cooperating together in pursuit of collective, and personal, development.

Which two examples illustrate what are, perhaps, the two main answers that the culture of pathei-mathos offers and has so far offered to the question, posed in the Introduction of this essay, of what, if anything, can or perhaps should (i) replace the answers of religions for those who do not or cannot accept such religious answers and the theological perspective and guidance so offered, and/or (ii) replace the answers offered by the jurisprudence of nation-States and the political theories of governance of such States for those who adjudge that the suffering such States cause is, on balance, unacceptable [7]. These two answers - founded on or inspired by the insight of a personal rather than an impersonal, dogmatical, good and bad - are the internal one of a personal life, focused on personal love (and/or on Art, music, and so on), and the external one of seeking change by means such as the non-violence of passive resistance [8] and through personal example.

How to choose? What criteria, moral or otherwise, to use to judge these two answers, and the other answers that over millennia and by pathei-mathos, have been lived and/or proposed? The criterion of the reformation - the development, the change - of the individual? If so, a change from what to where? Or, perhaps, the criterion should be personal honour? Indeed, should there be, or can there even be, some suprapersonal judgemental criteria that others may employ?

Given the nature of pathei-mathos [9], and the nature of a criterion, I incline toward the view that there is no criteria beyond the very individual, the reasoned, the personal, non-transferable, and fallible, judgement which derives

from our own pathei-mathos, our own empathy, our own experience, our own life, and our own understanding of the causes of suffering.

Good, Evil, and The Criteria of Progress

To formulate some standard or rule or some test to try to evaluate alternatives and make choices in such matters is to make presumptions about what constitutes progress; about what constitutes a 'higher' level - or a more advanced stage - and what constitutes a 'lower' level or stage. That is, to not only make a moral judgement connected to what is considered to be 'good' and 'evil' - right and wrong, correct and incorrect - but also to apply that judgement to others and to 'things'. To judge them, and/or the actions of others, by whether they are on a par with, or are moving toward or away from, that 'right' and that 'wrong'.

This is, in my view, a veering toward hubris, away from the natural balance, and thus away from that acknowledgement of our fallibility, of our uncertainty of knowing, that is the personal virtue of humility. For the essence of the culture of pathei-mathos, and the genesis, the ethos, of all religious revelations and spiritual ways before or until they become dogmatical [10], seems to be that we can only, without hubris, without prejudice, judge and reform ourselves.

For what the culture of pathei-mathos reveals is that we human beings, are - personally - both the cause and the cure of suffering; and that our choice is whether or not we live, or try to live, in a manner which does not intentionally contribute to or which is not the genesis of new suffering. The choice, in effect, to choose the way of harmony - the natural balance - in preference to hubris. But how, if we choose the way of harmony, are we to live? Are we to try and judge the lives and works of those who in the past have so chosen, or seem to us to have so chosen, or whose life and works seems to manifest a certain harmony or a particular numinous understanding which resonates with us? Are we then to try and judge and compare the passive resistance of Gandhi to the life and works of William Penn to the poetry of Sappho to the life and work of van Gogh to the influence of Lao Tzu or Jesus of Nazareth. Who are we to do this, and why? Does non-violent activism toward and in the name of 'progress', and/or a message of spiritual reformation and redemption, have - or should have - a higher value than poetry or Art or music or a life lovingly devoted to a partner or to cultivating Wu-Wei?

Or do we see the empathic, the human, the personal, scale of things, and our own human limitations, and accept that we do not need to so judge and so choose because we incline toward the view that all we can hope to do without veering toward hubris - toward upsetting the natural balance of Life, and thus causing more suffering - is to gently and with humility to try and personally

alleviate some suffering somewhere in our own small way by, for instance, being compassionate and honourable in the immediacy of the living moment? With thus little or no concern for, or presumptions about, what others believe constitutes some-thing termed progress, and with little or no concern either about the promise, the reward, of an afterlife or about some suprapersonal human manufactured form, such as a State, that in some shape or other exists during our own brief mortal life? If so, then what - if anything - is the meaning, the purpose, of our so brief human living?

Notes

[1] "For what can a Man give in Exchange for his Life, as well as Soul? And though the chiefest in Government are seldom personally exposed, yet it is a Duty incumbent upon them to be tender of the Lives of their People; since without all Doubt, they are accountable to God for the Blood that is spilt in their Service. So that besides the Loss of so many Lives, of importance to any Government, both for Labour and Propagation, the Cries of so many Widows, Parents and Fatherless are prevented, that cannot be very pleasant in the Ears of any Government, and is the Natural Consequence of War in all Government." William Penn. *An Essay towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe*. 1693 CE

[2] By the term politics is meant: (i) The theory and practice of governance, with governance itself founded on two fundamental assumptions; that of some minority - a government (elected or unelected), some military authority, some oligarchy, some ruling elite, some tyrannos, or some leader - having or assuming authority (and thus power and influence) over others, and with that authority being exercised over a specific geographic area or territory; (ii) The activities of those individuals or groups whose aim or whose intent is to obtain and exercise some authority or some control over - or to influence - a society or sections of a society by means which are organized and directed toward changing/reforming that society or sections of a society, either in accordance with a particular ideology or not.

[3] By the term ideology is meant a coherent, organized, and distinctive set of beliefs and/or ideas or ideals, and which beliefs and/or ideas and/or ideals pertain to governance, and/or to society, and/or to matters of a philosophical or a spiritual nature.

[4] From fragment 16 (7th century BCE), the full text of which, from P. Oxy. 1231 and 2166, is, with square brackets indicating conjectures and missing text:

οἱ μὲν ἱππῶν στρότον οἱ δὲ πέσδων,
οἱ δὲ νᾶων φαῖσ' ἐπ[ὶ] γᾶν μέλαι[ν]αν
ἔ]μμεναι κάλλιστον, ἔγω δὲ κῆν' ὄτ-
τω τις ἔραται·
πά]λγχυ δ' εὖμαρες σύνετον πόησαι

πάντι τ[ο]ῦτ', ἃ γὰρ πόλυ περσκέθοισα
 κάλλος [ἀνθ]ρώπων Ἑλένα [τὸ]ν ἄνδρα
 τὸν [ἄρ]ιστον
 καλλ[ίποι]σ' ἔβα 'ς Τροίαν πλέοι[σα
 κωῦδ[ὲ πα]ῖδος οὐδὲ φίλων το[κ]ήων
 πά[μπαν] ἐμνάσθη, ἀλλὰ παράγαγ' αὐταν
 []σαν
 [
 []αμπτον γὰρ [
 [
 []...κούφως τ[]οη.[.]ν
 [
 ..]με νῦν Ἀνακτορί[ας ὀ]νέμναι-
 σ' οὐ []παρεοίσας,
 τᾷς <κ>ε βολλοίμαν ἔρατόν τε βᾶμα
 κάμαρυχμα λάμπρον ἴδην προσώπω
 ἢ τὰ Λύδων ἄρματα κᾶν ὄπλοισι
 [πεσδομ]άχεντας.

[5] *Hind Swaraj*, part 13. 1909 CE

[6] Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, October 5, 1945 CE

[7] The argument here is along the following lines. That nation-States accept both the primacy of a codified law based on the maintenance of internal order according to that law, and the need to ensure the security, the interests, and the preservation, of the nation-State, both of which often necessitate or have necessitated the following: (i) the killing of and/or the use of violence against human beings in their own lands, and/or elsewhere by means of war or otherwise; (ii) the imprisonment/persecution of human beings both for deeds/dissent deemed illegal and for 'crimes against the State'; (iii) actions which cause pain and suffering and hardship to others, such as internal economic policies and/or external economic/trade sanctions; (iv) the commercial exploitation of the resources of this planet and of the other life with which we share this planet.

[8] "Passive resistance is a method of securing rights by personal suffering, it is the reverse of resistance by arms. When I refuse to do a thing that is repugnant to my conscience, I use soul-force [...] Passive resistance, that is, soul-force, is matchless. It is superior to the force of arms." Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, part 17. 1909 CE

Concerning governments, he wrote, also in *Hind Swaraj*, that: "They do not say: 'You must do such and such a thing,' but they say: 'if you do not do it, we will punish you'."

[9] qv. my *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary*.

[10] As William Penn wrote in his tract *The Great Case of Liberty of Conscience Once More Briefly Debated and Defended*, published in 1670 CE:

"They overturn the Christian Religion: 1. In the Nature of it, which is Meekness; 2. In the Practice of it, which is Suffering."

Part Four

Ontology and Denotatum

To find answers to questions such as (i) how to live in a manner which does not intentionally contribute to or which is not the genesis of new suffering, and (ii) is there a meaning to our existence beyond the answers of God and 'the pursuit of liberty and happiness' requires reformulating the questions based on the ontological presumptions that underlie them. That is, we need to understand ourselves, our nature, and to pose and answer questions regarding being, beings, and the relationship between beings.

Conventional religions - such as Christianity and Islam - begin with a supreme being and a revelation, the promise, of an afterlife following a judgement, by the supreme being, of we humans as individuals. That is, there is guidance given as to what is good and bad and as to one's expected behaviour, as well as individuals who can commit transgressions - who can 'sin' - or who, by following the correct guidance, can progress toward salvation. The ontology here is of a transcendent, immortal, God, or Allah, and of separate mortal beings who possess the potential - for example, an immortal soul - to gain an existence beyond the death of their corporeal body. The immortal being has the ability (the power) to punish, or to reward, the mortal beings, and is stated to be a real being with an existence independent of us.

In respect of The State, the ontology is one of an entity - The State, the nation-State, the government - and of individuals ('citizens') who are less powerful than this entity, with this entity, however named, having the ability (the power) to punish, or to reward, the citizens. There is guidance given, by powerful entity, in the form of laws - of what is bad and good and one's expected behaviour - and the promise of such things as 'Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness' and reward of, a possible progress toward (in this life), security, health, and (possibly) wealth or at least a reasonable standard of living. Here, the powerful entity is a human ideation, of varied and variable specification, and which specifications have been manufactured - brought into being - by humans at various times during the past three hundred years and more.

In respect of the culture of pathei-mathos, I find within it an alternative to these two influential, but in many ways quite similar, ontologies with their powerful entities, their guidance, their punishments and rewards, and the progression of individuals toward some-thing which the powerful entity asserts or promises it can provide.

This alternative is the ontology of us - we human beings - as a transient affective and effective connexion to other living beings [1], an emanation of the flux of Life, of ψυχή [2]. That is, of the separation-of-otherness - of I and of 'them', the others - being the result of a causal-only perception, and of denotatum: of our propensity to give names to, or to describe by means of terms, that which we observe to be or that which we assume to be is different to and separate from us, whereas, as empathy reveals, 'we' are part of, an aspect, of 'them' since 'they' are also finite, transient, emanations of ψυχή.

There is no abstract 'good' and 'evil' here; no division or cleaving asunder of φύσις (physis). There is only us in harmony, in balance, with our nature, our φύσις, or us not in harmony with our nature as an affecting and effecting, finite, transient, mortal, aspect of Life. If we are harmony - in balance with Life, with other life - we do not cause or contribute to or are not the genesis of suffering: we do not affect Life in a harmful way, and as I have intimated elsewhere [3] love, compassion, humility, empathy, and honour, are a possible means whereby we, in harmony with our φύσις, can avoid harming Life and its emanations, be such life our fellow human beings or the other life with which we share this planet.

In effect, this is the ontology of the illusion of self and of the unity, sans denotatum, of all living beings; of how we - presenced as human beings - can and do affect, and have affected, other life including other humans, often in ways we are not aware of; and of how our perception of I and of 'them' (the separation-of-otherness) has often led to us affecting other life in a harmful way, thus causing or contributing to or being the genesis of suffering, for that other life and often for ourselves. The ontology where there is no distinction, in being, between us - the emanations - and what emanates; there is only the appearance of difference due to our use of a causal-only perception and of denotatum. That is, we are ψυχή as ψυχή is both within us and us. We are the flux, the changing, of Life; changing as it changes.

There is therefore no suprapersonal supreme being who punishes and rewards; no requirement to actively agitate for or against the State; no afterlife separate from us because what exists after us is, partly, us transformed in being and, partly, what we aid or harm by virtue of the fact that we are an affective and effective connexion - a part of - Life. Furthermore, there is no need to strive to progress toward a some-thing because we already are that some-thing; that is, we already are what we are meant to be, except we often - or mostly - do not know this, or do not know what we are doing charmed as we seem to be by the

charisma of words, by denotatum. As Heraclitus expressed it:

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος αἰεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ
πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ
πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν εἰκόσσι, πειρώμενοι καὶ
ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῖμαι κατὰ φύσιν
διαίρεων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅπως ἔχει· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἄνθρώπους
λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὖδοντες
ἐπιλανθάνονται

Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done. [4]

The Simple Way of Harmony

This alternative ontology, derived from the culture of pathei-mathos, suggests that the answer to the question regarding the meaning of our existence is simply to be that which we are. To be in balance, in harmony, with Life; the balance that is love, compassion, humility, empathy, honour, tolerance, kindness, and wu-wei [5].

This, by its nature, is a personal answer and a personal choice; an alternative way that compliments and is respectful of other answers, other choices, and of other ways of dealing with issues such as the suffering that afflicts others, the harm that humans do so often inflict and have for so long inflicted upon others. The personal non-judgemental way, of presumption of innocence [6] and of wu-wei, balanced by, if required, a personal valourous, an honourable, intervention in a personal situation in the immediacy of the moment [7].

There is, in this alternative, no guidance required; and no-thing - such as an afterlife, or enlightenment, or liberty or happiness - to be attained. No need for dogma or too many words; no need for comparisons; no 'just cause' to excuse our behaviour. No mechanisms and no techniques to enable us to progress toward some-thing because there is no need or requirement to progress toward what is not there to be attained. There is only a personal living in such a way that we try to be compassionate, empathic, loving, honourable, kind, tolerant, gentle, and humble. And this is essentially the wisdom, the insight, the way of living - sans denotatum - that thousands upon thousands of people over millennia have contributed to the culture of pathei-mathos, as well as the essence of the message which many if not all spiritual ways and religions, in their genesis, perhaps sought to reveal: the message of the health of love and of our need, as fallible beings often inclined toward the unbalance of hubris, for humility.

Notes

[1] An affective connexion is an operative one, which therefore can affect or influence what it is connected to, and specifically in a non-causal and thus synchronistic manner; that is, without necessarily having a prior cause. An effective connexion is one of an effect; that is, is the result of some-thing else or causes some-thing else as result of that or some other prior cause.

[2] Life *qua* being. qv. my *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary*, and *Conspectus of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*. (2012)

[3] qv. *Recuyle of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*, and *Conspectus of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*. (2012)

[4] Myatt. *Some Notes on Heraclitus Fragment 1*. (2013)

[5] Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in my philosophy of pathei-mathos to refer to a personal 'letting-be' - a non-interference - deriving from humility and from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, their φύσις, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive - that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous.

In respect of non-interference and hubriatic striving, refer to my 2012 essay, *Some Personal Musings On Empathy - In relation to the philosophy of πάθει μάθος*

[6] As mentioned in my philosophy of pathei-mathos, innocence is regarded as an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us and beyond the purvue of our empathy, are therefore unjudged us by and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence of others - until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise - is the fair, the reasoned, thing to do.

[7] In respect of such valourous intervention in personal situations, the following quotation is from my *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary*.

"The personal virtue of honour, and the cultivation of wu-wei, are - together - a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἁρμονίη. For personal honour is essentially a presencing, a grounding, of ψυχή - of Life, of our φύσις - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη. This balancing of compassion - of the need not to cause suffering - by σωφρονεῖν and δίκη is perhaps most obvious on that particular occasion when it may be judged necessary to cause suffering to another human being. That is, in honourable self-defence. For it is natural - part of our reasoned, fair, just, human nature - to defend ourselves when attacked and (in the immediacy of the personal moment) to valorously, with chivalry, act in defence of someone close-by who is unfairly attacked or dishonourably threatened or is being bullied by others [...]

This use of force is, importantly, crucially, restricted - by the individual nature of our judgement, and by the individual nature of our authority - to such personal situations of immediate self-defence and of valorous defence of others, and cannot be extended beyond that, for to so extend it, or attempt to extend it beyond the immediacy of the personal moment of an existing physical threat, is an arrogant presumption - an act of ὕβρις - which negates the fair, the human, presumption of innocence of those we do not personally know, we have no empathic knowledge of, and who present no direct, immediate, personal, threat to us or to others nearby us. Such personal self-defence and such valorous defence of another in a personal situation are in effect a means to restore the natural balance which the unfair, the dishonourable, behaviour of others upsets. That is, such defence fairly, justly, and naturally in the immediacy of the moment corrects their error of ὕβρις resulting from their bad (their rotten) φύσις; a rotten character evident in their lack of the virtue, the skill, of σωφρονεῖν. For had they possessed that virtue, and if their character was not bad, they would not have undertaken such a dishonourable attack."

Part Five

A Very Personal Conclusion

Twenty years ago, someone whom I loved who loved me died, too young and having harmed no one. Died, leaving me bereft, if only for a while. For too soon my return to those hubriatic, selfish, suffering-causing, and extremist, ways of my pasts. As if, despite the grief, the pain of loss, I personally had learned nothing, except in such moments of such remembering that did not, unfortunately, impact too much upon my practicalities of life; at least until another bereavement, thirteen years later, came to shock, shake, betake me far from my arrogant presumptions about myself, about life, to thus lead, to so slowly lead, to me on a clear cold day yet again interiorly dwelling on what, if anything, is our human purpose of being here and why such bereavements, such

early deaths, just seem so unjust, unfair.

For they - as so many - having harmed no one, died, while I - as so many - lived on to continue causing mayhem, chaos, suffering, and grief, no God it seemed to stay us or to slay us for our miscreant mischief. That, to me, seems to be no deity of empathy and compassion; only one explanation to maybe betake our grief, our tears, our fears, away.

I admit I could be wrong, but - having perhaps at least in some ways, and partially, understood the errors of both my selfish and my extremist suffering-causing pasts - I still cannot accept that such a compassionate, empathic, deity would, could, sanction such a taking of such innocence and allow such infliction of suffering to continue. For that makes no sense to me, given how I now do not believe there is another life awaiting us where we, *judicium divinum*, are rewarded or condemned. I find no comfort there; no satisfying explanation for the suffering that afflicts so many now as in the past: as if that, such suffering, as was written once, many times, is some sort of *casus belli* for our life, to be endured until such time as such a deity deems fit to end it.

Man, that is born of a woman, hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down, like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay. In the midst of life we are in death. Of whom may we seek for succour, but of thee, O Lord...

Must we therefore be resigned to suffering, to misery, to injustices, to the iniquity, to the continuing iniquity, of selfish, hubriatic, individuals who bully, rape, scheme, subjugate, manipulate, injure, maim, and kill? Reassured by *judicium divinum* or - perhaps - hoping, trusting, in the pending justice of some judge, some government, or some State?

Is it wrong for me to still feel the need for someone, some many, somewhere, to somehow in some way forestall, prevent, such deeds by such persons as may unjustly harm some others so that there is no waiting for the divine justice of a deity; no waiting for some Court somewhere to - possibly, and sometimes - requite a grievous wrong. No waiting for that promised idealistic idyllic future society when we humans - having somehow (perhaps miraculously) been changed in nature *en masse* - have ceased to so grievously, harmfully, selfishly, inflict ourselves on others.

My own and only fallible answer to the question of how to deal with the suffering that blights this world therefore seems to be the answer of a personal honour. That is, for each of us to gently try to carry that necessary harmony, that balance, of *δίκη*, wordlessly within; to thus restrain ourselves from causing harm while being able, prepared, in the immediacy of the moment, to personally, physically, restrain - prevent - others when we chance upon such harm being done. This, to me, is Life in its wholesome natural fullness - as lived,

presenced, by the brief, mortal, consciously aware, emanations we are; mortal emanations capable of restraint, reason, culture, and reforming change; of learning from our pathei-mathos and that of others. My personal answer to personal questions, perplexion, and to grief and doubt. The answer which is to live in hope - even need - of a personal loyal love; to live with empathy, gentleness, humility, compassion, and yet with strength enough to do what should be done when, within the purvue of our personal space, we meet with one or many causing suffering and harm, no thought then for the fragility of our own mortal life or even for personal consequences beyond the ἀρμονίη we, in such honourable moments, are.

III Blue Reflected Starlight

As it departed toward the vastness of interstellar space, the Voyager 1 interplanetary spacecraft in 1990_(ce) transmitted an image of Earth from a distance of over four billion miles; the most distant image of Earth we human beings have ever seen. The Earth, our home, was a bluish dot; a mere Cosmic speck among the indefinity, visible only because of reflected starlight and - in the solar panorama imaged by Voyager on that February day - of no observed importance. One speck in one galaxy in a vast Cosmos of billions upon billions of galaxies, and one speck that would most probably appear, to a non-terran, less interesting than the rings of Saturn, just visible from such a distance.

Yet we human beings, en masse, continue to live in a manner which not only belies our Cosmic insignificance but which militates against the empathy, the humility, that such a Cosmic perspective can and does engender. Thus do we individually, as well as collectively, have pride in our lives, our deeds, our 'accomplishments', just as we continue to exploit not only other human beings but the Earth itself: and exploit for pleasure, or profit, or from some desire or because of some cause or some faith or some ideology or some ideation we believe in or support. Either believing or asserting, in our hubris, that we 'know' - that we 'understand' - what we are doing, or reckless of consequences because unable or unwilling to control our desires; unable or unwilling to control ourselves or our addiction to some cause or some faith or some ideology or some ideation.

Thus does the suffering we here inflict on other life - human and otherwise - continue. Thus does our human-wrought destruction continue, as if we are in thrall consciously or otherwise to the ideation that our planet, and its life including other humans, are some kind of 'resource', a means to supply our needs or a way to satiate our desires. So easy, so very easy, to injure, hate, and kill. So easy, so very easy, to satiate the desire to be in control. So very easy to place ourselves first; even easier to have our feelings, our desires, subsume, overcome, whatever consideration we might give, or previously had given, to others and to other life. So easy, so very easy, to make excuses - consciously or otherwise - to ourselves, and to others, for what we have done or what we are about to do; for always there is the excuse of self-interest or self-preservation, or the excuse of desires or some cause or some faith or some ideology or some ideation. So easy, so very easy, to spew forth words.

It is as if we terrans, en masse, have forgotten, keep forgetting, or have never discovered the wisdom that what involves too many words - and especially what involves or requires speeches, rhetoric, propaganda, dogma - is what obscures empathy and thus the numinosity that empathy reveals; the numinosity presented to us by the pathei-mathos of our human past; manifest to us - and living now - in the way of living of those whose personal pathei-mathos - whose

personal experience of suffering, death, destruction, hate, violence, of too many killings - has forever changed them. The numinous revelation of kindness, of humility, of gentleness, of love, of compassion; of being able to restrain, control, ourselves; of being able to comprehend our small, insignificant, place in the indefinity of the Cosmos, bringing as this comprehension does an understanding of the importance, the numinosity, that is a shared and loyal love between two people: and revealing as this does the Cosmic unimportance of such wars and conflicts and such brutality as have blighted our terran history.

As I know from my outré experience of life - especially my forty years of extremism, hubris, and selfishness; my terms of imprisonment, my experience with gangs, with people of bad intentions and with those of good intentions - it really is as if we terran men have, en masse, learnt nothing from the past four or five thousand years. For the uncomfortable truth is that we, we men, are and have been the ones causing, needing, participating in, those wars and conflicts. We - not women - are the cause of most of the suffering, death, destruction, hate, violence, brutality, and killing, that has occurred and which is still occurring, thousand year upon thousand year; just as we are the ones who seek to be - or who often need to be - prideful and 'in control'; and the ones who through greed or alleged need or because of some ideation have sought to exploit not only other human beings but the Earth itself. We are also masters of deception; of the lie. Cunning with our excuses, cunning in persuasion, and skilled at inciting hatred and violence. And yet we men have also shown ourselves to be, over thousands of years, valourous; capable of noble, selfless, deeds. Capable of doing what is fair and restraining ourselves from doing what is unethical. Capable of a great and a gentle love.

This paradox continues to perplex me. And I have no answers as to how we might change, reform, this paradoxical *φύσις* of ours, and so - perhaps - balance the suffering-causing masculous with the empathic muliebral and yet somehow in some way retain that which is the genesis of the valourous. And if we cannot do this, if we cannot somehow reform ourselves, can we terrans as a species survive, and do we deserve to?

Are we, we men here on this planet, capable of restraining and reforming ourselves, en masse, such that we allow ourselves, and are given, no excuses of whatever kind from whatever source for our thousand year upon thousand year of violence against women? Are we capable of such a reformation of our kind that such reprehensible violence against women by cowardly men becomes only historical fact?

Are we, here on this planet, capable of restraining and reforming ourselves, en masse, such that we allow ourselves no excuses of whatever kind from whatever source for wars, armed conflicts, brutality against perceived or stated 'enemies', and murderous intervention? Such a reformation of ourselves that wars, armed conflicts, such brutality, and such interventions, become only historical fact?

Or are we fated, under Sun, to squabble and bicker and hate and kill and destroy and exploit this planet and its life until we, a failed species, leave only dead detritic traces of our hubris?

Or will we, or some of us, betake ourselves away to colonize faraway non-terran places, taking with us our unreformed paradoxical *φύσις* to perchance again despoil, destroy, as some of our kind once betook themselves away to forever change parts of this speck of blue reflected starlight which gave us this fortunity of Life?

Yet again I admit I have no answers.

DWM
2012

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IV

Fifty Years Of Diverse Peregrinations

In fifty years of diverse peregrinations - which included forty years of practical involvement with various religions and spiritual ways, practical involvement with extremisms both political and religious, and some seven years of intense interior reflexion occasioned by a personal tragedy - I have come to appreciate and to admire what the various religions and the diverse spiritual ways have given to us over some three thousand years.

Thus have I sensed that our world is, and has been, a better place because of them and that we, as a sentient species, are en masse better because of them. Thus it is that I personally - even though I have developed my own non-religious weltanschauung - have a great respect for religions such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism; for spiritual ways such as Buddhism, Taoism; for older paganisms such as (i) θεοί and Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες, and (ii) άγνωστος θεός [1], and for the slowly evolving more recent paganisms evident for instance in a spiritual concern for the welfare of our planet and for

the suffering we have for so long inflicted on other humans and on the other life with which we share this planet.

Unsurprisingly, therefore, I disagree with those who, often intemperate in words or deeds - or both - disrespectfully fail to appreciate such religions and spiritual ways and the treasure, the culture, the *pathei-mathos*, that they offer, concentrating as such intemperate people so often do on what they perceive to be or feel to be are the flaws, the mistakes, of such religions and such spiritual ways while so often ignoring (as such people tend to do) their own personal flaws, their own mistakes, as well as the reality that it is we humans beings - with our *ὑβρις*, with our lack of humility, our lack of appreciation for the numinous, and with our intolerance and our often arrogant and harsh interpretations of such religions - who have been the cause and who continue to be the cause of such suffering as has blighted and as still blights this world.

As Heraclitus mentioned over two thousand years ago:

ὑβριν χρὴ σβεννύναι μᾶλλον ἢ πυρκαϊήν [2]

Better to deal with your hubris before you confront that fire

As recounted of Jesus of Nazareth over two thousand years ago:

ὥς δὲ ἐπέμενον ἐρωτῶντες αὐτόν, ἀνέκυσεν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὁ ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν πρῶτος ἐπ' αὐτήν βαλέτω λίθον. [3]

So, as they continued to ask [for an answer] he straightened himself, saying to them: Let he who has never made a mistake [*Αναμαρτητος*] throw the first stone at her.

One of the greatest gifts such religions and spiritual ways offer seems to me to be the gift of humility: the insight that we human beings are fallible and transient, and that there is some-thing 'out there' which is numinous, sacred, more vast and more powerful than us whether we call this some-thing God, or Allah, or *θεοί* or Nature, or *δίκη* or *Wyrd*, or Karma or *ψυχή* or simply the acausal. The insight that to disregard this some-thing, to disrespect what-is numinous, is unwise - *ὑβρις* - and perpetuates suffering or is the genesis of new suffering and which new suffering may well continue long after we, who brought it into being and who gave it life, are dead.

This insight of humility is evident, for instance and for me, in the sacred music of the Christian church; from the simplicity - the numinous purity - of plainchant to the polyphony of Byrd, Palestrina, and Vittoria to the counterpoint of JS Bach. For I find in this music an expression both of *κάλος* and of the numinous *mysterium* that is at the heart of Christianity, manifest as this *mysterium* is, for Christianity, in the allegory of the life, the betrayal, the crucifixion, of Jesus of

Nazareth and by a belief in redemption through both love and suffering. And this is essentially the same, albeit unallegorical and often wordless, numinous mysterium which we personally feel or we know or are touched by through that sadness born of our own pathos; by our acknowledgement of our mistakes, by our personal experience of suffering and grief, and by our heartfelt longing for, our hope for, the beautiful, for the redemption of innocence, for peace and love, manifest for example not only in the Christian allegory of Heaven, in the Muslim Jannah, in the Jewish Shamayim, but also in a very personal often private longing and hope for a better world and which longing and hope we so tearfully know is so often broken or forgotten or thrust aside by both our egoistical self and by other human beings: because of their, because of our, weakness, our failure to be the person we feel or we know we might be or perhaps could have been, born as such knowing and such feelings so often are in the inner intimacy that follows a personal grief or being a witness to or an accomplice in some act or acts of harshness and suffering.

This inner intimacy with the stark reality of our own being and with the world of suffering is what has caused so many people over thousands of years to try and not only reform themselves but also to try, in whatever way, to alleviate or try to alleviate some of the suffering of others, an effort and a reform so often aided by religion [4] and thus a tribute to those positive qualities, those personal virtues, which religions have so often revealed or reminded us of. Which is why - as I mentioned recently to another correspondent [5] - I incline toward the view that on balance the good that religions such as Christianity have done over millennia outweighs the suffering that has been caused by those who adhered to or who believed in some harsh interpretation of that religion.

There has thus developed within me these past seven years an understanding of my past hubris, my past multitudinous mistakes, and of how a lack of humility on my part - my extremism, my certainty of knowing about myself, my certainty of knowing about some cause or ideology or harsh interpretation of some religion I accepted and adhered to - was probably one of the most significant factors in that hubris and those suffering-causing mistakes. Which personal understanding, together with a decades-long experience of others such as I, led me to hypothesize that one of the fundamental causes of extremism is a masculine certainty of knowing and that, therefore, religions and spiritual ways are and can be - when not interpreted in a harsh, hubristic, way but rather via that personal humility and that appreciation of the numinous I believe are intrinsic to them - affective and effective answers to such extremism and to the harm that extremists cause.

In essence, therefore, my philosophy of pathos - my much revised 'numinous way' - is my own spiritual answer, born of fifty years of diverse peregrinations; my personal answer and response to the certitude of knowing, the harshness, that all extremisms (political, religious, and social) manifest, as well as also - perhaps, hopefully - being (as a spiritual way) in some small manner, and now sans a personal belief in *judicium divinum*, some expiation for

all the suffering that I over decades caused or contributed to.

The numinous, the beautiful - the divine - remain, to remind us. As someone so beautifully expressed it:

Wer, wenn ich schrie, hörte mich denn aus der Engel
Ordnungen? und gesetzt selbst, es nähme
einer mich plötzlich ans Herz: ich verginge von seinem
stärkeren Dasein. Denn das Schöne ist nichts
als des Schrecklichen Anfang, den wir noch grade ertragen,
und wir bewundern es so, weil es gelassen verschmäht,
uns zu zerstören. Ein jeder Engel ist schrecklich. [6]

DWM
2012

Notes

[1] qv. Pausanias. Ἑλλάδος περιήγησις 1.1.4 -

ἐνταῦθα καὶ Σκιράδος Ἀθηνᾶς ναός ἐστι καὶ Διὸς ἀπωτέρω, βωμοὶ δὲ
θεῶν τε ὀνομαζομένων Ἀγνώστων καὶ ἡρώων καὶ παίδων τῶν Θησέως
καὶ Φαληροῦ

Also here is a shrine [ναός] to Athena Skirados and, further afield,
one to Zeus, and others to [the] un-named unknown gods, to the
heroes, as well as to those children of Theseus and Phalerus

[2] Fragment 43

[3] John, 8.7

[4] For example, I well remember, decades ago, in the first month or so of my training to be a nurse doing some research into the history of nursing as preparation for my turn in giving a talk and presentation to our class as part of our nursing course; and finding just how entwined religion and the origins of organized nursing were, from the fourth century (CE) Roman lady Fabiola to the monastic infirmaries of medieval Europe to the al-Nuri al-Kabir bimaristan in Damascus [qv. Ahmad Isa: *Tarikh al-Bimaristanat fi al-Islam* [History of Hospitals in Islam]. Damascus, 1939] to the Hospitallers of St John to Florence Nightingale and beyond.

I also remember the hundreds of people met over some forty years whose faith inspired or aided them to endeavour, in social or political or legal or personal

ways, to alleviate some of the suffering of others, and who each, in their own way - and whether Christian, Muslim, Jew, Hindu, or Buddhist - helped make a positive difference.

[5] qv. *Just My Fallible Views, Again - Replies to Some Enquiries*. 2012

[6] Rilke, *Die erste Duineser Elegie*

Who, were I to sigh aloud, of those angelic beings might hear me?
And even if one of them deigned to take me to his heart I would dissolve
Into his very existence.
For beauty is nothing if not the genesis of that numen
Which we can only just survive
And which we so admire because it can so calmly disdain to betake us.
Every angel is numinous

Appendix

Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos Vocabulary, Definitions, and Explanations

Abstraction

An abstraction is a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed.

Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future.

All abstractions involve a causal perception, based as they are on the presumption of a linear cause-and-effect (and/or a dialectic) and on a posited or an assumed category or classification which differs in some way from some other assumed or posited categories/classifications, past, present or future. When applied to or used to describe/classify/distinguish/motivate living beings, abstractions involve a causal separation-of-otherness; and when worth/value/identity (and exclusion/inclusion) is or are assigned to such a causal separation-of-otherness then there is or there arises hubris.

Abstractions are often assumed to provide some 'knowledge' or some 'understanding' of some-thing assigned to or described by a particular abstraction. For example, in respect of the abstraction of 'race' applied to human beings, and which categorization of human beings describes a median set of values said or assumed to exist 'now' or in some recent historical past.

According to the philosophy of pathei-mathos, this presumption of knowledge and understanding by the application of abstractions to beings - living and otherwise - is false, for abstractions are considered as a primary means by which the nature of Being and beings are and have been concealed, requiring as abstractions do the positing and the continuation of abstractive opposites in relation to Being and the separation of beings from Being by the process of ideation and opposites.

Acausal

The acausal is not a generalization - a concept - deriving from a collocation of assumed, imagined, or causally observed Phainómenon, but instead is that wordless, conceptless, a-temporal, knowing which empathy reveals and which a personal *πάθει μάθος* and an appreciation of the numinous often inclines us toward. That is, the acausal is a direct and personal (individual) revealing of beings and Being which does not depend on denoting or naming.

What is so revealed is the a-causal nature of some beings, the connexion which exists between living beings, and how living beings are emanations of *ψυχή*.

Thus speculations and postulations regarding the acausal only serve to obscure the nature of the acausal or distance us from that revealing of the acausal that empathy and *πάθει μάθος* and an appreciation of the numinous provide.

ἀρετή

Arête is the prized Hellenic virtue which can roughly be translated by the English word 'excellence' but which also implies what is naturally distinguishable - what is pre-eminent - because it reveals or shows certain valued qualities such as beauty, honour, valour, harmony.

Aristotelian Essentials

The essentials which Aristotle enumerated are: (i) Reality (existence) exists independently of us and our consciousness, and thus independent of our senses; (ii) our limited understanding of this independent 'external world' depends for the most part upon our senses, our faculties - that is, on what we can see, hear or touch; on what we can observe or come to know via our senses; (iii) logical argument, or reason, is perhaps the most important means to knowledge and understanding of and about this 'external world'; (iv) the cosmos (existence) is, of itself, a reasoned order subject to rational laws.

Experimental science seeks to explain the natural world - the phenomenal world - by means of direct, personal observation of it, and by making deductions, and formulating hypothesis, based on such direct observation.

The philosophy of *pathei-mathos* adds the faculty of empathy - and the knowing so provided by empathy - to these essentials. Part of the knowing that empathy reveals, or can reveal, concerns the nature of Being, of beings, and of Time.

ἁρμονία

ἁρμονία (harmony) is or can be manifest/discovered by an individual cultivating *wu-wei* and *σωφρονεῖν* (a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement).

Compassion

The English word compassion dates from around 1340 CE and the word in its original sense (and as used in this work) means *benignity*, which word derives from the Latin *benignitatem*, the sense imputed being of a kind, compassionate, well-mannered character, disposition, or deed. Benignity came into English usage around the same time as compassion; for example, the word occurs in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* [ii. 483] written around 1374 CE.

Hence, compassion is understood as meaning being kindly disposed toward and/or feeling a sympathy with someone (or some living being) affected by pain/suffering/grief or who is enduring vicissitudes.

The word compassion itself is derived from *com*, meaning together-with, combined with *pati*, meaning to-suffer/to-endure and derived from the classical Latin *passiō*. Thus useful synonyms for compassion, in this original sense, are *compassivity* and *benignity*.

Cosmic Perspective

The Cosmic Perspective refers to our place in the Cosmos, to the fact that we human beings are simply one fragile fallible mortal biological life-form on one planet orbiting one star in one galaxy in a Cosmos of billions of galaxies. Thus in terms of this perspective all our theories, our ideas, our beliefs, our abstractions are merely the opinionated product of our limited fallible Earth-bound so-called 'intelligence', an 'intelligence', an understanding, we foolishly, arrogantly, pridefully have a tendency to believe in and exalt as if we are somehow 'the centre of the Universe' and cosmically important.

The Cosmic Perspective inclines us - or can incline us - toward wu-wei, toward avoiding the error of hubris, toward humility, and thus toward an appreciation of the numinous.

δαίμων

A *δαίμων* is not one of the pantheon of major Greek gods - *θεοί* - but rather a lesser type of divinity who might be assigned by those gods to bring good fortune or misfortune to human beings and/or watch over certain human beings and especially particular numinous (sacred) places.

Descriptor

A descriptor is a word, a term, used to describe some-thing which exists and which is personally observed, or is discovered, by means of our senses (including the faculty of empathy).

A descriptor differs from an ideation, category, or abstraction, in that a descriptor describes what-is as 'it' is observed, according to its physis (its nature) whereas an abstraction, for example, denotes what is presumed/assumed/idealized, past or present or future. A descriptor relies on, is derived from, describes, individual knowing and individual judgement; an abstraction relies on something abstract, impersonal, such as some opinion/knowing/judgement of others or some assumptions, theory, or hypothesis made by others.

An example of a descriptor is the term 'violent' [using physical force sufficient to cause bodily harm or injury to a person or persons] to describe the observed behaviour of an individual. Another example would be the term 'extremist' to describe - to denote - a person who treats or who has been observed to treat others harshly/violently in pursuit of some supra-personal objective of a political or of a religious nature.

δίκη

Depending on context, *δίκη* could be the judgement of an individual (or Judgement personified), or the natural and the necessary balance, or the correct/customary/ancestral way, or what is expected due to custom, or what is considered correct and natural, and so on.

A personified Judgement - the *Δίκη* of Hesiod - is the goddess of the natural balance, evident in the ancestral customs, the ways, the way of life, the ethos, of a community, whose judgement, *δίκη*, is "in accord with", has the nature or the character of, what tends to restore such balance after some deed or deeds by an individual or individuals have upset or disrupted that balance. This sense of *δίκη* as one's ancestral customs is evident, for example, in Homer (Odyssey, III, 244).

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, the term Δίκη - spelt thus in a modern way with a capital Δ - is sometimes used to intimate a new, a particular and numinous, philosophical principle, and differentiate Δίκη from the more general δίκη. As a numinous principle, or axiom, Δίκη thus suggests what lies beyond and what was the genesis of δίκη personified as the goddess, Judgement - the goddess of natural balance, of the ancestral way and ancestral customs.

Empathy

Etymologically, this fairly recent English word, used to translate the German Einfühlung, derives, via the late Latin *sympathia*, from the Greek συμπάθεια - συμπαθής - and is thus formed from the prefix σύν (sym) together with παθ- [root of πάθος] meaning *enduring/suffering*, feeling: πάσχειν, to endure/suffer.

As used and defined by the philosophy of pathei-mathos, empathy - ἐμπάθεια - is a natural human faculty: that is, a noble intuition about (a revealing of) another human being or another living being. When empathy is developed and used, as envisaged by that way of life, then it is a specific and extended type of συμπάθεια. That is, it is a type of and a means to knowing and understanding another human being and/or other living beings - and thus differs in nature from compassion.

Empathic knowing is different from, but supplementary and complimentary to, that knowing which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

Empathy reveals or can reveal the nature (the physis) - sans abstractions/ideations/words - of Being, of beings, and of Time. This revealing is of the the a-causal nature of Being, and of how beings have their genesis in the separation-of-otherness; and thus how we human beings are but causal, mortal, fallible, microcosmic emanations of ψυχή.

Enantiodromia

The unusual compound Greek word ἐναντιοδρομίας occurs in a summary of the philosophy of Heraclitus by Diogenes Laërtius.

Enantiodromia is the term used, in the philosophy of pathei-mathos, to describe the revealing, the process, of perceiving, feeling, knowing, beyond causal appearance and the separation-of-otherness, and thus when what has become separated - or has been incorrectly perceived as separated - returns to the wholeness, the unity, from whence it came forth. When, that is, beings are understood in their correct relation to Being, beyond the causal abstraction of different/conflicting ideated opposites, and when as a result, a reformation of the individual, occurs. A relation, an appreciation of the numinous, that empathy and pathei-mathos provide, and which relation and which appreciation the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals over millennia have made us aware of or tried to inform us or teach us about.

An important and a necessary part of enantiodromia involves a discovery, a knowing, an acceptance, and - as prelude - an interior balancing within individuals, of what has hitherto been perceived and designated as the apparent opposites described by terms (descriptors) such as 'muliebral' and 'masculous'.

The balance attained by - which is - enantiodromia is that of simply feeling, accepting, discovering, the empathic, the human, the personal, scale of things and thus understanding our own fallibility-of-knowing, our limitations as a human being

ἔρις

Strife; discord; disruption; a quarrel between friends or kin. As in the Odyssey:

ἧ τ' ἔριν Ἀτρεΐδῃσι μετ' ἀμφοτέροισιν ἔθηκε.

Who placed strife between those two sons of Atreus

Odyssey, 3, 136

According to the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, ἔρις was caused by, or was a consequence of, the marriage between a personified πόλεμος (as the δαίμων of kindred strife) and a personified ὕβρις (as the δαίμων of arrogant pride) with Polemos rather forlornly following Hubris around rather than vice versa. Eris is thus the child of Polemos and Hubris.

Extremism

By *extreme* is meant *to be harsh*, so that an *extremist* is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious nature. Here, *harsh* is: rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic.

Hence *extremism* is considered to be: (a) the result of such harshness, and (b) the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists. In addition, a fanatic is considered to be someone with a surfeit of zeal or whose enthusiasm for some objective, or for some cause, is intemperate.

In the terms of the philosophy/way of pathei-mathos, an extremist is someone who commits the error of hubris; and error which enantiodromia - following from πάθει μάθος - can sometimes correct or forestall. The genesis of extremism - be such extremism personal, or described as political or religious - is when the separation-of-otherness is used as a means of personal and collective identity and pride, with some 'others' - or 'the others' - assigned to a category considered less worthy than the category we assign ourselves and 'our kind/type' to.

Extremist ideologies manifest an unbalanced, an excessive, masculous nature.

εὐταξία

The quality, the virtue, of self-restraint, of a balanced, well-mannered conduct especially under adversity or duress, of which Cicero wrote:

Haec autem scientia continentur ea, quam Graeci εὐταξίαν nominant, non hanc, quam interpretamur modestiam, quo in verbo modus inest, sed illa est εὐταξία, in qua intellegitur ordinis conservatio

Those two qualities are evident in that way described by the Greeks as εὐταξίαν although what is meant by εὐταξία is not what we mean by the moderation of the moderate, but rather what we consider is restrained behaviour...

De Officiis, Liber Primus, 142

Honour

The English word honour dates from around 1200 CE, deriving from the Latin *honorem* (meaning refined, grace, beauty) via the Old French (and thence Anglo-Norman) *onor/onur*. As used by The Way of Pathei-Mathos, honour means an instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous. An honourable person is thus someone of manners, fairness, natural dignity, and valour.

In respect of early usage of the term, two quotes may be of interest. The first, from c. 1393 CE, is taken from a poem, in Middle English, by John Gower:

And riht in such a maner wise
Sche bad thei scholde hire don servise,
So that Achilles underfongeth
As to a yong ladi belongeth
Honour, servise and reverence.

John Gower, *Confessio Amantis*. Liber Quintus vv. 2997-3001 [Macaulay, G.C., ed. The Works of John Gower. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1901]

The second is from several centuries later:

" Honour - as something distinct from mere probity, and which supposes in gentlemen a stronger abhorrence of perfidy, falsehood, or cowardice, and a more elevated and delicate sense of the dignity of virtue, than are usually found in vulgar minds."

George Lyttelton. *History of the Life of Henry the Second*. London, Printed for J. Dodsley. M DCC LXXV II [1777] (A new ed., cor.) vol 3, p.178

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, the personal virtue of honour is considered to be a presencing, a grounding, an expression, of *ψυχή* - of Life, of our *φύσις* - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by *σωφρονεῖν* and in accord with *δίκη*. That is, as a means to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of *ὑβρις*, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, *ἀρμονίη*.

Humility

Humility is used, in a spiritual context, to refer to that gentleness, that modest demeanour, that understanding, which derives from an appreciation of the numinous and also from one's own admitted uncertainty of knowing and one's acknowledgement of past mistakes. An uncertainty of knowing, an acknowledgement of mistakes, that often derive from *πάθει μάθος*.

Humility is thus the natural human balance that offsets the unbalance of hubris (*ὑβρις*) - the balance that offsets the unbalance of pride and arrogance, and the balance that offsets the unbalance of that certainty of knowing which is one basis for extremism, for extremist beliefs, for fanaticism and intolerance. That is, humility is a manifestation of the natural balance of Life; a restoration of *ἀρμονίη*, of *δίκη*, of *σωφρονεῖν* - of those qualities and virtues - that hubris and extremism, that *ἔρις* and *πόλεμος*, undermine, distance us from, and replace.

Ideation

To posit or to construct an ideated form - an assumed perfect (ideal) form or category or abstraction - of some-thing, based on the belief or the assumption that what is observed by the senses, or revealed by observation, is either an 'imperfect copy' or an approximation of that thing, which the additional assumption that such an ideated form contains or in some way expresses (or can express) 'the essence' or 'the ethos' of that thing and of similar things.

Ideation also implies that the ideated form is or can be or should be contrasted with what it considered or assumed to be its 'opposite'.

Immediacy-of-the-Moment

The term the 'immediacy-of-the-moment' describes both (i) the nature and the extent of the acausal knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos provide, and (ii) the nature and extent of the morality of the philosophy of pathei-mathos.

Empathy, for example, being a natural and an individual faculty, is limited in range and application, just as our faculties of sight and hearing are limited in range and application. These limits extend to only what is direct, immediate, and involve personal interactions with other humans or with other living beings. There is therefore, for the philosophy of pathei-mathos, an 'empathic scale of things' and an acceptance of our limitations of personal knowing and personal understanding. An acceptance of (i) the unwisdom, the hubris, of arrogantly making assumptions about who and what are beyond the range of our empathy and outside of our personal experience/beyond the scope of our pathei-mathos.

Morality, for the philosophy of pathei-mathos, is a result of individuals using the faculty of empathy; a consequence of the insight and the understanding (the acausal knowing) that empathy provides for individuals in the immediacy-of-the-moment. Thus, morality is considered to reside not in some abstract theory or some moralistic schemata presented in some written text which individuals have to accept and try and conform or aspire to, but rather in personal virtues - such as such as compassion and fairness, and *εὐταξία* - that arise or which can arise naturally through empathy, *πάθει μάθος*, and thus from an awareness and appreciation of the numinous.

Innocence

Innocence is regarded as an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us, are therefore unjudged us by and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence of others - until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise - is the fair, the reasoned, the numinous, the human, thing to do.

Empathy and *πάθει μάθος* incline us toward treating other human beings as we ourselves would wish to be treated; that is they incline us toward fairness, toward self-restraint, toward being well-mannered, and toward an appreciation and understanding of innocence.

Masculous

Masculous is a term, a descriptor, used to refer to certain traits, abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with men, such as competitiveness, aggression, a

certain harshness, the desire to organize/control, and a desire for adventure and/or for conflict/war/violence/competition over and above personal love and culture. Extremist ideologies manifest an unbalanced, an excessive, masculine nature.

Masculine is from the Latin *masculus* and occurs, for example, in some seventeenth century works such as one by William Struther: "This is not only the language of Canaan, but also the masculine Schibboleth." *True Happiness, or, King Davids Choice: Begunne In Sermons, And Now Digested Into A Treatise*. Edinburgh, 1633

Muliebral

The term muliebral derives from the classical Latin word *muliebris*, and in the context the philosophy of Pathei-Mathos refers to those positive traits, abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with women, such as empathy, sensitivity, gentleness, compassion, and a desire to love and be loved over and above a desire for conflict/adventure/war.

Numinous

The numinous is what manifests or can manifest or remind us of (what can reveal) the natural balance of *ψυχή*; a balance which *ὑβρις* upsets. This natural balance - our being as human beings - is or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful. In a practical way, it is what we regard or come to appreciate as 'sacred' and dignified; what expresses our developed humanity and thus places us, as individuals, in our correct relation to *ψυχή*, and which relation is that we are but one mortal emanation of *ψυχή*.

Pathei-Mathos

The Greek term *πάθει μάθος* derives from The Agamemnon of Aeschylus (written c. 458 BCE), and can be interpreted, or translated, as meaning *learning from adversary*, or *wisdom arises from (personal) suffering*; or *personal experience is the genesis of true learning*.

When understood in its Aeschylean context, it implies that for we human beings pathei-mathos possesses a numinous, a living, authority. That is, the understanding that arises from one's own personal experience - from formative experiences that involve some hardship, some grief, some personal suffering - is often or could be more valuable to us (more alive, more relevant, more meaningful) than any doctrine, than any religious faith, than any words/advice one might hear from someone else or read in some book.

Thus, pathei-mathos, like empathy, offers we human beings a certain conscious understanding, a knowing; and, when combined, pathei-mathos and empathy are or can be a guide to wisdom, to a particular conscious knowledge concerning our own nature (our physis), our relation to Nature, and our relation to other human beings, leading to an appreciation of the numinous and an appreciation of virtues such as humility and εὐταξία.

Politics

By the term politics is meant both of the following, according to context. (i) The theory and practice of governance, with governance itself founded on two fundamental assumptions; that of some minority - a government (elected or unelected), some military authority, some oligarchy, some ruling elite, some tyrannos, or some leader - having or assuming authority (and thus power and influence) over others, and with that authority being exercised over a specific

geographic area or territory. (ii) The activities of those individuals or groups whose aim or whose intent is to obtain and exercise some authority or some control over - or to influence - a society or sections of a society by means which are organized and directed toward changing/reforming that society or sections of a society in accordance with a particular ideology.

Πόλεμος

Πόλεμος - Heraclitus fragment 80 - is not some abstract 'war' or strife or *kampf*, but rather that which is or becomes the genesis of beings from Being (the separation of beings from Being), and thus not only that which manifests as *δίκη* but also accompanies *ἔρις* because it is the nature of *Πόλεμος* that beings, born because of and by *ἔρις*, can be returned to Being, become bound together - be whole - again by *enantiodromia*.

According to the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, *ἔρις* was caused by, or was a consequence of, the marriage between a personified *πόλεμος* (as the *δαίμων* of kindred strife) and a personified *ὑβρις* (as the *δαίμων* of arrogant pride) with Polemos rather forlornly following Hubris around rather than vice versa. Thus Eris is the child of Polemos and Hubris.

Furthermore, Polemos was originally the *δαίμων* (not the god) of kindred strife, whether familial, of friends, or of one's *πόλις* (one's clan and their places of dwelling). Thus, to describe Polemos, as is sometimes done, as the god of war, is doubly incorrect.

Physis (φύσις)

φύσις suggests either (i) the Homeric usage of nature or character of a person, as for example in *Odyssey*, Book 10, vv. 302-3, and also in Herodotus (2.5.2):

Αἰγύπτου γὰρ φύσις ἐστὶ τῆς χώρας τοιήδε

or (ii) *Φύσις* (Physis) as in Heraclitus fragment 123 - that is, the natural nature of all beings, beyond their outer appearance, and which natural nature we, as human beings, have a natural [an unconscious] inclination to conceal; either because of *ὑβρις* or through an ignorance, an unknowing, of ourselves as an emanation of *ψυχή*.

In terms of the nature or the character of an individual:

σωφρονεῖν ἀρετὴ μέγιστη, καὶ σοφίη ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαίοντας

Most excellent is balanced reasoning, for that skill can tell inner character from outer.

Heraclitus fragment 112

Religion

By religion is meant organized worship, devotion, and faith, where there is: (i) a belief in some deity/deities, or in some supreme Being or in some supra-personal power who/which can reward or punish the individual, and (ii) a distinction made between the realm of the sacred/the-gods/God/the-revered and the realm of the ordinary or the human.

The term organized here implies an established institution, body or group - or a plurality of these - who or which has at least to some degree codified the faith and/or the acts of worship and devotion, and which is accepted as having some authority or has established some authority among the adherents. This codification can relate to accepting as authoritative certain writings and/or a certain book or books.

Separation-of-Otherness

The separation-of-otherness is a term used to describe the implied or assumed causal separateness of living beings, a part of which is the distinction we make (instinctive or otherwise) between our *self* and *the others*. Another part is assigning our self, and the-others, to (or describing them and us by) some category/categories, and to which category/categories we ascribe (or to which category/categories has/have been ascribed) certain qualities or attributes.

Given that a part of such ascription/denoting is an assumption or assumptions of worth/value /difference and of inclusion/exclusion, the separation-of-otherness is the genesis of hubris; causes and perpetuates conflict and suffering; and is a path away from *ἀρμονία, δίκη*, and thus from wisdom.

The separation-of-otherness conceals the nature of Beings and beings; a nature which empathy and *pathei-mathos* can reveal.

Society

By the term society is meant a collection of people who live in a specific geographic area or areas and whose association or interaction is mostly determined by a shared set of guidelines or principles or beliefs, irrespective of whether these are written or unwritten, and irrespective of whether such guidelines/principles/beliefs are willingly accepted or accepted on the basis of acquiescence. These shared guidelines or principles or beliefs often tend to form an ethos and a culture and become the basis for what is considered moral (and good) and thence become the inspiration for laws and/or constitutions.

As used here, the term refers to 'modern societies' (especially those of the modern West).

State

By the term The State is meant:

The concept of both (1) organizing and controlling - over a particular and large geographical area - land (and resources); and (2) organizing and controlling individuals over that same geographical particular and large geographical area by: (a) the use of physical force or the threat of force and/or by influencing or persuading or manipulating a sufficient number of people to accept some leader/cliue/minority/representatives as the legitimate authority; (b) by means of the central administration and centralization of resources (especially fiscal and military); and (c) by the mandatory taxation of personal income.

The Good

For the philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, 'the good' is considered to be what is fair; what alleviates or does not cause suffering; what is compassionate; what is honourable; what is reasoned and balanced. This knowing of the good arises from the (currently underused and undeveloped) natural human faculty of empathy, and which empathic knowing is different from, supplementary and complimentary to, that knowing which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

Time

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, Time is considered to be an expression of the nature - the *φύσις* - of beings, and thus, for living beings, is a variable emanation of *ψυχή*, differing from being to being, and representing how that living being can change (is a fluxion) or may change or has changed, which such change (such fluxions) being a-causal.

Time - as conventionally understood and as measured/represented by a terran-calendar with durations marked days, weeks, and years - is therefore regarded as an abstraction, and an abstraction which tends to conceal the nature of living beings.

ὕβρις

ὕβρις (hubris) is the error of personal insolence, of going beyond the proper limits set by: (a) reasoned (balanced) judgement - *σωφρονεῖν* - and by (b) an awareness, a personal knowing, of the numinous, and which knowing of the numinous can arise from empathy and *πάθει μάθος*.

Hubris upsets the natural balance - is contrary to *ἀρμονίη* [harmony] - and often results from a person or persons striving for or clinging to some causal abstraction.

According to The Way of Pathei-Mathos, *ὕβρις* disrupts - and conceals - our appreciation of what is numinous and thus of what/whom we should respect, classically understood as *ψυχή* and *θεοί* and *Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες* and *δαιμόνων* and those sacred places guarded or watched over by *δαιμόνων*.

Way

The philosophy of pathei-mathos makes a distinction between a religion and a spiritual Way of Life. One of the differences being that a religion requires and manifests a codified ritual and doctrine and a certain expectation of conformity in terms of doctrine and ritual, as well as a certain organization beyond the local community level resulting in particular individuals assuming or being appointed to positions of authority in matters relating to that religion. In contrast, Ways are more diverse and more an expression of a spiritual ethos, of a customary, and often localized, way of doing certain spiritual things, with there generally being little or no organization beyond the community level and no individuals assuming - or being appointed by some organization - to positions of authority in matters relating to that ethos.

Religions thus tend to develop an organized regulatory and supra-local hierarchy which oversees and appoints those, such as priests or religious teachers, regarded as proficient in spiritual matters and in matters of doctrine and ritual, whereas adherents of Ways tend to

locally and informally and communally, and out of respect and a personal knowing, accept certain individuals as having a detailed knowledge and an understanding of the ethos and the practices of that Way.

Many spiritual Ways have evolved into religions.

Wisdom

Wisdom is both the ability of reasoned - a balanced - judgement, *σωφρονεῖν*, a discernment; and a particular conscious knowledge concerning our own nature, and our relation to Nature, to other life and other human beings: *rerum divinarum et humanarum*. Part of this knowledge is of how we human beings are often balanced between honour and dishonour; balanced between *ὑβρις* and *ἀρετή*; between our animalistic desires, our passions, and our human ability to be noble, to morally develop ourselves; a balance manifest in our known ability to be able to control, to restrain, ourselves, and thus find and follow a middle way, of *ἀρμονίη*.

Wu-wei

Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in The Way of Pathei-Mathos/The Numinous Way to refer to a personal 'letting-be' deriving from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, their *φύσις*, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive - that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous.

In practice, the knowledge, the understanding, the intuition, the insight that is wu-wei is a knowledge, an understanding, that can be acquired from empathy, *πάθει μάθος*, and by a knowing of and an appreciation of the numinous. This knowledge and understanding is of wholeness, and that life, things/beings, change, flow, exist, in certain natural ways which we human beings cannot change however hard we might try; that such a hardness of human trying, a belief in such hardness, is unwise, un-natural, upsets the natural balance and can cause misfortune/suffering for us and/or for others, now or in the future. Thus success lies in discovering the inner nature (the *physis*) of things/beings/ourselves and gently, naturally, slowly, working with this inner nature, not striving against it.

ψυχή

Life *qua* being. Our being as a living existent is considered an emanation of *ψυχή*. Thus *ψυχή* is what 'animates' us and what gives us our nature, *φύσις*, as human beings. Our nature is that of a mortal fallible being veering between *σωφρονεῖν* (thoughtful reasoning, and thus fairness) and *ὑβρις*.

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Exegesis and Translation Some Personal Reflexions

Part One

Since I first studied the Greek text of the Septuagint as a Christian monk, more than thirty five years ago, I have often reflected on matters pertaining to exegesis and translation. Four issues in particular have interested me during those decades.

1. How revealed religions, such as Christianity and Islam, and how certain spiritual ways [1], such as Buddhism and even Hinduism [2], are reliant on or have developed to become reliant upon certain texts, and how such dependant texts either by their nature require interpretation [3] or (more often) how interpretation is considered as necessary in order for the religion or spiritual way to gain support, influence, and adherents.

2. How many of those of faith - especially in revealed religions and almost certainly the majority of the faithful - have to rely on, and often quote, the translations of others; even if such people of faith are engaged in proselytizing.

3. How certain English words, used to interpret a particular Hebrew or Greek or Arabic word, suggest, represent, or have acquired, a particular meaning to English readers/listeners but which particular meaning may not necessary accurately reflect the meaning of the non-English word as that

non-English word was possibly understood at the time it was included in a particular text.

4. How there seems to be, in revealed religions and most conventional spiritual ways, a rejection of *pathei-mathos* in favour of the wisdom said to be contained in the texts and thus in the teachings of the founder(s) of the religion/spiritual way, and - in the case of revealed religions - in the writings/edicts of those who have been vested with or who have acquired a certain religious authority, and - also in the case of revealed religions - how such *pathei-mathos*, to be accepted at all, has to be judged by criteria developed from such texts and/or developed from interpretations of such texts.

Interpretation and The Question of Sin

It is my view that in translations into English it is often best to avoid words that impose or seem to impose a meaning on an ancient text especially if the sense that an English word now imputes is the result of centuries of assumptions or opinions or influences and thus has acquired a modern meaning somewhat at variance with the culture, the milieu, of the time when the text that is being translated was written. Especially so in the matter of religious or spiritual texts where so many people rely or seem to rely on the translations, the interpretations, of others and where certain interpretations seem to have become fixed. [4]

Thus, it may be helpful if one can suggest, however controversial they may seem in their time, reasoned alternatives for certain words important for a specific and a general understanding of a particular text, and helpful because such alternatives might enable a new appreciation of such a text, as if for instance one is reading it for the first time with the joy of discovery.

One of the prevalent English words used in translations of the New Testament, and one of the words now commonly associated with revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam, is *sin*. A word which now imputes and for centuries has imputed a particular and at times somewhat strident if not harsh moral attitude, with sinners starkly contrasted with the righteous, the saved, and with *sin*, what is evil, what is perverse, to be shunned and shudderingly avoided.

One of the oldest usages of the word *sin* - so far discovered - is in the c. 880 CE translation of the c. 525 CE text *Consolatio Philosophiae*, a translation attributed to King Ælfred. Here, the Old English spelling of *syn* is used:

Ʒæt is swiðe dyslic & swiðe micel syn Ʒæt mon Ʒæs wenan scyle
be Gode

come þonne he, gif hit swa wære. Ac Ʒ is swiðe dyslic 7
swiðe micel syn Ʒ mon Ʒæs wenan scyle be Gode, oððe eft

The context of the original Latin of Boethius [5] is cogitare, in relation to a dialogue about goodness and God, so that the sense of the Latin is that it is incorrect - an error, wrong - to postulate/claim/believe certain things about God. There is thus here, in Boethius, as in early English texts such as Beowulf [6], the sense of doing what was wrong, of committing an error, of making a mistake, of being at fault; at most of overstepping the bounds, of transgressing limits imposed by others, and thus being 'guilty' of such an infraction, a sense which the suggested etymology of the word syn implies: from the Latin sons, sontis.

Thus, this early usage of the English word syn seems to impart a sense somewhat different from what we now associate with the word sin, which is why in my translation of John, 8.7 [7] I eschewed that much overused and pejorative word in order to try and convey something of the numinous original:

So, as they continued to ask [for an answer] he straightened himself, saying to them: Let he who has never made a mistake [Αναμαρτητος] throw the first stone at her.

ὥς δὲ ἐπέμενον ἐρωτῶντες αὐτόν, ἀνέκυψεν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὁ ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν πρῶτος ἐπ' αὐτὴν βαλέτω λίθον.

Jesus here is not, in my view, sermonizing about sin, as a puritan preacher might, and as if he is morally superior to and has judged the sinners. Instead, he is rather gently and as a human pointing out an obvious truth about our human nature; explaining, in v.11, that he has not judged her conduct:

ἡ δὲ εἶπεν· οὐδεὶς, κύριε. εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· οὐδὲ ἐγὼ σε κατακρίνω· πορεύου, ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε

[And] she answered, No one, my Lord. Whereupon Jesus replied Neither do I judge [κατακρίνω] you, therefore go, and avoid errors such as those. [8]

Such a translation avoids the rather contradictory nature of most other translations which have Jesus clearly stating that he also does not judge her but then have him go on to say that she should 'sin no more' with the obvious implication that he has indeed judged her in that in his judgement she had

indeed sinned before.

Understood and appreciated thus, sans the now culturally-biased word sin, these passages from the gospel according to John - together with passages such as Luke 19.10 and Romans 13.10 [9] - perhaps usefully summarize the evangel of Jesus of Nazareth; the (in my view) rather human message of avoiding judging others because we ourselves are prone to error, the message of love, and the message of redemption (forgiveness) for those who in the past have made mistakes but who have thereafter tried to avoid making such mistakes again, those hitherto perhaps damaged or lost.

In respect of ἀμαρτάνω [10] consider, for example, Matthew 18.21:

Τότε προσελθὼν ὁ Πέτρος εἶπεν [αὐτῷ] Κύριε, ποσάκις ἀμαρτήσῃ εἰς ἐμὲ ὁ ἀδελφός μου καὶ ἀφήσω αὐτόν; ἕως ἑπτάκις

Peter then approached [προσέρχομαι] him saying My Lord, how often [ποσάκις] may my brother fail [ἀμαρτάνω] me and be ignored [ἀφίημι]? Up to seven times?

Which is somewhat different from the usual "how many times shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him."

Ontology, Exegesis, and Pathei-Mathos

All religions and spiritual ways, because they are spiritual/metaphysical, either posit, or are interpreted as positing, an ontology. That is, they all offer an explanation, or an analysis, of the nature of our being as humans and of the nature of, and our relation to, Being, whether Being is understood as God/Allah/gods/Nature/Fate or in terms of axioms such as karma and nirvana. There thus exists, or there develops, an explanation or explanations concerning the meaning and the purpose of our mortal lives; of how that purpose may be attained; and thus of what wisdom is and why there is and continues to be suffering.

However, as I mentioned in *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God*, citing several examples, the original message of a revelation or of a spiritual way often seems to become obscured or somehow gets lost over centuries. A loss or obscuration partly due to the reliance on revealed or given texts; partly due to divergent interpretations of such texts, with some interpretations accepted or rejected by those assuming or vested with a religious authority; and partly due to a reliance, by many of the faithful, on translations of such texts.

Furthermore, the interpretation of such religious texts - and/or the emergence or the writing of new texts concerning a particular spiritual way - has often led to schism or schisms, and to harsh interpretations of religions; schisms and a harshness that have sometimes led to sects, to violence between believers and sects, to accusations of heresy, and to the persecution of those said to be heretics. All of which have thus caused or been the genesis of suffering.

Thus, in respect of Christianity,

"...it is tempting therefore to suggest that it was later, and theological, interpretations and interpolations which led to a harsh dichotomy, an apocalyptic eschatology, a 'war' between an abstract 'good' and 'evil', and that with such interpretations and interpolations - much in evidence in the persecution of alleged heretics - the simple gospel message of the health of love was somehow lost for a while, to be, later on, re-expressed by people such as William Penn, who wrote, in his *Some Fruits of Solitude*, "Let us then try what love can do." [11]

In effect, the humility that I have found by experience that all or most religions and spiritual ways manifest - and an essential part of their revelation, their message, their presencing of the numinous - is obscured or ignored in favour of arrogant human presumptions and assumptions and a personal pride: that 'we' know better, or believe we know better; that 'we' have somehow found or been given the 'right' answer(s) or the 'right' interpretation(s), and that therefore 'the others' are wrong, and 'we' are better or more 'pure'/devout than them. And so on.

Yet there is, it seems to me, after many years of reflexion, something else which accounts for why this loss of a necessary humility occurs, other than the aforementioned reliance on revealed or given texts, the divergent interpretations of such texts, and the reliance, by many of the faithful, on translations of such texts. This is the reality of religions and many spiritual ways either rejecting pathei-mathos as a source of wisdom or favouring specific texts and their interpretation(s) over and above the pathei-mathos of individuals.

For pathei-mathos - the personal learning from grief, suffering, pain, adversity, and experience - directly connects us to and thus enables us to personally experience and appreciate the numinous, sans words, ideations, ideology, theology, and dogma. An experience and an appreciation outwardly and inwardly manifest in a personal humility; in the knowledge of ourselves

as but one fallible, mortal, fragile, human emanation of and connexion to Being; and in an empathic understanding of how all religions and spiritual ways, in their genesis and in their original emanations, express - or try to express - the same wisdom: manifest in an appreciation of the numinous, and in our human necessity for the natural balance that is humility and a very personal honour. And, because of this spiritual and religious equivalence, it does not matter if the individual of pathei-mathos, having so touched and felt the numinous, develops their own weltanschauung or none, or leaves or finds an existing spiritual or religious one, although it is and often has been such pathei-mathos which reveals to individuals, or which enables them to rediscover, the essence of a particular religion or a particular spiritual way: that simple and similar numinous essence which schisms, harsh interpretations, dogma, and ideology, have so often and for so long obscured.

For what pathei-mathos reveals does matter, beyond such outward and such supra-personal manifestations, are the personal, the individual, virtues of love, empathy, gentleness, and compassion.

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Part Two

Translation and Al-Quran

The problem of sometimes projecting modern interpretations onto ancient texts by the injudicious use, in a translation, of a particular English word is especially relevant in the matter of the Quran, for it seems to be increasingly common for someone reliant on translations - on the interpretations of meaning given by others - to misunderstand the text of the Quran and then, from that misunderstanding, not only form a misconceived (and sometimes prejudiced) opinion about the Quran in particular and Islam in general but also to give voice to such an opinion.

For example, an ayah [verse] often (mis)quoted is Ayah 151 of Surah Al 'Imran, which is usually interpreted as "Soon shall we cast terror into the hearts of the unbelievers."

However, the word 'terror' is an inappropriate interpretation for several reasons. The Arabic of Ayah 151 of Surah Al 'Imran is:

سَنُلْقِي فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الرُّعْبَ بِمَا أَشْرَكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَمَأْوَاهُمُ
النَّارُ وَيُسْ مَتَوَى الظَّالِمِينَ

[Transliteration: sanulqi fee qulubi allazeena kafaroo l-ruba bima ashraaku
bil-lahi ma lam yunazzil bihi sultanana wamawhumu l-naru wabisa mathwa
l-zalimeena]

Does الرُّعْبَ imply 'terror' as the aforementioned interpretation suggests, along with all that the modern English word terror now implies, as in the difficult to define term terrorism? No, it does not; rather, the Arabic implies *the fear/the dread* and 'the astonishment/awe' - that is, that human feeling inspired by apprehending or experiencing some-thing supernaturally or extraordinarily powerful and numinous; for example, an Ayah (Sign) of Allah, Al-Khaliq, Al-Azim, Al-Jalil. The kind of fear/trembling/awe/astonishment felt, for instance and importantly, by the Apostles when, as recounted in Luke 24.37, they witnessed Jesus alive after the crucifixion.

That is, I suggest that what is referred to in Ayah 151 of Surah Al 'Imran - as in the other four Ayat where الرُّعْبَ / رُعْبًا occur - is similar to the 'suffusion with fear' and the 'being scared' that occurs and has occurred, as recounted in both Christian scripture and the Quran, when a mortal is (a) confronted by God/Allah or some-thing divine/numinous/awe-inspiring, and/or (b) has such fear, and such a being scared, thrust into their hearts by God/Allah, as a Sign, a warning, or as mention of their fate.

In respect of Luke 24.37, for instance, the Greek text is:

πτοηθέντες δὲ καὶ ἔμφοβοι γενόμενοι ἐδόκουν πνεῦμα θεωρεῖν

The term ἔμφοβος means 'suffused with/by phobos' - held/gripped by fear; timorous - and occurs in Sirach 19.24 and Luke 24.5, the latter of which is very interesting: ἐμφόβων δὲ γενομένων αὐτῶν καὶ κλινουσῶν τὰ πρόσωπα εἰς τὴν γῆν εἶπαν πρὸς αὐτάς Τί ζητεῖτε τὸν ζῶντα μετὰ τῶν νεκρῶν. That is, suffused with phobos, they assumed a posture of submission/reverence /respect by bowing their heads; in effect prostrating themselves in the presence of some-thing divine/numinous/awe-inspiring. Since πνεῦμα - pneuma - implies apparition or ghost, and πτοηθέντες suggests they were 'scared' (cf. Odyssey 22.298 - τῶν δὲ φρένες ἐπτοίγηεν) then Luke 24.37 could be translated as "But they, suffused with fear and scared, felt that they saw an apparition." [1]

My, admittedly fallible, view now - after some years of reflexion and study - is that, in an English interpretation of the meaning of a work as revered, and misunderstood, as the Quran, English words in common usage must be carefully chosen, with many common words avoided, and that it would sometimes be better to choose an unusual or even archaic word in order to try and convey something of the sense of the Arabic. Thus, with a careful interpretation common misunderstandings of the text - by non-Muslims unversed in Arabic - can possibly be avoided, especially if - as might be the case with unusual words - the reader has to pause to consider the meaning or make the effort to find the meaning, if only in a glossary appended to the interpretation. A pause and/or an effort that is suited to reading a work revered by millions of people around the world.

In the matter of Ayah 151 of Surah Al 'Imran, a possible interpretation of meaning therefore is:

Into the hearts of they who disbelieve We shall hurl redurre
because they, without any authority revealed about such things,
associate others with Allah; and for their home: The Fire, that
harrowing resting place of the unjust.

Here, I have used the unusual English word redurre, with a meaning of 'awe combined with a trembling fear'. A word suggested by its occurrence in religious works by Richard Rolle and John Gower, and also by texts such as *Morte Arthure* [2] and which word therefore places this Ayah from the Quran into the correct context, which is that of a religious revelation, a spiritual message, comparable to that of Christianity, and of the particular ontology that Islam offers as answers to questions concerning the meaning and the purpose of our mortal lives; of how that purpose may be attained; and thus of what wisdom is. Answers which have nothing whatsoever to do with 'terrorism', or even with 'terror' as that word is now commonly understood.

The Art of Translation, and A Question About Time

One question of possibly projecting modern interpretations onto ancient texts by the injudicious use of a particular English word, occurred to me some twenty years ago during my translation of the *Oedipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles, and concerned the Greek word χρόνος. This is almost always translated as 'time', a word we now associate with a regular linearity - of past-present-future - measured in terms of the minutes, hours, and fixed days, of a reliable timepiece such as a watch or clock.

In the classical world of Homer and Sophocles, this type of reliable, linear,

regularity was almost unknown, with χρόνος thus sometimes denoting some ill-defined period - long or short - and with the passing of a year, for example, often determined by the changes of the seasons, and which seasons themselves were marked in their arrival by the appearance of certain constellations in the night sky, something beautifully expressed by Aeschylus at the beginning of the Agamemnon:

θεοὺς μὲν αἰτῶ τῶνδ' ἀπαλλαγὴν πόνων
φρουρᾶς ἐτείας μῆκος, ἦν κοιμώμενος
στέγαις Ἀτρειδῶν ἄγκαθεν, κυνὸς δίκην,
ἄστρον κάτοιδα νυκτέρων ὁμήγυριν,
καὶ τοὺς φέροντας χειῖμα καὶ θέρος βροτοῖς
λαμπροὺς δυνάστας, ἐμπρέποντας αἰθέρι
ἀστέρας, ὅταν φθίνωσιν, ἀντολὰς τε τῶν.
καὶ νῦν φυλάσσω λαμπάδος τό σύμβολον,
αὐγὴν πυρὸς φέρουσιν ἐκ Τροίας φάτιν
ἀλώσιμόν τε βάζειν: ὧδε γὰρ κρατεῖ
γυναικὸς ἀνδρόβουλον ἐλπίζον κέαρ.

Again I have asked the gods to deliver me from this toil,
This vigil a year in length, where I repose
On Atreidae's roof on my arms, as is the custom with dogs
Looking toward the nightly assembly of constellations
And they who bring to mortals the storm-season and the summer:
Those radiant sovereigns, distinguished in the heavens
As stars when they come forth or pass away.
And still I keep watch for the sign of the beacon,
The light of the fire which will bring report of Troy,
Announcing it is captured.
For such is the command
And expectation of that woman with a man's resolve.

However, in Oedipus Tyrannus, Sophocles has the memorable phrase καὶ μ' ἥμαρ ἤδη ξυμμετρούμενον χρόνῳ, indicating something not only about χρόνος but also about the classical world and (importantly) about the character of Oedipus. The phrase is therefore worth quoting in context:

ὦ παῖδες οἰκτροί, γνωτὰ κοῦκ ἄγνωτά μοι
προσῆλθεθ' ἰμεῖροντες: εὖ γὰρ οἶδ' ὅτι
νοσεῖτε πάντες, καὶ νοσοῦντες, ὥς ἐγὼ
οὐκ ἔστιν ὑμῶν ὅστις ἐξ ἴσου νοσεῖ.

τὸ μὲν γὰρ ὑμῶν ἄλγος εἰς ἔν' ἔρχεται
μόνον καθ' αὐτὸν κούδέν' ἄλλον, ἡ δ' ἐμὴ
ψυχὴ πόλιν τε κάμει καὶ σ' ὁμοῦ στένει.
ὥστ' οὐχ ὕπνω γ' εὐδοντά μ' ἐξεγείρετε,
ἀλλ' ἵστε πολλὰ μὲν με δακρύσαντα δῆ,
πολλὰς δ' ὁδοὺς ἐλθόντα φροντίδος πλάνοις:
ἦν δ' εὖ σκοπῶν ἠῦρискον ἴασιν μόνην,
ταύτην ἔπραξα: παῖδα γὰρ Μενοικέως
Κρέοντ', ἐμαυτοῦ γαμβρόν, ἐς τὰ Πυθικὰ
ἔπεμψα Φοίβου δώμαθ', ὡς πύθοιθ' ὅ τι
δρῶν ἢ τί φωνῶν τήνδε ῥυσαίμην πόλιν.
καὶ μ' ἤμαρ ἤδη ζυμμετρούμενον χρόνῳ 73
λυπεῖ τί πράσσει: τοῦ γὰρ εἰκότος πέρα
ἄπεστι πλείω τοῦ καθήκοντος χρόνου.
ὅταν δ' ἵκηται, τηνικαῦτ' ἐγὼ κακὸς
μὴ δρῶν ἂν εἶην πάνθ' ὅσ' ἂν δηλοῖ θεός.

You, my children, who lament - I know, for I am not without knowledge,
Of the desire which brings you here. For well do I see
All your sufferings - and though you suffer, it is I
And not one of you that suffers the most.
For your pain comes to each of you
By itself, with nothing else, while my psyche
Mourns for myself, for you and the clan.
You have not awakened me from a resting sleep
For indeed you should know of my many tears
And the many paths of reflection I have wandered upon and tried.
And, as I pondered, I found one cure
Which I therefore took. The son of Menoeceus,
Creon - he who is my kin by marriage - I have sent to that Pythian dwelling
Of Phoebus to learn how I
By word or deed can give deliverance to the clan.
But I have already measured the duration
And am concerned: for where is he? He is longer than expected
For his absence is, in duration, greater than is necessary.
Yet when he does arrive, it would dishonourable
For me not to act upon all that the gods makes clear.

vv.58-77

To translate χρόνος in v.73 abstractly as 'time' is therefore to overlook not only the context - of a world where the seasons were often determined by observation of the night sky - but also the significance of what Oedipus says. For he has, out of his urgent concern for both his people and himself - out of fear of the wrake of the gods - gone to the trouble to determine how long

Creon's journey should take and to measure/calculate/record, or to have someone do this for him, precisely how long Creon has been away.

A pedantic point, possibly; but one which perhaps illustrates the engaging art of translation and the possibilities of interpretation, and of misinterpretation, that exist.

David Myatt
2013

Notes

[1] As outlined in Appendix II (Glossary of Terms and Greek Words) of *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. ISBN 978-1484096642 (2013) I make a distinction between a religion and a spiritual Way of Life.

One of the differences being that a religion requires and manifests a codified ritual and doctrine and a certain expectation of conformity in terms of doctrine and ritual, as well as a certain organization beyond the local community level resulting in particular individuals assuming or being appointed to positions of authority in matters relating to that religion. In contrast, Ways are more diverse and more an expression of a spiritual ethos, of a customary, and often localized, way of doing certain spiritual things, with there generally being little or no organization beyond the community level and no individuals assuming - or being appointed by some organization - to positions of authority in matters relating to that ethos.

Religions thus tend to develop an organized regulatory and supra-local hierarchy which oversees and appoints those, such as priests or religious teachers, regarded as proficient in spiritual matters and in matters of doctrine and ritual, whereas adherents of Ways tend to locally and informally and communally, and out of respect and a personal knowing, accept certain individuals as having a detailed knowledge and an understanding of the ethos and the practices of that Way.

Many spiritual Ways have evolved into religions.

[2] In Buddhism, the primary texts are regarded as: (i) for Theravada Buddhism, the collections referred to as *Tipitaka/Tripitaka*; (ii) for Mahāyāna Buddhism, the Tipitaka (in some cases, depending on interpretation) and the various *Sutras*, including the collection often referred to as The Perfection of Wisdom; (iii) for Tibetan Buddhism, the various Tantric texts, plus some of the Tipitaka (in some cases, depending on interpretation) and some the Mahāyāna sutras (in some cases, depending on interpretation).

In Hinduism, there is the *Bhagavad Gītā* and the literature of the *Vedas*.

[3] By *interpretation* here is meant (i) commentaries (academic, theological, and otherwise); (ii) explanations (critical, and otherwise); (iii) translations; and – most importantly – (iv) a seeking of the meaning of (a) both the text (in whole and in parts) and (b) of the words and terms used.

[4] One misused English word is 'terror', often used to translate الرَّعْبَ in Ayah 151 of Surah Al 'Imran. See Part Two, below *Translation and Al-Quran*.

[5] Quare quod a summo bono diversum est sui natura, id summum bonum non est; quod nefas est de eo cogitare, quo nihil constat esse praestantius. *Consolatio Philosophiae*, Liber Tertius, pr. x

[6] Beowulf, 2470f, where the spelling synn is used:

eaferum laefde, swa deð eadig mon,
lond ond leodbyrig, þa he of life gewat.
þa wæs synn ond sacu Sweona ond Geata
ofer wid wæter, wroht gemæne,
herenið hearda, syððan Hreðel swealt

[7] qv. Myatt, *Fifty Years of Diverse Peregrinations*. 2013

[8] The conventional interpretation of ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε is "from now on sin no more".

[9] Luke 19.10:

ἦλθεν γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ζητῆσαι καὶ σῶσαι τὸ ἀπολωλός

The arrivance [ἔρχομαι] of the Son of Man was to seek and to save what was lost

However, a more interesting interpretation is:

The arrivance of the Son of Man was to seek and to repair [σώζω]
what had been damaged [ἀπόλλυμι]

and which interpretation is suggested by (i) the sense of σώζω: keep safe, preserve, maintain - whence repair, and (ii) the sense of ἀπόλλυμι: destroy, ruin, kill, demolish, and - metaphorically - damaged, lost, and die.

Romans 13.10:

ἡ ἀγάπη τῷ πλησίον κακὸν οὐκ ἐργάζεται· πλήρωμα οὖν νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη

love brings no harm to the neighbour; love is the completion of the law

[11] ἀμαρτάνω implies a failure, mistake, an error, deprivation, loss, to miss/fail. qv (i) Sophocles, Oedipus Tyrannus:

ὅταν ταχύς τις οὐπιβουλεύων λάθρα
χωρῇ, ταχὺν δεῖ κάμει βουλεύειν πάλιν:
εἰ δ' ἡσυχάζων προσμενῶ, τὰ τοῦδε μὲν
πεπραγμέν' ἔσται, τάμὰ δ' ἡμαρτημένα 621

But when there is a plot against me which is swiftly and furtively
Moving forward, then I must be swift in opposing that plot
Since if I remain at rest, then indeed
What is about to be done, will be - because of my mistake.

and (ii) Aeschylus, Agamemnon:

ὀφλὼν γὰρ ἀρπαγῆς τε καὶ κλοπῆς δίκην
τοῦ ῥυσίου θ' ἡμαρτε καὶ πανώλεθρον 535
αὐτόχθονον πατρῶον ἔθρισεν δόμον.

The penalty for the pillage and theft was fair -
He lost his booty and completely ruined
His own land with his father's family cut down

[11] Myatt. *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God*. 2013

[12] On a pedantic note, I understand δοκέω as meaning here not the

conventional unemotional 'suppose/thought' nor (worse) 'opinion' but rather as 'felt' in the sense of experiencing (as they do) an intense and personal feeling. Hence my rendering that they "felt that they saw..."

[13] John Gower, *Confessio Amantis* [written 1390 ce]

That thogh thi love more drawe
And peise in the balance more,
Thou miht noght axe ayein therfore
Of duete, bot al of grace.
For love is lord in every place,
Ther mai no lawe him justefie
Be reddour ne be compaignie,
That he ne wole after his wille
Whom that him liketh spede or spille

(Book 5, v. 4558) *The Complete Works of John Gower*.
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899-1902

Morte Arthure [written c. 1400 ce]

That thow ne schall rowte ne ryste vndyr the heuene ryche, þofe
thow for reddour of Rome ryne to þe erthe [108-109]

cc David Myatt 2013

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All translations: DW Myatt

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Illumination from the MS Anicii Manlii Torqvati Severini Boetii,
De Consolatione Philosophiae cvm Commento,
dated c. 1385 ce, in Glasgow University library: MS Hunter 374 fol.4r

In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church

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Prefatory Note

Collected here are three essays written in 2018 and 2019 which present my personal views regarding Catholicism and in particular regarding what has been termed the "culture of abuse", cultura del abuso. The internet links in the footnotes were valid as of January 2019.

David Myatt
February 2019

In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church

Part One

Listening to *Messe De La Nativité: Gaudeamus Hodie; Puer Natus Est Nobis* - performed by Ensemble Gilles Binchois - I am so reminded how the Roman Catholic Church inspired such numinosity, such beauty, century following century. For it is as if such music presenced the Divine to thus remind us, we fallible error-prone mortals, of another realm beyond the material and beyond our own mortal desires.

Such presencing of the Divine - such a numinous reminder of our fallibility, century following century, as for example in *Kyrie Orbis Factor* as performed by Ensemble Organum - seems to have become somewhat lost in all the recent Media propaganda about how some Catholic priests and monks have allowed their personal desires to overwhelm such a presencing of the numinous and which presencing of the divine is and was manifest in compassion, empathy, and a personal humility.

Lost, in all the Media propaganda, because I from personal experience know that such incidents are perpetrated by a minority of individuals and that the vast majority of Catholic priests and monks are good individuals who strive, who often struggle, each in their own way and according to their physis, to manifest the virtues of compassion, empathy, and humility. That so many writers and readers of such Media propaganda in this our modern world seem to commit the fallacy of *a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter* no longer, unfortunately, surprises me.

In respect of personal experience I have to admit that I was somewhat dismayed by a recent report issued by a government sponsored Inquiry Panel. For I personally had known two of the individuals mentioned in that report, knowing from personal experience in a certain monastery that they, and the few others like them over the years, were the exception out of dozens and dozens of other monks and priests there. I was also somewhat dismayed by what I felt was the personal opinion of the authors of that report - stated in their "Conclusions" - that those involved in placing their personal desires before compassion, empathy, and humility, are "likely to be considerably greater than numbers cited in the convictions" since no evidence was presented to substantiate such an opinion. Another example of individuals committing the fallacy of *a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter*? Probably.

But why does someone who has developed a somewhat paganus weltanschauung – the mystical individualistic numinous way of pathemathos – now defend a supra-personal organization such as the Roman Catholic Church? Because I from personal experience appreciate that for all its many faults – recent and otherwise – and despite my disagreement regarding some of its teachings it still on balance does, at least in my fallible opinion, presence – as it has for centuries presenced – aspects of the numinous and which presencing has over centuries, again in my fallible opinion, had a beneficial affect on many human beings.

As I wrote some years ago in respect of visiting my father's grave in Africa:

"Once I happened to be travelling to an area which colonial and imperialist Europeans formerly described as part of 'darkest Africa'. Part of this travel involved a really long journey on unpaved roads by bus from an urban area. You know the type of thing – an unreliable weekly or sporadic service in some old vehicle used by villagers to take themselves (and often their produce and sometimes their livestock) to and from an urban market and urban-dwelling relatives. On this service, to a remote area, it [seemed to be] the custom – before the journey could begin – for someone to stand at the front and say a Christian prayer with every passenger willingly joining in.

It was quite touching. As was the fact that, at the village where I stayed (with a local family) near that grave, everyone went to Church on a Sunday, wearing the best clothes they could, and there was a real sense (at least to me) of how their faith helped them and gave them some guidance for the better, for it was as if they, poor as they were, were in some way living, or were perhaps partly an embodiment of, the ethos expressed by the Sermon of the Mount, and although I no longer shared their Christian faith, I admired them and respected their belief and understood what that faith seemed to have given them.

Who was – who am – I to try and preach to them, to judge them and that faith? I was – I am – just one fallible human being who believes he may have some personal and fallible answers to certain questions; just one person among billions aware of his past arrogance and his suffering-causing mistakes." [1]

Is to not judge others without a personal knowing of them, to not commit fallacies such as *a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter*, and to allow for personal expiation, perhaps to presence the numinous in at least one small and quite individual way? Personally, I am inclined to believe it is.

Pietatis fons immense, ἐλέησον
Noxas omnes nostras pelle, ἐλέησον [2]

2.x.18

ooo

[1] <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2012/10/30/just-my-fallible-views-again/>

[2] "Immeasurable origin of piety, have mercy. Banish all our faults, have mercy." Kyrie Orbis Factor.

Although the Greek phrase Κύριε ἐλέησον is considered to be a Christian doxology, deriving from the Old Testament, it is possible that it was a common phrase in Greco-Roman culture, with origins dating back to the classical period, for it occurs in the Discourses of Epictetus – Book II, vii, 13 – in relation to a discussion about divination,

καὶ τὸν θεὸν ἐπικαλούμενοι δεόμεθα αὐτοῦ κύριε ἐλέησον

and in our invocations to the theos our bidding is: Master, have mercy.

ooooooo

Part Two

Expiation And Penance

Two of the guiding practical principles of living as a Roman Catholic seem to me, on the basis of personal experience and fallible understanding, to be expiation and penance, related as they are to what was termed the Sacrament of Confession – now re-named the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation – and thence related to one of the founding principles of the Roman Catholic Church: that an ordained Priest has the religious

authority [1] to give absolution for the "sins" [2] a person has committed, and the authority to specify what penance is required for expiation, but which absolution is dependant on the person making a full and truthful confession and being repentant.

Such personal confession, penance, and expiation, are evidential of how a practising Catholic interacts with the Divine and is thus personally reminded of what is spiritual, eternal, numinous, and beyond the causal everyday world. As I wrote in my essay *Numinous Expiation*,

"One of the many problems regarding both The Numinous Way and my own past which troubles me – and has troubled me for a while – is how can a person make reparation for suffering caused, inflicted, and/or dishonourable deeds done [...]

One of the many benefits of an organized theistic religion, such as Christianity or Islam or Judaism, is that mechanisms of personal expiation exist whereby such feelings can be placed in context and expiated by appeals to the supreme deity. In Judaism, there is Teshuvah culminating in Yom Kippur, the day of expiation/reconciliation. In Catholicism, there is the sacrament of confession and penance. In Islam, there is personal dua to, and reliance on, Allah Ar-Rahman, Ar-Raheem, As-Salaam.

Even pagan religions and ways had mechanisms of personal expiation for wrong deeds done, often in the form of propitiation; the offering of a sacrifice, perhaps, or compensation by the giving or the leaving of a valuable gift or votive offering at some numinous – some sacred and venerated – place or site." [3]

This personal – and via the Confessional, this priestly – connexion to the Divine, with the attendant penitence, penance, personal expiation, seems to me to have been somewhat neglected when non-Catholics, and even some Catholics criticize the Roman Catholic Church for their past response to those accused of placing their personal (often sexual) desires before compassion, empathy, and humility.

That is, such criticism is secular; based on what is temporal, causal, such as some secular law or some personal emotive reaction, with the spiritual – the eternal – dimension to mortal life unconsidered. Which spiritual dimension is for Catholics based on allowing for personal expiation by spiritual means such as confession, penitence, and penance.

This allowance for such personal expiation by such spiritual means is what, according to my fallible understanding, informed the treatment by the Catholic hierarchy of many of those accused of placing their personal desires before obedience to their God.

For judgement according to such a spiritual dimension was, rightly or wrongly, often considered more important than secular recompense and secular punishment. Understood thus, there were no – to use a vernacular term – "cover-ups", just the application of certain spiritual considerations, considerations which are the foundations of the Catholic faith based as such considerations are on the belief in the Eternal Life – in Heaven or in Hell – which awaits all mortals, one portal to such an Eternal Life in Heaven being, according to Catholic faith, the sacrament of confession.

Another aspect of this Catholic priority of the spiritual over the secular is the sanctity (the seal) of the confessional and which sanctity is adjudged to be more important than secular laws relating, for example, to disclosure of or information regarding actions deemed to be criminal.

As for my personal opinions on the matter, I have none, for who am I – with my decades of hubris, my knowledge of my plenitude of mistakes – to judge others, to judge anyone? I have tried to rationally understand both the secular and the spiritual dimensions involved, having personal experience of both, and as so often these days remain somewhat perplexed by our human nature and by the need so many humans, myself included, still have for a belief in a spiritual dimension whereby we can connect ourselves to the numinous, to the Divine – however the Divine is presented to and in us – enabling us to perhaps find some peace, some happiness, some solace, some answers, among the turmoil, the suffering, the chngement, of the secular world.

My portal to the spiritual remains 'the way of pathei-mathos', the way of striving to cultivate, striving to live by, the virtues of humility, empathy, compassion, honour, non-interference, and self-restraint. A very individual way devoid of mythoi and anthropomorphic deities.

Perhaps it would be easier to believe in God, to accept again the Catholic expiation of the sacraments of Confession and the Mass. It would perhaps be even easier to accept some tangible votive wordless means in the form of offering some paganus propitiation, some libation, some talismata left, at some numinous paganus site.

But as Aeschylus so well-expressed it,

ἔστι δ' ὅπη νῦν
ἔστι: τελεῖται δ' ἐς τὸ πεπρωμένον:
οὔθ' ὑποκαίων οὔθ' ὑπολείβων
οὔτε δακρύων ἀπύρων ἱερῶν
ὀργὰς ἀτενεῖς παραθέλξει [4]

What is now, came to be
As it came to be. And its ending has been ordained.
No concealed laments, no concealed libations,
No unburnt offering
Can charm away that firm resolve.

Which type of sentiment I feel philosophers such as Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius also sought to express.

4.x.18

ooo

[1] Qv. John 20:22-23,

λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἃν τινων ἀφῆτε τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἀφέωνται
αὐτοῖς ἃν τινων κρατῆτε κεκράτηνται

Receive Halig Spiritus: if you release anyone from their errors,
they are released; if you hold onto them, they are held onto.

In regard to the term Spiritus, in my commentary on John 1:31 I wrote:

τὸ πνεῦμα. Almost without exception, since Wycliffe's Bible the Greek here has been translated as "the spirit", although the ASV [the Anglo-Saxon Version] has gast (gast of heofenum), whence the later English word 'ghost'. However, given what the terms 'spirit' and 'ghost' – both in common usage, and as a result of over a thousand years of Christian exegesis – now impute, it is apposite to offer an alternative and one which is germane to the milieu of the Gospels or which at least suggests something of the numinosity presenced, in this instance, via the Gospel of John.

Given that the transliteration *pneuma* – with its modern association with terms such as *pneumatic* – does not unequivocally suggest the numinous, I have chosen *spiritus*, as referenced in respect of *gast* in Wright's *Anglo-Saxon And Old English Vocabularies*.

In regard to the translation *Halig Spiritus*, in my commentary on John 5:33 I wrote:

I have here used the Old English word *Halig* – as for example found in the version of John 17.11 in the Lindisfarne Gospel, 'Du halig fæder' – to translate ἅγιος rather than the later word 'holy' derived as that is from *halig* and used as it was by Wycliffe in his 1389 translation of this phrase, "in the Hooly Gost", which itself echoes the ASV, "on Halgum Gaste."

The unique phrase *in Halig Spiritus* – in place of the conventional 'with the Holy Spirit' – may thus express something of the numinosity, and the newness, of the original Gospel, especially as the word 'holy' has been much overused, imputes particular meanings from over a thousand years of exegesis, and, latterly in common parlance, has become somewhat trivialized.

[2] As I have noted in several essays, and in my translation of the Gospel of John, I prefer to translate the Greek term ἁμαρτία not by the conventional 'sin' but rather by 'error' or 'mistake'. As I wrote in the essay *Exegesis and Translation*,

One of the prevalent English words used in translations of the New Testament, and one of the words now commonly associated with revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam, is *sin*. A word which now imputes and for centuries has imputed a particular and at times somewhat strident if not harsh moral attitude, with sinners starkly contrasted with the righteous, the saved, and with *sin*, what is evil, what is perverse, to be shunned and shudderingly avoided.

One of the oldest usages of the word *sin* – so far discovered – is in the c. 880 CE translation of the c. 525 CE text *Consolatio Philosophiae*, a translation attributed to King Ælfred. Here, the Old English spelling of *syn* is used:

Ʒæt is swiðe dyslic & swiðe micel syn Ʒæt mon Ʒæs
wenan scyle be Gode

The context of the original Latin of Boethius is cogitare, in relation to a dialogue about goodness and God, so that the sense of the Latin is that it is incorrect – an error, wrong – to postulate/claim/believe certain things about God. There is thus here, in Boethius, as in early English texts such as Beowulf, the sense of doing what was wrong, of committing an error, of making a mistake, of being at fault; at most of overstepping the bounds, of transgressing limits imposed by others, and thus being 'guilty' of such an infraction, a sense which the suggested etymology of the word syn implies: from the Latin sons, sontis.

Thus, this early usage of the English word syn seems to impart a sense somewhat different from what we now associate with the word sin, which is why in my translation of John, 8.7 I eschewed that much overused and pejorative word in order to try and convey something of the numinous original:

So, as they continued to ask [for an answer] he straightened himself, saying to them: "Let he who has never made a mistake [Αναμαρτητος] throw the first stone at her."

ὥς δὲ ἐπέμενον ἐρωτῶντες αὐτόν, ἀνέκυψεν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὁ ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν πρῶτος ἐπ' αὐτὴν βαλέτω λίθον.

Jesus here is not, in my view, sermonizing about sin, as a puritan preacher might, and as if he is morally superior to and has judged the sinners. Instead, he is rather gently and as a human pointing out an obvious truth about our human nature; explaining, in v.11, that he has not judged her conduct:

ἡ δὲ εἶπεν· οὐδεὶς, κύριε. εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· οὐδὲ ἐγὼ σε κατακρίνω· πορεύου, ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε

[And] she answered, No one, my Lord. Whereupon Jesus replied "Neither do I judge [κατακρίνω] you, therefore go, and avoid errors such as those."

The essay is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2013/04/26/exegesis-and-translation/> and was included as an Appendix to my *Mercvrii Trismegisti Pymander* (ISBN 978-1495470684)

[3] The essay is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/numinous-expiation/>

[4] Agamemnon, 67-71

Two Metaphysical Contradictions Of The Modern West

The letter written by Pope Francis, dated 1° de enero de 2019 and sent to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, seems to me to encapsulate two of the metaphysical contradictions of the modern Western world in regard to the numinous and the profane.

For in the letter Pope Francis, commenting on what the Media has described as "the scandal of clerical abuse" within the Roman Catholic Church, wrote that

La credibilidad de la Iglesia se ha visto fuertemente cuestionada y debilitada por estos pecados y crímenes, pero especialmente por la voluntad de querer disimularlos y esconderlos. [1]

and also used Biblical quotations in support of his arguments.

The use of the phrase pecados y crímenes - sins and crimes - seems to indicate an acceptance of the metaphysical equality of Church and State: of a sin, as defined by the teachings of the Church, and of a crime as defined in laws made by some State [2].

Sins And Crimes: Sacred And Secular

Pope Francis provides the context for one metaphysical contradiction, for in respect of the response he believes is required regarding such "sins and crimes" he writes

Hoy se nos pide una nueva presencia en el mundo conforme a la Cruz de Cristo, que se cristalice en servicio a los hombres y mujeres de nuestro tiempo [3]

That is, there should be a change, a new presencing, and one that serves the people now; the people of our epoch, of our age, of the 'times' in which we now live.

This is the epoch in which the Media, using such expressions as a "culture of abuse" - cultura del abuso - can question the credibility of the Roman Catholic Church, and by repetition of particular instances of abuse and the reporting of other ones, demand not only a response from the hierarchy of the Church but a response that conforms to the popular, or to the Media created, expectations of the epoch. Which expectations are that secular justice - as understood and as implemented by the State - has a higher priority than *judicium divinum*, the divine justice of God or of the gods.

Which divine justice was, at least according to my fallible understanding and as I noted in part two of my *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*, "often considered more important than secular recompense and secular punishment" especially as personal confession to a Priest, personal penitence, and undertaking the penance prescribed were, in the Roman Catholic Church, a connexion to the Divine. Hence why many of those who, via the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, confessed to abuse were not "publicly named and shamed" by the Catholic hierarchy, were not brought to the attention of State authorities, but instead given penance and, in some instances, quietly moved and expected to begin a new penitential life in the service of God.

That Pope Francis uses the expression cultura del abuso and writes that la credibilidad de la Iglesia se ha visto fuertemente cuestionada y debilitada por estos *pecados y crímenes* suggests to me at least two things. First, that the move toward the change he suggests is in part at least placatory, in conformity with our epoch with its powerful secular Media and its powerful modern secular States; and second that the religious, the numinous, the spiritual, balance presenced for millennia by aspects of the Roman Catholic Church [4] - the devotion to the sacred over and above the secular - is continuing to be lost within the Roman Catholic Church, with *judicium divinum* and the secular justice of some State now apparently considered by the Pope as metaphysically equal. Hence why in a speech to the Roman Curia in December 2018 he said that those who abused children should "hand themselves over to human justice." [5]

A Revealed Religion

The second metaphysical contradiction, between the sacred and the profane in the modern world, which the Papal letter reveals is the unsurprising and traditional use of Biblical quotations in support of, and to frame, the presented suggestions and argument.

This reliance on written texts and reliance on their exegesis and thus on the varied interpretations that result [6] is an implicit part of all revealed religions from Judaism, to Christianity, to Islam. Since these interpretations can vary and have varied over the centuries the result is schism, reformation and counter-reformation, leading as these did in the past to such things as the suppression of the monasteries, the theft of monastic lands and wealth, and the persecution and martyrdom of Catholics, by a tyrannos named Henry; and leading as they have in more modern times, to the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, and to the proliferation of Christian sects and denominations who have diverse views about such matters as same-gender love and abortion.

Such reliance on such texts, such varying interpretations, are as I have noted elsewhere the fundamental weakness of revealed religions [7] with, in my fallible view, the sacred - the numinous - unable to fully be presenced by such religions.

Thus it does not surprise me that the Roman Catholic Church apparently now considers *judicium divinum* and the secular justice of some State as metaphysically equal since the conflict between varying interpretations, the apparent desire for placatory reforms - of being "a new presence in the world" - as a consequence of Media attention, and the increasing move away "in this epoch" from a belief in the superiority of *judicium divinum* (the primacy of the sacred) are necessary consequences of the dialectic of exegesis.

Which is one reason why my personal spiritual belief is now not that of Catholicism even though I sense that Catholicism does still presence some aspects of the numinous.

Instead, I incline toward an apprehension of the divine, the sacred, which is *paganus* and thus individual, undogmatic, and empathic, since my *paganus* metaphysics is that of

(i) an (often wordless) awareness of ourselves as a fallible mortal, as a microcosmic connexion to other mortals, to other life, to Nature, and to the Cosmos beyond our world, and (ii) a new civitas, and one not based on some abstractive law but on a spiritual and interior (and thus not political) understanding and appreciation of our own Ancestral Culture and that of others; on our 'civic' duty to personally presence καλὸς κάγαθός and thus to act and to live in a noble way. For the virtues of personal honour and manners, with their responsibilities, presence the fairness, the avoidance of hubris, the natural harmonious balance, the gender equality, the awareness and appreciation of the divine, that is the numinous. [8]

7.i.19

Extract from a reply to someone
who enquired about a Papal Letter in relation to my text
In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church

ooo

[1] "The credibility of the Church has been seriously questioned and undermined by these sins and crimes but especially by a desire to hide or to disguise them."

The official Vatican translation is "The Church's credibility has been seriously undercut and diminished by these sins and crimes, but even more by the efforts made to deny or conceal them."

[2] By the term State is meant the concept of both (i) organizing and controlling – over a particular and large geographical area – land (and resources); and (ii) organizing and controlling individuals over that same geographical particular and large geographical area.

[3] "Today, what is asked of us is to be a new presence in the world that, in conformity with the Cross of Christ, is made clear in service to the men and women of our epoch."

The official Vatican translation is "What is being asked of us today is a new presence in the world, conformed to the cross of Christ, one that

takes concrete shape in service to the men and women of our time."

[4] As I noted in part one of my *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*,

"Listening to Messe De La Nativité: Gaudeamus Hodie; Puer Natus Est Nobis performed by Ensemble Gilles Binchois - I am so reminded how the Roman Catholic Church inspired such numinosity, such beauty, century following century. For it is as if such music presenced the Divine to thus remind us, we fallible error-prone mortals, of another realm beyond the material and beyond our own mortal desires."

[5] Catholic News Agency, December 21, 2018.

[6] Qv. my *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*, and *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*.

[7] Qv. (i) *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God*; (ii) *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*; (iii) *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*.

[8] *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*.

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Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God

Some Personal Musings

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Introduction

For the past three or so years, as I developed my 'numinous way' and then last year refined it into the philosophy of pathei-mathos, I have reflected more and more on questions concerning good, evil, honour, God, and religion and ethics in general; related as these matters are (at least according to my fallible understanding) to our nature, and possible development, as human beings, and thence to matters such as society, culture, and the jurisprudence by which modern societies function, or endeavour or aspire to function; and manifesting, as answers to such questions should, at least some explanations concerning the evidence that we human beings possess, and have possessed for thousands upon thousands of years, a paradoxical character, capable of - and having done - both honourable and dishonourable deeds, of being both 'good' and 'bad'.

Thus some of the questions of concern are: (i) what is 'good' and 'bad'; (ii) have the definitions and thence the theology and epistemology and the morality of religions, over millennia, enabled more and more of us to avoid doing or causing what is 'bad'; (iii) what, if anything, can or perhaps should replace such definitions, such theology, such epistemology, such morality - such religions - for those who do not or cannot accept such religious answers and the guidance so offered; (iv) does jurisprudence - and thence The State - offer an acceptable alternative; and, perhaps most importantly, as I have endeavoured to intimate in some other recent musings, (v) can we as a species change, sans a belief in some reward or the threat of punishment - be such karmic, eschatological, or deriving from something such as a State - or "are we fated, under Sun, to squabble and bicker and hate and kill and destroy and exploit this planet and its life until we, a failed species, leave only dead detritic traces of our hubris?" [1]

Today - thousands of years after the births of Lao Tzu, of the Buddha, of Moses, of Jesus of Nazareth, of Muhammad - horrid things still happen every minute of every day to people who do not deserve them, who have done nothing dishonourable. Horrid things caused by other human beings, and it certainly seems to me that we, as a species - en masse, world-wide - cannot seem to prevent ourselves from doing what is bad, here understanding and accepting, initially at least, 'the bad' as that which harms or kills or causes suffering to others. All we seem to have done is manufacture more excuses for ourselves and for others in order to try and justify the harm done, and the killings and the suffering caused, and thus

"...latterly, in the name of some country, or some nation, or some political ideal, or some cause, or on behalf of some-thing supra-personal we believed in, we sallied for to war or did deeds that caused

suffering, death, destruction, and inflicted violence on others. Defending this, or attacking that. Invading here; or colonizing there. Dreaming of or determined to find glory. Always, always, using the excuse that our cause, our ideal, our country, our nation, our security, our prosperity, our 'way of life', our 'destiny', hallowed our deeds; believing that such suffering, death, destruction as we caused, and the violence we inflicted on others, were somehow justified because 'we' were right and 'they' our foes, were wrong or in some way not as 'civilized' or as 'just' as us since 'their cause' or their 'way of life' or way of doing things was, according to us, reprehensible." [2]

But is 'the bad' really that which harms or kills, or causes suffering to, others, and if so, is it necessary - moral - to qualify this understanding by appending 'without just cause' to it, and what, therefore - as others, from the *Jus Papirianum* attributed to Sextus Papirius to Augustine of Hippo to Thomas Aquinas and beyond, have sought to define - is a 'just cause' so that 'the bad' is then understood to be "that which harms or kills or causes suffering to others without just cause".

This essay presents some musings of mine regarding such questions.

David Myatt
April 2013

Part One

Good and Evil - An Early Christian Perspective

Given the influence of Christianity over individuals in the West during the past two millennia, especially in terms of eschatology and jurisprudence, it seems apposite to consider how the concepts of 'good' and 'evil' are presented in Christian scripture.

In Genesis 3.5 it is written that:

ἦδει γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ὅτι ἐν ἡ ἡμέρᾳ φάγητε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, διανοιχθήσονται ὤμων οἱ ὀφθαλμοί, καὶ ἔσεσθε ὡς θεοὶ γινώσκοντες καλὸν καὶ πονηρόν. [3]

What, therefore, is meant by γινώσκοντες καλὸν καὶ πονηρόν? Most

translations - modern and otherwise - provide something akin to "knowing good and evil" which we, after two thousand years, presume to associate with some theological ideation such as 'the forces/realm of good' contrasted with (or verses) 'the forces/realm of evil' as if both have or can have an existence independent of the physical world and independent of ourselves, an existence or a force associated, or seemingly associated, with a being described, in the Hebrew scriptures, as שָׁרָפִי - a serpent - and in LXX as ὄφις, a mythological creature familiar to readers of Hesiod's *Theogony* [4] and from myths and legends concerning the oracle at Delphi and the Πύθων, which is both curious and interesting given that שָׁרָפִי can signify divination (qv. Genesis 44.15, for example) and the whisper (the hiss) of a soothsayer or an enchantress.

But, in respect of this 'good and evil', might the Greek of LXX - and the Hebrew text - suggest something other than such a theological ideation? That is, how might the Greek text have been understood in its time?

The Greek of LXX contrasts κάλος with πονηρόν. Now, κάλος is classically understood (as often in Homer) as 'what is pleasing' (as in pleasing to look upon) and that which is considered beneficial and/or admirable (as in admirable deeds); whence what is beautiful/healthy and what is noble or honourable. Classically understood, πονηρόν is 'wearisome' (as in Hesiod, for instance in reference to the tasks that Hercules has to endure) and also what is considered dishonourable or cowardly, as in Sophocles, *Philoctetes* v.437 - πόλεμος οὐδέν' ἄνδρ' ἐκὼν αἰρεῖ πονηρόν, ἀλλὰ τοὺς χρηστοὺς αἰεὶ (battle does not willingly take cowards, but - as of old - the honourable).

The classical meaning of the Genesis text - of the Greek still understood at the time of LXX (c. 250 BCE) and before later interpretations [5] - might therefore seem to suggest some contrast between what is beneficial/admirable/beautiful/noble/honourable and what is wearisome/cowardly/dishonourable.

Interestingly, the sense of the Hebrew text of Genesis 3.5 seems to follow the sense of the Greek, or vice versa [6] - יָדָעַי טוֹב וְרָע . That is, "knowing tov and rah," with טוֹב suggesting pleasing, pleasant, beautiful; and רָע suggesting adversity, unpleasant, harmful, injurious.

In Genesis 8.21, πονηρόν also occurs, again usually translated as some abstract 'evil' - man's heart is evil from his youth, and so on - even though the classical/Hebrew understanding of the term suggests the former more personal sense of dishonourable/injurious, as does its occurrence in the New Testament, as, for example, in Luke 6.45 where it is - interestingly - contrasted not with κάλος but with ἀγαθός, and where the context - of a healthy (a good, κάλος) tree not bearing rotten/bad (σαπρός) fruit, καλὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν σαπρόν - also

suggests not some abstract (demonic) 'evil' but a dishonourable (a bad, cowardly) person bringing forth some-thing bad, burdensome, dishonourable, and thus unhealthy, as rotten fruit is unhealthy and harmful, and with Luke 6.43-5 therefore translated thus:

For no healthy tree brings forth rotten fruit just as a rotten tree cannot bring forth healthy fruit. For each tree is judged by its fruit. A good person from the store of good in their heart brings forth what is good, and a bad person from their bad store brings forth what is bad; for it is because of an overflowing heart that the mouth speaks.

Οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν δένδρον καλὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν σαπρὸν, οὐδὲ πάλιν δένδρον σαπρὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν καλόν, ἕκαστον γὰρ δένδρον ἐκ τοῦ ἰδίου καρποῦ γινώσκεται· ὁ ἀγαθὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ θησαυροῦ τῆς καρδίας προφέρει τὸ ἀγαθόν, καὶ ὁ πονηρὸς ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ προφέρει τὸ πονηρόν· ἐκ γὰρ περισσεύματος καρδίας λαλεῖ τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ

This 'healthy tree' and 'rotten fruit' make sense, for how can a tree be evil? Similarly, the contrast of πονηρόν with ἀγαθός also makes sense in referring to a bad person and good person, for ἀγαθός is classically understood as brave; honourable; well-bred (as often in Homer) and as implying a personal quality, such as prowess, excellence, in some-thing - or good at some-thing - as in The Agamemnon of Aeschylus:

ὅστις δ' ἀγαθὸς προβατογνώμων,
οὐκ ἔστι λαθεῖν ὄμματα φωτός,
τὰ δοκοῦντ' εὐφρονος ἐκ διανοίας
ὑδαρεῖ σαίνειν φιλότητι.

Yet to he who has a good knowledge of his herd
A person's eyes cannot conceal what is a feeble begging for friendship
Behind a pretence of reasoned good judgement. (vv. 795-798)

and as in Oedipus Tyrannus by Sophocles:

ὄρᾳς ἔν' ἤκεις, ἀγαθὸς ὦν γνώμην ἀνὴρ,
τούμῳ παριεῖς καὶ καταμβλύνων κέαρ;

Observe where you have come to with your prowess in reason
By me giving way and blunting my passion. (vv. 687-8)

The scriptural contrast of rottenness and health is also evident, for instance, in Romans 12.21:

μὴ νικῶ ὑπὸ τοῦ κακοῦ ἀλλὰ νίκα ἐν τῷ ἀγαθῷ τὸ κακόν

where ἀγαθός is contrasted with κακός rather than with πονηρόν. Although the verse is often translated along the lines of 'Do not let evil conquer you, instead conquer evil with good,' classically understood, κακός is what is 'bad' in the sense of some-thing rotten or unhealthy, or - the opposite of κάλος - what is displeasing to see. κακός is also what is unlucky, a misfortune, and/or injurious, as for example in The Agamemnon

τὸ μὲν γυναιῖκα πρῶτον ἄρσενος δίχα
ῥῆσθαι δόμοις ἔρημον ἔκπαγλον κακόν

Primarily, for a lady to be separate from her mate -
To remain unprotected by family - is a harsh misfortune (vv. 862-3)

Given the sense of ἀγαθός previously mentioned (with reference for example to Luke 6.45) and this sense of κακός, then Romans 12.21 might suggest: "Do not let what is rotten win; instead, overpower what is rotten with what is good," and good in the sense of beneficial and healthy, so that an alternative would be "Do not let what is harmful win; instead, overpower what is harmful with what is healthy."

Similarly, Romans 12.17 - with its contrast of κακός and κάλος - would imply:

Do not render what is bad with what is bad; rather, show concern for what all see is good.

μηδενὶ κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἀποδιδόντες, προνοοῦμενοι καλὰ ἐνώπιον
πάντων ἀνθρώπων·

Understood thus, the impression is not of 'fire and brimstone' preaching but of something rather gentle, something much more human and appealing and understanding of human nature; something evident, for example, in the well-known passage (Romans 13.10) ἡ ἀγάπη τῷ πλησίον κακὸν οὐκ ἐργάζεται· πλήρωμα οὖν νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη: love brings no harm to the neighbour; love is the completion of the law.

Furthermore, it is this love which is healthy and good; which can 'overpower what is harmful', what is bad.

What these examples reveal - and many other examples from Christian scripture could be adduced - is not abstract, impersonal, theological concepts of 'good' and 'evil' but rather something personal that individuals can relate to and understand, and it is tempting therefore to suggest that it was later, and theological, interpretations and interpolations which led to a harsh dichotomy,

an apocalyptic eschatology, a 'war' between an abstract 'good' and 'evil', and that with such interpretations and interpolations - much in evidence in the persecution of alleged heretics - the simple gospel message of the health of love was somehow lost for a while, to be, later on, re-expressed by people such as William Penn, who wrote, in his *Some Fruits of Solitude*, "Let us then try what love can do."

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Notes

[1] *Blue Reflected Starlight*. 2012

[2] *qv. A Slowful Learning, Perhaps*. 2012

[3] Septuaginta - Vetus Testamentum. c. 250 BCE.

[4] *qv. the Chimaera* (vv. 319ff), described as having three heads, one of which - ἡ δ' ὄφις - was a serpent, a dragon: ὄπιθεν δὲ δράκων.

[5] The current consensus is that LXX was written around 250 BCE, give or take a few decades. This is the Hellenistic era of Euclid and Archimedes; a period when Homer was still recited, and the classic tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and others, some two or more centuries before, were still understood and appreciated, just as the language of Shakespeare - and his plays - are understood and appreciated today. This appreciation of classical Greek literature continued into the Roman era and beyond, with the cultured Cicero, for example, often explaining classical Greek terms for his Latin readers, and with Marcus Aurelius - Roman Emperor a century after the time of Jesus of Nazareth - writing his 'meditations', Τὰ εἰς ἑαυτὸν - in the same (possibly Attic derived) κοινή Greek as that of LXX and the New Testament.

It is therefore seems likely that the scribes of LXX - and possibly those of the New Testament - were also familiar with the earlier classical literature.

[6] The date of the Hebrew scriptures has been much discussed. The earliest fragments of extant texts of both LXX and the Hebrew scriptures currently known suggest that LXX is slightly (but not much) older than the written text of the Hebrew scriptures of which papyrus fragments survive. However, according to Jewish aural tradition the scrolls of the Torah were first written c. 1000 BCE and thus would predate LXX by many centuries.

Part Two

Good and Evil - A Muslim Perspective

The classical and the early Christian sense of a human, and a natural, and not an abstract, dogmatical, good and bad, briefly outlined in part one, is also found in Islam: in the Quran, in the Sunnah, and in Shariah. For the sense of 'the bad' - الخبيث - is of what is rotten, unhealthy, dirty, unclean, defective; with the sense of 'the good', of 'good things' - الطيبات - being pleasing, pure, healthy, natural, beautiful, noble.

Consider, for example, Surah 5, Ayah 100 of the Quran:

قُلْ لَا يَسْتَوِي الْخَبِيثُ وَالطَّيِّبُ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ كَثْرَةُ
الْخَبِيثِ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

A fallible 'interpretation of meaning' [1] is:

"The dirty and the clean are not alike even though, being ubiquitous, what is dirty may entice [أَعْجَبَكَ] you." [2]

In Surah 61, Ayah 12, 'good' - طيبة - is what is beautiful, pleasant:

يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَيُدْخِلْكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ وَمَسَاكِنَ طَيِّبَةً فِي جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ
الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٢﴾

" [Allah] will forgive your transgressions [ذُنُوبَكُمْ] and guide you to Jannah wherein are rivers, cascading down, and those beautiful dwellings set within perpetually-flowering gardens. And this is the success that matters." [Interpretation of meaning]

Consider also Surah 2, Ayah 267:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّا
أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ۖ وَلَا تَيَمَّمُوا الْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ وَلَسْتُمْ
بِتَّخِذِيهِ إِلَّا أَنْ تُغْمِضُوا فِيهِ ۚ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ ﴿٢١٧﴾

"From what We give you from the earth and from the good things you have earned - disburse; but do not look toward [تَيَمَّمُوا] disbursing those defective things, which you would never take [for yourself] unless your eyes were closed." [Interpretation of meaning]

As with the New Testament, what these examples reveal - and many other examples could be adduced - is not abstract concepts of 'good' and 'evil' but rather something that is understandable by individuals and related to themselves and the world around them [3].

Jurisprudence and Society

Islam and Christianity have both developed traditions relating to the scope, detail, intent, and the implementation, of the laws necessitated by a society [4] - a jurisprudence - as well as traditions, or doctrines, concerning the nature of the authority that has or asserts it has the power to enforce such laws, and which laws often seek to criminalize 'the bad' and thus offer an interpretation of 'the good' and 'the bad'.

The traditional Christian view, evident in the Catholic tradition, is one of not only canon law but of the exercise of spiritual influence, direct and indirect, over civil authority to the extent, for example, that the Code of Justinian of 529-534 CE begins with *In Nomine Domini Nostri Jesu Christi* and (i) enshrined in law the authority of the Church, (ii) enshrined in law the requirement that all persons subject to the jurisdiction of the code be Christian, and thus that society be a Christian one; and (iii) detailed in law what constituted heresy.

For Muslims, Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) - the textual sources of which are the Quran and Sunnah - is a legal and an ethical guide to what is good and what is bad; that is, to what is halal (beneficial) and what is haram (harmful) from the perspective of the only success that, for a Muslim, matters: the success of being guided by Allah to dwell in the perpetually-flowering Gardens of Paradise, wherein are rivers, cascading down.

Being a legal as well as an ethical guide, fiqh deals not only with religious worship but also with civil, business, and domestic matters such as transactions, ownership, funds, and inheritance, and thus provides a framework for a society whose aim is to assist Muslims who live together in a particular area to know and follow the precepts and the way of life revealed by Muhammad: to do and inspire what is good, and avoid and dissuade others from doing what is bad, *تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ* (Amr bil Maroof wa Nahi anil Munkar) [5].

However, it seems to me that the problem with jurisprudence, Muslim and Christian, is and was our fallible, human, understanding of the revelation, of the original message; a problem classically understood in Islam by the distinction made by Muslim scholars between fiqh - our fallible understanding and attempts at interpretation - and Shariah, the divine and perfect guidance given by Allah, based as fiqh (classical Islamic jurisprudence) is on the principles of acceptance of diversity (of scholarly opinion), on custom [6], and on reasoned deductions by individuals that are stated to be fallible and thus not immutable. A distinction that allows for reasoned change, accepts the necessity of diverse opinions, the necessity of individual independent scholarly judgement in trials, arbitrations, and determining penalties, and manifests both the non-hierarchical nature of the religion of Islam and the original understanding of the good and the bad.

In modern times, in the Muslim world, this necessary distinction between fiqh and Shariah, this allowance for reasoned change based on diverse scholarly opinion, and the necessity of individual independent scholarly judgement in trials, arbitrations, and determining penalties, often seems to be overlooked when attempts are made by governments in Muslim lands to introduce 'Shariah law' with the result that inflexible penal codes and immutable penalties are introduced backed by the claim, contrary to fiqh, that such governments have a mandate to impose and enforce such dogmatical interpretations as are an inevitable part of such government-sponsored codified law.

Even in the past this distinction between fiqh and Shariah, and the need for an acceptance of a diversity of scholarly and reasoned opinion, was often neglected, especially by powerful rulers or ruling cliques, leading to societies which were Muslim in name only where 'the good' came to be more the embodiment of the will or the desire or the need of the powerful, the privileged, than it was of the original religious revelation, and where 'the law' became inflexible, impersonal, and often corrupt, with regular conflict between the powerful, the privileged within a society and/or between societies, and which conflicts were sometimes justified by appeals to a particular religious

interpretation. Similarly with Christianity, as shown by the tumultuous conflicts - religious and civil, and causing immense suffering - within the West since the time of Justinian.

Thus does the original meaning - the message - of the revelation seem to become somewhat lost; the message, in the case of Christianity, of love and humility, of redemption through suffering (crucifixus), of Ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ [7]; the message, in the case of Islam, of an individual reliance only on Allah, of Adab [8], of respect for diversity and custom.

Which leads to the question as to whether a jurisprudence based on a spiritual revelation works, given the nature of such a religion and the fact that it seems that our paradoxical human nature and our societies were not effectively changed, and have not been effectively changed, by such jurisprudence, or at least not changed for long. Do these religions - does religion, spirituality, in general - require, demand, that the believers reform, or try to reform, the world? If so, is that contrary to such personal, human, notions of the good and the bad that have been described above? [9] Is two thousand years - in the case of Christianity - a sufficient time to judge such change, such societies, such jurisprudence? Is one and a half thousand years - in the case of Islam - a sufficient time to judge such change, such societies, such jurisprudence?

The problem seems to be that for revelatory religions such as Islam and Christianity the priority is salvation of the individual and thus the distinction made between this, our mortal, life and the next; a priority and a distinction that has, for centuries, been used to explain, and often justify - by individuals, governments, factions, and authorities - harsh deeds and practices, and harsh punishments and policies. Thus, what has tended to occur is that such salvation has become a 'just cause', used for century after century to justify or to try and justify (i) the persecution, torture, and killing of those deemed to be heretics, (ii) wars (bellum iustum), conflicts, and violent religious schisms; and (iii) the harsh treatment of 'non-believers'. All in the name of, for example, 'saving souls', and/or based on the belief, the interpretation, that this is what God has commanded; for such suffering and horrors that are caused or occur in this life are really of lesser importance than being admitted into Heaven. Hence the concepts of martyrdom and of us bearing our misfortunes, our pain, our suffering, the horrors inflicted by others and on others, because of the hope, the promise, the reward, of an everlasting life in eternal bliss.

The Modern State

Such an understanding - such questions and such answers regarding religion

and religious jurisprudence - are not new, and led, centuries ago, to the idea of the secular State, to the theory of governance termed liberal democracy, and to a new or at least a revised jurisprudence [10]. That is, to such sentiments as are expressed in the 1776 Declaration of Independence:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."

The focus is not on salvation, not on Heaven or Jannah, but on Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. A focus, a governance, a jurisprudence, and a sentiment, that have certainly changed the West, and some other parts of the world, for the better. As I have mentioned elsewhere:

"The simple truth of the present and so evident to me now - in respect of the societies of the West, and especially of societies such as those currently existing in America and Britain - is that for all their problems and all their flaws they seem to be much better than those elsewhere, and certainly better than what existed in the past. That is, that there is, within them, a certain tolerance; a certain respect for the individual; a certain duty of care; and certainly still a freedom of life, of expression, as well as a standard of living which, for perhaps the majority, is better than elsewhere in the world and most certainly better than existed there and elsewhere in the past.

In addition, there are within their structures - such as their police forces, their governments, their social and governmental institutions - people of good will, of humanity, of fairness, who strive to do what is good, right. Indeed, far more good people in such places than bad people, so that a certain balance, the balance of goodness, is maintained even though occasionally (but not for long) that balance may seem to waver somewhat.

Furthermore, many or most of the flaws, the problems, within such societies are recognized and openly discussed, with a multitude of people of good will, of humanity, of fairness, dedicating themselves to helping those affected by such flaws, such problems. In addition, there

are many others trying to improve those societies, and to trying find or implement solutions to such problems, in tolerant ways which do not cause conflict or involve the harshness, the violence, the hatred, of extremism." [11]

Interestingly, many of the 'multitude of people of good will, of humanity, of fairness' dedicated to helping those within such now secular societies, and many of those trying to improve those societies, are people of faith: Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist... Which perhaps explains, or partly explains, why Christianity and, to a lesser extent, Islam have begun, by the necessity of interaction and by social practicalities, to adapt to the changes that the modern State - with its liberal democracy and modern jurisprudence - has wrought over the past two centuries; changes manifest, for example, not only in an increased standard of living for many (especially in the lands of the West) but also in attitudes, perception, and expectation, especially in relation to human rights. A change that has begun to lead many Christians, and some Muslims, to re-discover the simple message of their respective - and in many ways quite similar - revelations; a change that has led others to reject the more harsh interpretations of their faith and seek reform within their faith (Christian, Jewish, and Muslim); and a change which is leading others to question whether such messages of revelation are even compatible with the rights, the life, the liberty, and the happiness, of certain people, such as those whose love is for someone of the same gender.

Good and Evil - The Perspective of Pathei-Mathos

The pathei-mathos of individuals over thousands of years, often described in literature, poetry, memoirs, aural stories, and often expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, has resulted in an accumulation of insights; what we might with some justification describe as a culture, which, while often redolent of the spiritual, is not religious. That is, not doctrinal, not codified, not organized, and not presenting or manifesting a theology. A culture that is supra-national, containing as it does, among many other treasures, the observations of Lao Tzu, Siddhartha Gautama, Ovid, and Mohandas K. Gandhi; the thoughts of Aeschylus, Sappho, and Sophocles; the writings of Marcus Aurelius and Jane Austen; the allegory, the mysterium, of Jesus of Nazareth; and, importantly, the experiences - written, recorded, and aural - of those who over the centuries have endured suffering, conflict, disaster, tragedy, and war, and who were forever changed by the experience.

As often in respect of a culture, as with a religion or a spiritual Way of Life, individuals may favour some insights over others, and may and probably will differ over how certain insights should be understood or interpreted. As for me, I find in this vast cultural treasure three important things.

First, an understanding of the impermanence of temporal things; of how abstract ideations - given some practical form and maintained via striving human beings - over decades and centuries always by their nature wreck havoc and cause or contribute to suffering often despite the decent intentions of those who brought them into being and maintain or maintained them; and of how all such forms, in the perspective of millennia, 'hath but a short time to live'.

Second, that even the modern State with its liberal democracy and its jurisprudence and its benefits and positive change, is not only impermanent but also, for some, a cause of suffering, of havoc, and that the benefits and the positive change do not necessarily offset such suffering, such havoc, as are caused, as have been caused, and as may continue to be caused; and that it is for each one of us to decide how to, or whether to, engage with such an impermanent form, by and for example following the moral advice given some two millennia ago - Απόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ - and/or by perhaps trying to improve those societies, "in tolerant ways which do not cause conflict or involve the harshness, the violence, the hatred, of extremism."

Third, that there is in this culture of pathei-mathos a particular ethos: the tone of harmony, ἀρμονίη; of a natural balance, or rather of how certain human actions are hubris - ὕβρις - and not only disrupt this needful harmony but also cause or contribute to suffering. Of the importance, and perhaps the primacy, of human love; of how Eris is the child of Polemos and Hubris, and of how a lovelorn Polemos follows Hubris around, never requited. Of how the truths of religions and spiritual ways are, in their genesis, basically simple, always numinous, and most probably the same: guides to living in such a way that we can rediscover the natural balance, appreciate the numinous, and avoid hubris.

All of which lead to an understanding of (i) how good and bad are not 'out there' and cannot be manifest or assumed to be manifest in some form, by some ideation, or in 'them' (the others), without causing or contributing to or being the genesis of suffering, but instead are within us as individuals, a part of our nature, our character, our φύσις, and often divergently expressed; and (ii) of how, in my view at least, personal honour and not a codified law, not a jurisprudence, is the best, the most excellent, way to define and manifest this 'good', with honour understood, as in my philosophy of pathei-mathos [12], as an instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous. An honourable person is thus someone of manners, fairness, reasoned judgement, and valour; with honour being a means to live, to behave, in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις; in order try and avoid causing suffering, and in order to rediscover, to acquire, ἀρμονίη, that natural balance that presences the numinous (sans denotatum and sans dogma) and thus

reveals what is important about life and about being human.

For, in effect, the truths concerning honour and dishonour, and of our propensity for both honour and dishonour, are the essence of what we can learn from the supra-national, the living, and the thousands of years old, human culture of pathei-mathos.

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Notes

[1] The fallible interpretations of meaning that are given here are mine.

[2] In respect of *وَلَا تُعْجِبْكَ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَأَوْلَادُهُمْ* - *أَعْجَبَكَ* , qv. Surah 9, Ayah 85 - do not let their wealth and their children enchant you. That is, do not be impressed by their wealth and marvel at their (apparently fine) offspring.

[3] It is to be expected that some, or many, will find this conclusion of mine regarding good and evil in Christian scripture and/or in Islam a controversial one, as no doubt some will query my (fallible) interpretation of the texts, and which interpretations often avoid conventional readings, for three reasons.

First, to hopefully give some readers a sense - an intimation - of the vibrancy, the immediacy, that I find in the texts that I have endeavoured to translate/interpret here, and endeavoured in the past to translate/interpret elsewhere.

Second, as I noted in *Explanation Of Humility and The Need for Tolerance* with respect to the Quran and *الرُّعْبَ* :

My, admittedly fallible, view now - after some years of reflexion and study - is that, in an English interpretation of the meaning of a work as revered, and misunderstood, as the Quran, English words in common usage must be carefully chosen, with many common words avoided, and that it would sometimes be better to choose an unusual or even archaic word in order to try and convey something of the sense of the Arabic. Thus, with a careful interpretation common misunderstandings of the text - by non-Muslims unversed in Arabic - can possibly be avoided, especially if - as might be the case with unusual words - the reader has to pause to consider the meaning or make the effort to find the meaning, if only in a glossary appended to the interpretation. A pause and/or an effort that is suited to reading a

work revered by millions of people around the world.

Hence why in the matter of Ayah 151 of Surah Al 'Imran, my interpretation of meaning, employing just such an unusual English word with a literary provenance, was:

Into the hearts of they who disbelieve We shall hurl redurre because they, without any authority revealed about such things, associate others with Allah; and for their home: The Fire, that harrowing resting place of the unjust.

Third, to perhaps inspire some to scholarly consider, again, both the text themselves and the accepted interpretation(s) given that in my view translation/interpretation of texts to English from an ancient (no longer spoken) language or from a text revered in the way the Quran is (i) not 'an exact science' but more akin to an art to be approached with (a) an artistic appreciation of what was (in the case of ancient texts) a living vibrant language and in the case of the Quran is a poetic and numinous language, (b) with a certain humility, and (c) with a lack of preconceptions about the accepted 'meaning' of certain words and which accepted meanings are often only the attempts of others in the past to approximate an assumed meaning, and (ii) that the rich diversity, vibrancy, and flexibility of the English language has, in my view, been much underused, and an underuse that has sometimes led to bland interpretations of texts.

[4] Society is understood here, as elsewhere in my philosophy of pathei-mathos, as a collection of individuals who live in a particular area and who are subject to the same laws (or customs) - whether written or aural - and the same institutions of authority, however that authority has been obtained and is manifest.

Jurisprudence is understood here as describing a systematic (often codified) system of law - written or aural, and whether practical, implemented, or theorized - and the scope, nature, and intent of those laws. The *Jus Papirianum* attributed to Sextus Papirius and the Code of Justinian are thus examples of jurisprudence.

[5] Surah 3, Ayah 110.

[6] One of the five principle maxims of Islamic jurisprudence (which five principles are regarded as expressing the essence of fiqh) is لعادة محكمة . That is, that the customs of a society or culture are important and a factor to be considered if they do not conflict with the guidance of Quran and Sunnah.

[7] Matthew 22:21. Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God, the things that are God's.

[8] The importance of Muslim Adab - the manners, the morals, the culture, of Muslims - in defining and understanding Islam is something that many non-Muslims, especially those critical of Islam, are either ignorant of or dismiss.

An appreciation of Adab can be gleaned from reading Bukhari's book *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad* and also An-Nawawi's collection *Forty Ahadith*.

[9] qv. Part Three.

[10] Important parts of this jurisprudence concern international law and laws relating to human rights.

[11] *Notes on The Politics and Ideology of Hate* (2012)

[12] qv. *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos* and *Recuyle of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*.

Part Three

Religion, Law, and The Reformation of Individuals

The overview in parts one and two of how, in my view, good and evil are understood in the culture of pathei-mathos and by early Christianity and Islam presented several musings, based as that overview was and those musing are on my experiences, study, and reflexion, over some forty years. One of my musings was that, in the case of Islam and Christianity - two of the most influential spiritual ways of life in the last two millennia - the understanding of good and evil was not originally of some dogmatical and theological abstraction divorced from human life, but a more directly personal one related to the behaviour of individuals, with the promise that good behaviour - as outlined in the gospels and in the Quran and Sunnah - would most probably be rewarded with a place in Heaven or Paradise, and that the powerful and the leaders of governments are accountable to God [1].

In the case of the culture of pathei-mathos, it not only provides, as does the modern State, a perspective (and a teleology) unrelated to the judgement of a supreme deity and the promise of an after-life, but also points us toward

answers rather different from those provided by proponents of the State, of liberal democracy, and of a jurisprudence concerned with international law and codifying and criminalizing what politicians, and/or some political theory, ideology, dogma, or agenda, deem to be bad. For what that culture provides is an understanding of how all forms - be they considered political [2], or codified ideologically [3] or in the form of a dogmatic hierarchical religion - have caused suffering, or do cause suffering sooner or later, because they are judgemental, supra-personal; and that such suffering is unjustified because it is individual human beings and indeed the other life with which we share this planet who and which are important; and that to alleviate and to prevent and remove the causes of suffering is necessary because a manifestation of what is good; that is, a manifestation of reasoned, balanced, compassionate, personal judgement, and of that learning, that knowledge, the insights, that personal experience of conflict, war, disaster, tragedy, havoc, violence, hatred, and pain, have taught and revealed to individuals for some three thousand years.

Thus it is that this culture contains the judgement, the insights, and the experience, of people as diverse in their origins, their life, and in some of their views, as Lao Tzu, Sappho, van Gogh, Solzhenitsyn, and Mohandas K. Gandhi. Sappho, for instance, moved by personal love, wrote over two and half thousand years ago that:

For some - it is horsemen; for others - it is infantry;
For some others - it is ships which are, on this black earth,
Visibly constant in their beauty. But for me,
It is that which you desire.

To all, it is easy to make this completely understood
For Helen - she who greatly surpassed other mortals in beauty -
Left her most noble man and sailed forth to Troy
Forgetting her beloved parents and her daughter
Because [the goddess] led her away [...]

Which makes me to see again Anactoria now far distant:
For I would rather behold her pleasing, graceful movement
And the radiant splendour of her face
Than your Lydian chariots and foot-soldiers in full armour.. [4]

While Gandhi, motivated by a desire for communal change and a vision of the future, more recently wrote that civilization, correctly understood, does not mean and does not require cities and centralized government and vast industries - and thus a modern State - but rather means and requires a certain personal moral conduct, a "mastery over our mind and our passions" [5],

non-violence, the simplicity of village life [6], and communities voluntarily cooperating together in pursuit of collective, and personal, development.

Which two examples illustrate what are, perhaps, the two main answers that the culture of pathei-mathos offers and has so far offered to the question, posed in the Introduction of this essay, of what, if anything, can or perhaps should (i) replace the answers of religions for those who do not or cannot accept such religious answers and the theological perspective and guidance so offered, and/or (ii) replace the answers offered by the jurisprudence of nation-States and the political theories of governance of such States for those who adjudge that the suffering such States cause is, on balance, unacceptable [7]. These two answers - founded on or inspired by the insight of a personal rather than an impersonal, dogmatical, good and bad - are the internal one of a personal life, focused on personal love (and/or on Art, music, and so on), and the external one of seeking change by means such as the non-violence of passive resistance [8] and through personal example.

How to choose? What criteria, moral or otherwise, to use to judge these two answers, and the other answers that over millennia and by pathei-mathos, have been lived and/or proposed? The criterion of the reformation - the development, the change - of the individual? If so, a change from what to where? Or, perhaps, the criterion should be personal honour? Indeed, should there be, or can there even be, some suprapersonal judgemental criteria that others may employ?

Given the nature of pathei-mathos [9], and the nature of a criterion, I incline toward the view that there is no criteria beyond the very individual, the reasoned, the personal, non-transferable, and fallible, judgement which derives from our own pathei-mathos, our own empathy, our own experience, our own life, and our own understanding of the causes of suffering.

Good, Evil, and The Criteria of Progress

To formulate some standard or rule or some test to try to evaluate alternatives and make choices in such matters is to make presumptions about what constitutes progress; about what constitutes a 'higher' level - or a more advanced stage - and what constitutes a 'lower' level or stage. That is, to not only make a moral judgement connected to what is considered to be 'good' and 'evil' - right and wrong, correct and incorrect - but also to apply that judgement to others and to 'things'. To judge them, and/or the actions of others, by whether they are on a par with, or are moving toward or away from, that 'right' and that 'wrong'.

This is, in my view, a veering toward hubris, away from the natural balance, and

thus away from that acknowledgement of our fallibility, of our uncertainty of knowing, that is the personal virtue of humility. For the essence of the culture of pathos-mathos, and the genesis, the ethos, of all religious revelations and spiritual ways before or until they become dogmatical [10], seems to be that we can only, without hubris, without prejudice, judge and reform ourselves.

For what the culture of pathos-mathos reveals is that we human beings, are - personally - both the cause and the cure of suffering; and that our choice is whether or not we live, or try to live, in a manner which does not intentionally contribute to or which is not the genesis of new suffering. The choice, in effect, to choose the way of harmony - the natural balance - in preference to hubris. But how, if we choose the way of harmony, are we to live? Are we to try and judge the lives and works of those who in the past have so chosen, or seem to us to have so chosen, or whose life and works seems to manifest a certain harmony or a particular numinous understanding which resonates with us? Are we then to try and judge and compare the passive resistance of Gandhi to the life and works of William Penn to the poetry of Sappho to the life and work of van Gogh to the influence of Lao Tzu or Jesus of Nazareth. Who are we to do this, and why? Does non-violent activism toward and in the name of 'progress', and/or a message of spiritual reformation and redemption, have - or should have - a higher value than poetry or Art or music or a life lovingly devoted to a partner or to cultivating Wu-Wei?

Or do we see the empathic, the human, the personal, scale of things, and our own human limitations, and accept that we do not need to so judge and so choose because we incline toward the view that all we can hope to do without veering toward hubris - toward upsetting the natural balance of Life, and thus causing more suffering - is to gently and with humility to try and personally alleviate some suffering somewhere in our own small way by, for instance, being compassionate and honourable in the immediacy of the living moment? With thus little or no concern for, or presumptions about, what others believe constitutes some-thing termed progress, and with little or no concern either about the promise, the reward, of an afterlife or about some suprapersonal human manufactured form, such as a State, that in some shape or other exists during our own brief mortal life? If so, then what - if anything - is the meaning, the purpose, of our so brief human living?

Notes

[1] "For what can a Man give in Exchange for his Life, as well as Soul? And though the chiefest in Government are seldom personally exposed, yet it is a Duty incumbent upon them to be tender of the Lives of their People; since without all Doubt, they are accountable to God for the Blood that is spilt in their Service. So that besides the Loss of so many Lives, of importance to any

Government, both for Labour and Propagation, the Cries of so many Widows, Parents and Fatherless are prevented, that cannot be very pleasant in the Ears of any Government, and is the Natural Consequence of War in all Government." William Penn. *An Essay towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe*. 1693 CE

[2] By the term politics is meant: (i) The theory and practice of governance, with governance itself founded on two fundamental assumptions; that of some minority - a government (elected or unelected), some military authority, some oligarchy, some ruling elite, some tyrannos, or some leader - having or assuming authority (and thus power and influence) over others, and with that authority being exercised over a specific geographic area or territory; (ii) The activities of those individuals or groups whose aim or whose intent is to obtain and exercise some authority or some control over - or to influence - a society or sections of a society by means which are organized and directed toward changing/reforming that society or sections of a society, either in accordance with a particular ideology or not.

[3] By the term ideology is meant a coherent, organized, and distinctive set of beliefs and/or ideas or ideals, and which beliefs and/or ideas and/or ideals pertain to governance, and/or to society, and/or to matters of a philosophical or a spiritual nature.

[4] From fragment 16 (7th century BCE), the full text of which, from P. Oxy. 1231 and 2166, is, with square brackets indicating conjectures and missing text:

οἱ μὲν ἱππῶν στρότον οἱ δὲ πέσδων,
οἱ δὲ νάων φαῖς' ἐπ[ι] γᾶν μέλαι[ν]αν
ἔ]μμεναι κάλλιστον, ἔγω δὲ κῆν' ὅτ-
τω τις ἔραται·
πά]γχυ δ' εὖμαρες σύνετον πόησαι
π]άντι τ[ο]ῦτ', ἃ γὰρ πόλυ περσκέθοισα
κάλλος [ἀνθ]ρώπων Ἑλένα [τὸ]ν ἄνδρα
τὸν [ἀρ]ιστον
καλλ[ίποι]σ' ἔβα 'ς Τροίαν πλέοι[σα
κωὺδ[ὲ πα]ῖδος οὐδὲ φίλων το[κ]ήων
πά[μπαν] ἐμνάσθη, ἀλλὰ παράγαγ' αὐταν
[]σαν
[
[]αμπτον γὰρ [
[
[]...κούφως τ[]ση[.]ν
[
..]με νῦν Ἀνακτορί[ας ὁ]νέμναι-

σ' οὐ] παρείσας,
τᾷς <κ>ε βολλοίμαν ἔρατόν τε βᾶμα
κάμάρυγμα λάμπρον ἴδην προσώπω
ἦ τὰ Λύδων ἄρματα κᾶν ὄπλοισι
[πεσδομ]άχεντας.

[5] *Hind Swaraj*, part 13. 1909 CE

[6] Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, October 5, 1945 CE

[7] The argument here is along the following lines. That nation-States accept both the primacy of a codified law based on the maintenance of internal order according to that law, and the need to ensure the security, the interests, and the preservation, of the nation-State, both of which often necessitate or have necessitated the following: (i) the killing of and/or the use of violence against human beings in their own lands, and/or elsewhere by means of war or otherwise; (ii) the imprisonment/persecution of human beings both for deeds/dissent deemed illegal and for 'crimes against the State'; (iii) actions which cause pain and suffering and hardship to others, such as internal economic policies and/or external economic/trade sanctions; (iv) the commercial exploitation of the resources of this planet and of the other life with which we share this planet.

[8] "Passive resistance is a method of securing rights by personal suffering, it is the reverse of resistance by arms. When I refuse to do a thing that is repugnant to my conscience, I use soul-force [...] Passive resistance, that is, soul-force, is matchless. It is superior to the force of arms." Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, part 17. 1909 CE

Concerning governments, he wrote, also in *Hind Swaraj*, that: "They do not say: 'You must do such and such a thing,' but they say: 'if you do not do it, we will punish you'."

[9] qv. my *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary*.

[10] As William Penn wrote in his tract *The Great Case of Liberty of Conscience Once More Briefly Debated and Defended*, published in 1670 CE:

"They overturn the Christian Religion: 1. In the Nature of it, which is Meekness; 2. In the Practice of it, which is Suffering."

Part Four

Ontology and Denotatum

To find answers to questions such as (i) how to live in a manner which does not intentionally contribute to or which is not the genesis of new suffering, and (ii) is there a meaning to our existence beyond the answers of God and 'the pursuit of liberty and happiness' requires reformulating the questions based on the ontological presumptions that underlie them. That is, we need to understand ourselves, our nature, and to pose and answer questions regarding being, beings, and the relationship between beings.

Conventional religions - such as Christianity and Islam - begin with a supreme being and a revelation, the promise, of an afterlife following a judgement, by the supreme being, of we humans as individuals. That is, there is guidance given as to what is good and bad and as to one's expected behaviour, as well as individuals who can commit transgressions - who can 'sin' - or who, by following the correct guidance, can progress toward salvation. The ontology here is of a transcendent, immortal, God, or Allah, and of separate mortal beings who possess the potential - for example, an immortal soul - to gain an existence beyond the death of their corporeal body. The immortal being has the ability (the power) to punish, or to reward, the mortal beings, and is stated to be a real being with an existence independent of us.

In respect of The State, the ontology is one of an entity - The State, the nation-State, the government - and of individuals ('citizens') who are less powerful than this entity, with this entity, however named, having the ability (the power) to punish, or to reward, the citizens. There is guidance given, by powerful entity, in the form of laws - of what is bad and good and one's expected behaviour - and the promise of such things as 'Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness' and reward of, a possible progress toward (in this life), security, health, and (possibly) wealth or at least a reasonable standard of living. Here, the powerful entity is a human ideation, of varied and variable specification, and which specifications have been manufactured - brought into being - by humans at various times during the past three hundred years and more.

In respect of the culture of pathei-mathos, I find within it an alternative to these two influential, but in many ways quite similar, ontologies with their powerful entities, their guidance, their punishments and rewards, and the progression of individuals toward some-thing which the powerful entity asserts or promises it

can provide.

This alternative is the ontology of us - we human beings - as a transient affective and effective connexion to other living beings [1], an emanation of the flux of Life, of ψυχή [2]. That is, of the separation-of-otherness - of I and of 'them', the others - being the result of a causal-only perception, and of denotatum: of our propensity to give names to, or to describe by means of terms, that which we observe to be or that which we assume to be is different to and separate from us, whereas, as empathy reveals, 'we' are part of, an aspect, of 'them' since 'they' are also finite, transient, emanations of ψυχή.

There is no abstract 'good' and 'evil' here; no division or cleaving asunder of φύσις (physis). There is only us in harmony, in balance, with our nature, our φύσις, or us not in harmony with our nature as an affecting and effecting, finite, transient, mortal, aspect of Life. If we are harmony - in balance with Life, with other life - we do not cause or contribute to or are not the genesis of suffering: we do not affect Life in a harmful way, and as I have intimated elsewhere [3] love, compassion, humility, empathy, and honour, are a possible means whereby we, in harmony with our φύσις, can avoid harming Life and its emanations, be such life our fellow human beings or the other life with which we share this planet.

In effect, this is the ontology of the illusion of self and of the unity, sans denotatum, of all living beings; of how we - presenced as human beings - can and do affect, and have affected, other life including other humans, often in ways we are not aware of; and of how our perception of I and of 'them' (the separation-of-otherness) has often led to us affecting other life in a harmful way, thus causing or contributing to or being the genesis of suffering, for that other life and often for ourselves. The ontology where there is no distinction, in being, between us - the emanations - and what emanates; there is only the appearance of difference due to our use of a causal-only perception and of denotatum. That is, we are ψυχή as ψυχή is both within us and us. We are the flux, the changing, of Life; changing as it changes.

There is therefore no suprapersonal supreme being who punishes and rewards; no requirement to actively agitate for or against the State; no afterlife separate from us because what exists after us is, partly, us transformed in being and, partly, what we aid or harm by virtue of the fact that we are an affective and effective connexion - a part of - Life. Furthermore, there is no need to strive to progress toward a some-thing because we already are that some-thing; that is, we already are what we are meant to be, except we often - or mostly - do not know this, or do not know what we are doing charmed as we seem to be by the charisma of words, by denotatum. As Heraclitus expressed it:

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἔοντος αἰεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ
πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ
πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν εἰκόσιν, πειρώμενοι καὶ
ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῖμαι κατὰ φύσιν
διαίρεων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅπως ἔχει· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους
λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὐδοντες
ἐπιλανθάνονται

Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done. [4]

The Simple Way of Harmony

This alternative ontology, derived from the culture of pathei-mathos, suggests that the answer to the question regarding the meaning of our existence is simply to be that which we are. To be in balance, in harmony, with Life; the balance that is love, compassion, humility, empathy, honour, tolerance, kindness, and wu-wei [5].

This, by its nature, is a personal answer and a personal choice; an alternative way that compliments and is respectful of other answers, other choices, and of other ways of dealing with issues such as the suffering that afflicts others, the harm that humans do so often inflict and have for so long inflicted upon others. The personal non-judgemental way, of presumption of innocence [6] and of wu-wei, balanced by, if required, a personal valourous, an honourable, intervention in a personal situation in the immediacy of the moment [7].

There is, in this alternative, no guidance required; and no-thing - such as an afterlife, or enlightenment, or liberty or happiness - to be attained. No need for dogma or too many words; no need for comparisons; no 'just cause' to excuse our behaviour. No mechanisms and no techniques to enable us to progress toward some-thing because there is no need or requirement to progress toward what is not there to be attained. There is only a personal living in such a way that we try to be compassionate, empathic, loving, honourable, kind, tolerant, gentle, and humble. And this is essentially the wisdom, the insight, the way of living - sans denotatum - that thousands upon thousands of people over millennia have contributed to the culture of pathei-mathos, as well as the essence of the message which many if not all spiritual ways and religions, in their genesis, perhaps sought to reveal: the message of the health of love and of our need, as fallible beings often inclined toward the unbalance of hubris, for

humility.

Notes

[1] An affective connexion is an operative one, which therefore can affect or influence what it is connected to, and specifically in a non-causal and thus synchronistic manner; that is, without necessarily having a prior cause. An effective connexion is one of an effect; that is, is the result of some-thing else or causes some-thing else as result of that or some other prior cause.

[2] Life *qua* being. qv. my *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary*, and *Conspectus of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*. (2012)

[3] qv. *Recuyle of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*, and *Conspectus of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*. (2012)

[4] Myatt. *Some Notes on Heraclitus Fragment 1*. (2013)

[5] Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in my philosophy of pathei-mathos to refer to a personal 'letting-be' - a non-interference - deriving from humility and from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, their φύσις, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive - that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous.

In respect of non-interference and hubriatic striving, refer to my 2012 essay, *Some Personal Musings On Empathy - In relation to the philosophy of πάθει μάθος*

[6] As mentioned in my philosophy of pathei-mathos, innocence is regarded as an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us and beyond the purvue of our empathy, are therefore unjudged us by and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence of others - until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise - is the fair, the reasoned, thing to do.

[7] In respect of such valourous intervention in personal situations, the following quotation is from my *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical*

Compendiary.

"The personal virtue of honour, and the cultivation of wu-wei, are - together - a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἀρμονίη. For personal honour is essentially a presencing, a grounding, of ψυχή - of Life, of our φύσις - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη. This balancing of compassion - of the need not to cause suffering - by σωφρονεῖν and δίκη is perhaps most obvious on that particular occasion when it may be judged necessary to cause suffering to another human being. That is, in honourable self-defence. For it is natural - part of our reasoned, fair, just, human nature - to defend ourselves when attacked and (in the immediacy of the personal moment) to valorously, with chivalry, act in defence of someone close-by who is unfairly attacked or dishonourably threatened or is being bullied by others [...]

This use of force is, importantly, crucially, restricted - by the individual nature of our judgement, and by the individual nature of our authority - to such personal situations of immediate self-defence and of valorous defence of others, and cannot be extended beyond that, for to so extend it, or attempt to extend it beyond the immediacy of the personal moment of an existing physical threat, is an arrogant presumption - an act of ὕβρις - which negates the fair, the human, presumption of innocence of those we do not personally know, we have no empathic knowledge of, and who present no direct, immediate, personal, threat to us or to others nearby us. Such personal self-defence and such valorous defence of another in a personal situation are in effect a means to restore the natural balance which the unfair, the dishonourable, behaviour of others upsets. That is, such defence fairly, justly, and naturally in the immediacy of the moment corrects their error of ὕβρις resulting from their bad (their rotten) φύσις; a rotten character evident in their lack of the virtue, the skill, of σωφρονεῖν. For had they possessed that virtue, and if their character was not bad, they would not have undertaken such a dishonourable attack."

Part Five

A Very Personal Conclusion

Twenty years ago, someone whom I loved who loved me died, too young and having harmed no one. Died, leaving me bereft, if only for a while. For too soon my return to those hubriatic, selfish, suffering-causing, and extremist, ways of my pasts. As if, despite the grief, the pain of loss, I personally had learned nothing, except in such moments of such remembering that did not, unfortunately, impact too much upon my practicalities of life; at least until

another bereavement, thirteen years later, came to shock, shake, betake me far from my arrogant presumptions about myself, about life, to thus lead, to so slowly lead, to me on a clear cold day yet again interiorly dwelling on what, if anything, is our human purpose of being here and why such bereavements, such early deaths, just seem so unjust, unfair.

For they - as so many - having harmed no one, died, while I - as so many - lived on to continue causing mayhem, chaos, suffering, and grief, no God it seemed to stay us or to slay us for our miscreant mischief. That, to me, seems to be no deity of empathy and compassion; only one explanation to maybe betake our grief, our tears, our fears, away.

I admit I could be wrong, but - having perhaps at least in some ways, and partially, understood the errors of both my selfish and my extremist suffering-causing pasts - I still cannot accept that such a compassionate, empathic, deity would, could, sanction such a taking of such innocence and allow such infliction of suffering to continue. For that makes no sense to me, given how I now do not believe there is another life awaiting us where we, *judicium divinum*, are rewarded or condemned. I find no comfort there; no satisfying explanation for the suffering that afflicts so many now as in the past: as if that, such suffering, as was written once, many times, is some sort of *casus belli* for our life, to be endured until such time as such a deity deems fit to end it.

Man, that is born of a woman, hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down, like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay. In the midst of life we are in death. Of whom may we seek for succour, but of thee, O Lord...

Must we therefore be resigned to suffering, to misery, to injustices, to the iniquity, to the continuing iniquity, of selfish, hubriatic, individuals who bully, rape, scheme, subjugate, manipulate, injure, maim, and kill? Reassured by *judicium divinum* or - perhaps - hoping, trusting, in the pending justice of some judge, some government, or some State?

Is it wrong for me to still feel the need for someone, some many, somewhere, to somehow in some way forestall, prevent, such deeds by such persons as may unjustly harm some others so that there is no waiting for the divine justice of a deity; no waiting for some Court somewhere to - possibly, and sometimes - requite a grievous wrong. No waiting for that promised idealistic idyllic future society when we humans - having somehow (perhaps miraculously) been changed in nature *en masse* - have ceased to so grievously, harmfully, selfishly, inflict ourselves on others.

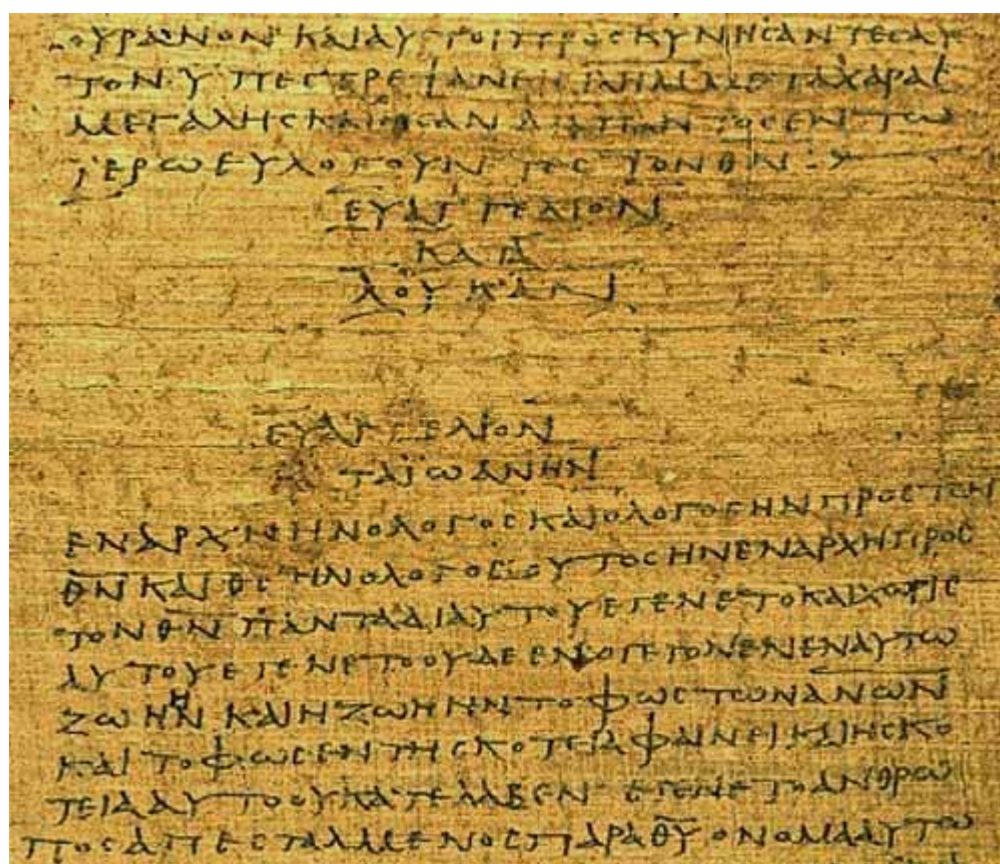
My own and only fallible answer to the question of how to deal with the suffering that blights this world therefore seems to be the answer of a personal honour. That is, for each of us to gently try to carry that necessary harmony, that balance, of δίκη, wordlessly within; to thus restrain ourselves from causing harm while being able, prepared, in the immediacy of the moment, to personally, physically, restrain - prevent - others when we chance upon such harm being done. This, to me, is Life in its wholesome natural fullness - as lived, presenced, by the brief, mortal, consciously aware, emanations we are; mortal emanations capable of restraint, reason, culture, and reforming change; of learning from our pathei-mathos and that of others. My personal answer to personal questions, perplexion, and to grief and doubt. The answer which is to live in hope - even need - of a personal loyal love; to live with empathy, gentleness, humility, compassion, and yet with strength enough to do what should be done when, within the purvue of our personal space, we meet with one or many causing suffering and harm, no thought then for the fragility of our own mortal life or even for personal consequences beyond the ἀρμυγή we, in such honourable moments, are.

In Loving Remembrance of Sue, died 4th April 1993

cc David Myatt 2013
(First Edition)

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Image credit: NASA/STS107 (Columbia) - Moon Over the Atlantic Ocean



The Gospel According to John

Translation And Commentary

Volume I

Chapters 1 - 5

David Myatt

Preface

This is the first of five projected volumes containing my complete translation of and commentary on the Gospel of John.

In respect of the Greek text, I have followed Nestle-Aland (NA28), although I have on occasion favoured some variant reading such as from the Textus Receptus (Stephanus, 1550) or from a particular MSS with such departures noted in the commentary and which commentary illustrates my methodology and thus my interpretation, which is of seeking to understand the meaning of certain Greek words in their historical context and of searching for appropriate English words to express that meaning and not the "meaning" that particular English words may now convey to the detriment of understanding this particular Gospel in that historical context.

In terms of layout of the translation, I follow the tradition of the Anglo-Saxon version - adopted by both Wycliffe and Tyndale - of placing each verse on a separate line and capitalizing the initial letter of each verse.

2017

Image credit:

Papyrus Bodmer XIV-XV (P75). c. 175-225 CE . Gospel of John, Chapter 1, vv.1 ff. Vatican Library.

Introduction

A New Interpretation

The genesis of this interpretation of meaning was some marginal notes I made, some forty years ago while a Christian monk, in my copy of τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον.

During my time in that monastery many hours on many days on many months were spent in the library reading many books that I now only vaguely recollect. But one of those which does still linger in memory was a work by John Chrysostom concerning the Gospel of John [i], homilies given toward the end of the fourth century Anno Domini, probably in Antioch, and over one and half thousand years before I sat down in a religious environment to read them. This continuity of religious tradition, of language, resonated with me then in a pleasing way as did the scholarly minutiae, sparsely scattered among the preaching, in which he explained some matters such as the use of the definite article in the phrase – from verse 1 of chapter one of the Gospel – θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος, Theos was the Logos.

In the matter of minutiae, I had then some doubts as to why θεὸς there is not ὁ θεὸς as at verse 24 of chapter four, πνεῦμα ὁ θεός. But arguments were made regarding why the Evangelist wrote ὁ λόγος (the logos) rather than just λόγος: because, it was argued, to distinguish Jesus (identified as the logos) from everyone else. In addition, the Evangelist, and thus his Gospel, were considered to be divinely-inspired – guided by the Holy Spirit, with the Evangelist thus aware of τὰ βάθη τοῦ θεοῦ [ii] – so that there are in that Gospel, as in the others, meanings beyond what an ordinary person might express in Hellenistic Greek.

Over forty years ago I, subsequent to such doubts, accepted such theological arguments and therefore had little interest – beyond disputations concerning the actual meaning of words such as λόγος in classical and Hellenistic Greek – in further questioning the accuracy of conventional interpretations of the Gospel of John such as that of the Douay-Rheims version.

Now, as someone with a rather paganus weltanschauung brought-into-being by some thirty years of πάθει μάθος, but respectful still of other manifestations of the numinous, I strive to understand that Gospel in the cultural milieu of the ancient Roman Empire and thus as a work, written in Hellenistic Greek, by a man who either had known Jesus and participated in his life, or who had known and was close to someone who did. That is, I now approach the text as I have in the past three decades approached the tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum and the extant writings of Sophocles and Aeschylus; as an original work, possibly a self-contained one, where the author conveys something derived from their knowledge, learning, and personal experience, and where the meanings of certain words or passages may sometimes be explained or placed into context by comparison with other authors writing in the same language in the same or in a similar cultural milieu.

Thus, and as I have sometimes done in translations of mine from Hellenic Greek (for example, tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum), I have here opted for some transliterations (such as logos and theos) in an endeavour to avoid reading into the text the meanings that some of the English words conventionally used in other translations – and given in lexicons – may now suggest, or do suggest often as a result of over a thousand years of exegesis. For the hope is that such transliterations, and eschewing some other English words that have traditionally been used, will enable the reader to approach and to appreciate the text in a new way, sans preconceptions, and hopefully intimate how it might have been understood by those – both pagans and new converts – who first heard or read this evangel in the formative years of Christianity before Christian doctrine became formalized, before disputations about heresy, and before there were extensive theological commentaries on the text.

To give just two examples. (i) In 8.7 and in respect of ἀναμάρτητος I have eschewed the common translation of ἁμαρτία by English word 'sin' and which English word, through centuries of Christian exegesis and preaching, has become a theological abstraction and a pejorative term, whereas the the original meaning of the English word syn imputed the sense of doing what was wrong, of committing an error, of making a mistake, of being at fault; of in some way overstepping the bounds or transgressing limits imposed by others, and thus of accepting responsibility for such an infraction, a sense which the suggested etymology of the word syn implies: from the Latin sons, sontis. While my translation of 'mistake' (in 8.7) and 'error' (in 1.29) may well be controversial, to me it imparts something important regarding the teachings, and the life, of Jesus of Nazareth: something quite human, something rather different from a stern preacher preaching about 'sin'; something which seems to express what the Beatitudes express, and something which individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox and William Penn many centuries later tried to say and write about Christianity and about the teachings and the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Thus the interpretation of this particular verse is "So, as they continued to ask he straightened himself, saying to them: Let he who has never made a mistake throw the first stone at her." (ii) In 1.10 – ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο – I take the sense of ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν as suggesting not that "he was in the world" but rather that he was "of the world", among – with – those of the world, with his mortal body subject to pain and bodily death, with καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο thus implying not that "the world was made/created through him" but that the world was presenced in him, past, present, and future, with the English word 'presenced' – etymon: Latin praesentia – suggested by how he came to be embodied, presenced, in the Eucharist (qv. the phrase "This same presence may be called moste fitly, a reall presence, that is a presence not fained, but a true & a faythfull presence," in John Foxe's *The first volume of the ecclesiasticall history: contaynyng the Actes and monumentes of thynges passed in every kynges tyme in this realme*, 1570).

In several instances, in respect of choice of English words, I have taken inspiration from the Anglo-Saxon version of the Gospels – the Wessex Gospels, dating from c.990 CE – as for example at 1.18 and 1.32.

[i] *Homiliae in Ioannem*, volume 59 of the Migne Patrologia Graeca series.

[ii] "The profundities of Theos." *First Epistle To The Corinthians*, 2.10. Both Wycliffe, and the King James Bible, translate as "The deep things of God."

Chapter One

1 In primacy was the logos, and the logos was with Theos, and the logos was Theos.

2 For this was, in primacy, with Theos

3 Who brought into being all beings and without whom no beings would exist:

4 Who was Life and which Life was the Phaos of human beings.

5 And the Phaos illuminates the dark and is not overwhelmed by the dark.

6 There was a man, a messenger from Theos, named John

7 Who, arriving as a witness so that others might trust him, gave evidence concerning the Phaos

8 For he himself was not the Phaos but rather gave evidence regarding the Phaos:

9 Of the advent into the world of the genuine Phaos who could enlighten any person.

10 He who was of the world with the world presenced in him but whose own did not recognize him.

11 For having ventured to his own his own did not receive him

12 While those who did receive him he confirmed as children of Theos including those affirming his Nomen

13 Who were begotten not of blood nor by the design of mortals but of Theos.

14 And the Logos became corporeal and dwelt among us and we perceived his numinosity, the numinosity of the only begotten of the Father, abounding in veritas, benevolence.

15 John was a witness for him and loudly said, "This is he of whom I spoke: the one who, arriving after me, takes precedence because he came-into-being before me.

16 Out of his plenitude we have been given benevolence after benevolence

17 For while the Nomos was received from Moses, benevolence and veritas came to be through Jesus Christ.

18 No one has ever yet beheld Theos; but the being in the greada of the Father has made him known."

19 For such was the evidence John gave when the Judaeans dispatched priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him: "Who are you?"

20 And he admitted, he did not deny but admitted, "I am not the Christ."

21 So they asked him: "Who, then? Are you Elijah?" And he said: "I am not."

"Are you the Prophet?"

And he replied, "No."

22 So they asked him: "Who, then? For we have to give an answer to those who dispatched us. What have you to say about yourself?

23 He replied: "I, a call sounding out in forsaken places, straightening the way for the Master, just as Isaiah the Prophet said."

24 Now those dispatched were from the Pharisees

25 And they asked him, saying: "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, not Elijah, not the Prophet?"

26 John, answering them, said: "I baptize in water yet standing in your midst is someone you do not recognize

27 Who, proceeding me, arrives after me whose sandal strap I do not deserve to unfasten."

28 Such was what came to pass in Bethany, on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

29 The next day he saw Jesus approaching him and said: "Observe! The Lamb of Theos who removes the error of the world.

30 This is he of whom I said: 'Having arrived after me, he takes precedence because he came-into-being before me.'

31 Although personally unacquainted with him, it was for his discovery by Israel that I set out to baptize in water,"

32 And, as evidence, John said: "I beheld the Spiritus as a dove descend from Empyrean and remain there with him.

33 And although personally unacquainted with Him, it was He who sent me to baptize in water, saying to me: 'Upon whosoever you behold the Spiritus descend and remain there with, is the same one who baptizes in Halig Spiritus.'

34 Such have I seen and such is my evidence that this is the Son of Theos."

35 Next day, John once more stood with two of his disciples

36 And, looking at Jesus as he passed them by, said: "Observe, the Lamb of Theos."

37 Hearing him say this, his two disciples followed Jesus

38 And Jesus, seeing them following him, turned around, asking: "What do you seek?"

And they replied: "Rabbi," - which is to say, when interpreted, Master - "where do you stay?"

39 He replied: "Arrive with me and you will see." So they arrived and saw where he stayed, staying with him that day: this, around the tenth duration.

40 One of the two who had followed him after having heard John was Andrew, brother of Simon Peter,

41 Who having firstly saught his brother Simon said to him: "We have found The Messias," which when interpreted is Christ.

42 And he led him to Jesus who, looking at him, said: "You are Simon, son of John, and you will be called Kephas," which, when explained, is Petros.

43 The next day Jesus went forth into Galilee and there found Philip, saying to him: "Follow me."
44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the community of Andrew and Peter.
45 Philip, finding Nathaniel, said to him: "We have found the one written about by Moses in the Nomos and by the Prophets: Jesus of Nazareth, son of Joseph."
46 And Nathaniel asked him: "Has anything good ever come from Nazareth?" To which Philip replied: "Set out with me and see."
47 When Jesus beheld Nathaniel approaching he said this about him: "Behold, a true Israelite: someone without guile."
48 Nathaniel said to him: "From where do you know me?" In answer, Jesus said: "Before Philip called you I beheld you beside a tree of figs."
49 To which Nathaniel replied: ""Rabbi, you are the Son of Theos, you are the King of Israel."
50 In answer, Jesus said: "Are you persuaded because I beheld you beside a tree of figs? You will see much more than that."
51 And he said to him: "Verily, verily, I say unto you that you will see the sky opening and those envoys of Theos descending to and ascending around the son of a mortal."

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Chapter Two

1 On the third day there was a marriage in Cana, Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.
2 Also invited to the wedding were Jesus and his disciples
3 And when there was an insufficiency of wine the mother of Jesus said to him: "They do not have any wine,"
4 And Jesus said to her: "My lady, what has that to do with you and me? For my season is not yet due."
5 His mother said to the attendants: "Do whatever he says."
6 And - as there were there six stone water-urns set up according to Judaeans cleansing holding two or three measures each -
7 Jesus said to them: "Fill those urns with water." And they completely filled them.
8 Then he said: "Now pour some out for the master of ceremonies." And they did.
9 Thus the master of ceremonies tasted the water become wine unaware from whence it was - although the attendants, having poured it, were aware - and called out to the spouse,
10 Saying to him: "Everyone sets out the better wine first and then, after a sufficiency is drunk, an inferior one, but you have kept the better wine until now."
11 This was the commencement of the signs, and this Jesus did in Cana, Galilee, and thus was his numinosity manifest with his disciples trusting him.

12 After this he - with his mother, brothers, and his disciples - went down to Capernaum, staying there for not many days,
13 And when the pascha of the Judaeans was near, Jesus went up to Jerusalem,
14 Where, in the temple, he found those sellers of oxen and sheep and doves as well as those seated changers-of-money,
15 And, fashioning a flail from cords, he cast all of them - including the sheep and the oxen - out from the temple and poured away the coins of those changers-of-money and overturned their tables,
16 Saying to those sellers of doves: "Take those from here. Do not make the house of my father a house of merchandise."
17 His disciples recalled that it was written: "Enthusiasm for your house will devour me."
18 In response, the Judaeans said to him: "What sign do you show us for you doing such things?"
19 Jesus replied, saying to them: "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it."
20 The Judaeans said: "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and you will raise it in three days?"
21 But he spoke of the temple of his body.
22 When therefore he was raised from the dead his disciples recalled that he had said this and trusted what was written and the word that Jesus had spoken.

23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at pascha on the feast-day, many trusted in his name having beheld the signs which he did,
24 But Jesus did not place his trust in them since he understood everything
25 And did not need anyone to give evidence regarding a person, aware as he was of the person within.

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Chapter Three

1 Now there was a Pharisee - a man called Nicodemus, a leader of the Judaeans -
2 Who, arriving at night, said to him: "Rabbi, we recognize that you are a teacher, arriving from Theos, for no one is able to do the signs you do unless Theos is with them."
3 In answer, Jesus said to him: "Verily, verily, I say unto you that if someone is not born anew they are unable to behold the Kingdom of Theos."
4 Nicodemus said to him: "How can a person be born when they are old? How are they able to twice enter the womb of the mother?"
5 Jesus answered: "Verily, verily, I say unto you that if someone is not born of Water and Spiritus they are unable to enter the Kingdom of Theos.
6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spiritus is spiritus.
7 Do not be astonished that I said to you to that it is needful for you to be born anew.

8 The wind blows where it will, and when you hear its sound you do not know from whence it came or whence it goes. So it is for everyone who is born of the Spiritus."

9 In reply, Nicodemus said to him: "How are such things able to exist?"

10 Jesus answered, saying to him: "You - a Magister of Israel - do not apprehend such things?

11 Verily verily I say unto you that what we recognize, we can talk about, and what we have observed we can give evidence concerning, and our evidence has not been accepted.

12 Having spoken to you of earthly things and you lack trust, how can you trust if I speak of things caelestien?

13 And no one has ascended into Empyrean without having descended out from Empyrean, the son of a mortal who is in Empyrean,

14 For just as Moses elevated that serpent in a forsaken place so will the son of a mortal be elevated

15 So that all those trusting in him might have life everlasting.

16 For Theos so loved the world that he offered up his only begotten son so that all those trusting in him would not perish but might have life everlasting.

17 For Theos did not dispatch his son to the world to condemn the world, but rather that the world might be rescued through him.

18 Whosoever trusts in him is not condemned while whomsoever does not trust is condemned for he has not trusted in the Nomen of the only begotten son of Theos.

19 And this is the condemnation: That the Phaos arrived in the world but mortals loved the darkness more than the Phaos, for their deeds were harmful.

20 For anyone who does what is mean dislikes the Phaos and does not come near the Phaos lest their deeds be exposed.

21 But whomsoever practices disclosure goes to the Phaos so that their deeds might be manifest as having been done through Theos.

22 After this, Jesus and his disciples, having arrived in the land of the Judaeans, stayed there together, for he was baptizing.

23 Also baptizing - in Aenon near Salim - was John, since the water there was plentiful and others had arrived to be baptized,

24 And John had yet to be hurled into a guarded cage.

25 Now, it came to pass that some disciples of John were disputing with a Judaeen about the cleansing,

26 So they went to John and said to him: "Rabbi, there on the other side of the Jordan is the one you gave evidence about. He is baptizing and everyone is going to him."

27 In answer, John said: "A person is unable to receive anything unless it is gifted to them from Empyrean.

28 You yourselves can give evidence that I said I am not the Christ but was dispatched before him.

29 He who has an espousess is the spouse, and the friend of the spouse - who stands by him and listens - is joyous with joy because of his words. Hence, my own joy is complete.

30 It is necessary that he continues to grow and that I wane.

31 The one who arrives from above is above everything while the one from the Earth is of the Earth and speaks about the Earth: the one who arrives from Empyrean is above everything.

32 He gives evidence about what he observed and heard and yet no one accepts his evidence.

33 Whomsoever accepts his evidence certifies by their seal that Theos is steadfast,

34 For the one dispatched by Theos speaks the words of Theos since he does not apportion Spiritus.

35 The father loves his son and has placed all things in his hands:

36 Whomsoever trusts in the son shall have life everlasting but whomsoever does not trust the son shall not see that life; rather, the anger of Theos abides on them.

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Chapter Four

1 Now, when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus had made more disciples and baptisms than John

2 Even though it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples,

3 He left Judaea and went back again into Galilee

4 With him of necessity having to pass through Samaria.

5 Thus did Jesus arrive in a town in Samaria called Sychar near to the plot of land that Jacob had gifted to Joseph his son

6 Where the well of Jacob was. And Jesus, wearied by his walking, sat down beside that well: this, around the sixth duration.

7 When a Samaritan woman arrived to haul-out water, Jesus said to her: "Grant me to drink,"

8 For his disciples had departed to the town to purchase food,

9 With the Samaritan woman saying to him: "How do you, a Judaeen, ask to drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" For Judaeans do not use Samaritan things.

10 Jesus answered and said to her: "Had you been aware of the gift of Theos and who it was saying to you 'grant me to drink,' you would have asked of him and he would have gifted you with living water."

11 The woman said to him: "Sir, you do not have anything to haul-out with and the well is deep. From where then is this living water that you have?

12 Are you better than our ancestor Jacob who gifted us with this well which he himself drank from as did his sons and livestock?"

13 Jesus answered and said to her: "Whomsoever drinks this water will thirst again

14 But whomsoever would drink of the water I gift them would not ever thirst. Instead, the water I gift them would be in them a source of water rising up to life everlasting."

15 The woman said to him: "Sir, grant me that water so I never thirst nor have to be here, hauling."

16 To her he said: "Go, call your spouse and return here."

17 The woman answered, saying to him: "I do not have a spouse."

Jesus replied: "It is good that you said you have no spouse.

18 Although you have had five spouses, he whom you are with now is not your spouse. Thus, you told the truth."

19 The woman said to him: "Sir, I deem you are a prophet.

20 Our ancestors gave reverence on this mountain but you say that the necessary place of reverence is in Jerusalem."

21 Jesus said to her: "My lady, trust me. There is a season arriving when you will reverence the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.

22 You reverence what you do not recognize; we reverence what we recognize, for deliverance is of the Judaeans.

23 But a season is arriving - and is here, now - when the sincere reverencers will reverence the Father in spiritus and sincerity. And the Father seeks those who so reverence him.

24 Theos is Spiritus, and it behoves those reverencing him to give reverence in spiritus and sincerity."

25 The woman said to him: "I am aware that the Messias - called the Christ - is arriving. When he arrives, he will disclose everything to us."

26 Jesus said to her: "I am: who speaks to you."

27 It was then that the disciples arrived and, although they had wondered why he was speaking with a woman, none of them asked "What are you enquiring about?" or "Why are you speaking to her?"

28 The woman, leaving her water-urn, departed for the town and said to the people there

29 "Follow! Behold a man who related to me everything I have ever done. Could it be the Christ?"

30 So they went forth from the town to arrive near to him.

31 Meanwhile, the disciples made a request of him, saying: "Rabbi, eat."

32 But he said to them: "I have food to eat that you do not recognize."

33 Then the disciples said among themselves: "Did anyone provide, for him to eat?"

34 Jesus said to them: "My food is that I undertake the design of the one having sent me and accomplish His work.

35 Do you not say: There are four moons until the harvest arrives? Behold, I say to you: raise your eyes and observe the fields for they are already nearing harvest-white.

36 The one reaping receives payment, gathering together fruit for life everlasting, so that both the one sowing and the one reaping can rejoice.

37 In this instance, there is a relevant saying: One sows and another reaps.

38 I sent you to reap that which you did not toil for but which others did toil for, and you are entering into that toil."

39 Now, many Samaritans in that town trusted in him because of the word of the woman who gave evidence: "he related to me everything I have ever done."

40 Thus when the Samaritans, arriving, were near him they invited him to stay with them. And for two days he stayed there.

41 And many more trusted because of his word,

42 Saying to the woman: "We do not trust because of what you told us, for we ourselves have heard and recognize that this is indeed the Servator Of The World.

43 And, after two days, he went forth from there into Galilee,

44 For Jesus himself gave evidence that a prophet is not esteemed in his own village.

45 On his arrival in Galilee, the Galileans accepted him having observed all that he had done at the feast in Jerusalem, for they themselves had gone to that feast.

46 Then he went again to Cana of Galilee where he had made that water wine. And there was in Capernaum a royal official whose son was ill.

47 When he heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea he went to him to ask him to descend and heal his son who was about to die.

48 Jesus said to him: "If you do not observe signs and portents you will not trust."

49 The royal official said to him: "Sir, descend before my dear child dies."

50 Jesus said to him: "Be on your way: your son will live." The man trusted the word of Jesus that he had said to him, and went on his way.

51 And even as he was descending his servants met him, saying that his son was alive.

52 Thus he enquired of them in which duration his betterment took hold. And they said to him: "Yesterday, at the sixth duration the fever left him."

53 The father therefore learned that it was the duration when Jesus had said to him: "Your son will live," and thus he himself was trusting as was everyone in his household.

54 That was the second sign that Jesus brought about when he arrived in Galilee from Judea.

Chapter Five

1 Following this, there was a Judaeen feast and Jesus went to Jerusalem.

2 And there is in Jerusalem by the place of the sheep a pool, named in the language of the Hebrews as Bethesda, which has five colonnades

3 In which were a large number of the infirm - the blind, the limping, the withered - awaiting a change in the water

4 Since on occasion an Envoy of Theos descended into the pool, stirring the water, and whomsoever after that stirring of the water was first to enter became complete, the burden of their affliction removed.

5 And there was a man there who for eight and thirty years had been infirm.

6 Jesus, seeing him lying there and knowing of that lengthy duration, said to him: "Do you seek to be complete?"

7 The infirm one replied: "Sir, I do not have someone who when the water is stirred could place me in that pool, and, when I go, someone else has descended before me."

8 Jesus said to him: "Arise. Take your bedroll, and walk."

9 And, directly, the man became complete, took up his bedroll and walked around. And it was the day of the Sabbath.

10 Thus did the Judaeans say to the one who had been treated: "It is the Sabbath and it is not permitted for you to carry your bedroll."

11 To them he answered: "It was he who made me complete who said for me to take my bedroll and to walk around."

12 So they asked him: "Who is the man who said for you to take the bedroll and walk around?"

13 But the healed one did not know, for there was a crowd there with Jesus having betaken himself away.

14 Following this, Jesus discovered him in the temple and said to him: "Behold, you are complete. No more missteps, lest something worse befalls you."

15 The man then went away and informed the Judaeans that it was Jesus who had made him complete.

16 And thus did the Judaeans harass Jesus because he was doing such things on the Sabbath.

17 When Jesus responded to them: "My father even now labours, and I also labour,"

18 The Judaeans were even more determined to kill him since not only had he annulled the Sabbath but also because he spoke of Theos as his Father, presenting himself as equal to Theos.

19 In response, Jesus said to them: "Verily, verily, I say unto you that the son is not able to do anything on his own: only that which he observes his father doing. For whatever the father does, the son also does,

20 For the father loves the son and reveals to him all that he does. And, beyond this, he will reveal to him greater works which shall astonish you

21 Since just as the father awakens the dead, and gives life, so also the son gives life by design to whomsoever,

22 For the father does not choose anyone, having accorded all choosing to his son

23 So that all might honour the son as they honour the father. And whoever does not honour the son, does not honour the father who sent him.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you that whomsoever hears my Logos, and trusts who sent me, has life everlasting and is not entered into the choosing but passes from death into life.

25 Verily, verily, I say unto you that a season is arriving, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of Theos and those who listen shall live.

26 Just as the father possesses Life within himself so he gifted the son with Life within him,

27 And also gifted him - as the son of a mortal - with the authority of choosing.

28 Do not be astonished at this, for a season is arriving when all those in their burial places will hear his voice

29 And proceed forth: those who have acted honourably to anastasis of life; those who have acted dishonourably, to anastasis of the choosing.

30 For I am not able to do anything on my own. When I have listened, I choose; and my choosing is fair since I do not seek my own design but rather the design of he who sent me.

31 If I am a witness about myself then my testimony is invalid,

32 But there is another as a witness for me, and I recognize that his testimony about me is valid.

33 You inquired after John, and he was evidential to the veritas.

34 And, although the testimony I receive is not from people, I say these things that you may be rescued.

35 He: a lantern, firefull and revealing; you: desirous to seasonably exult in his phaos.

36 I however have a testimony beyond that of John, for the deeds the father gifted me that I should accomplish them - the deeds which I do - are witness that the father sent me,

37 With the father - he who sent me - a witness about me: he whose voice you have never heard, whose likeness you have never observed,

38 With his Logos not remaining within you for you do not trust the one he sent.

39 You search the writings because you suppose that there is within them life everlasting and that they are a witness about me.

40 And yet have no desire to go to me so that you might have Life.

41 I do not receive honours from people,

42 But I have recognized you: for love of Theos is not within you.

43 I have arrived in the name of my father yet you do not accept me, but if another arrives in his own name you will accept him.

44 How are you able to trust when you accept honours from one another and yet do not seek the honour that is only from Theos?

45 Do not suppose that I will accuse you before the father, for it is Moses - on whom you rely - who is the one accusing you.
46 Had you trusted Moses, you would have trusted me for it was he who wrote about me.
47 Thus, since you do not trust what he wrote, how can you trust what I say?

Commentary

Chapter One

1.

a) Ἐν ἀρχῇ

I have eschewed the conventional, and the somewhat bland, 'in the beginning', for the more descriptive 'in primacy', a sense which the Greek suggests.

b) λόγος

It is, in my view, better to transliterate this than give a definite interpretation such as 'Word', especially since I incline toward the view that λόγος (as the following verses indicate – qv. the note on πρὸς τὸν θεόν below) is used here both in the sense of divine wisdom as manifest in the divine Law (as for example in the LXX text of Exodus 34.28) and in reference to Jesus - the divine made manifest - thus implying a fundamental principle which describes/reveals the nature of Being and beings, and thus the relationship between Being and beings. In this case, between the divinity and we mortals, and the duties and responsibilities of mortals.

Thus the translation 'In primacy was the logos.'

c) θεὸς

A transliteration for two basic reasons. (i) Because this is the very beginning of the text, with nothing having been mentioned so far about the nature or the attributes of the deity, and (ii) because the English word God now implies a particular cultural interpretation, the assumption being of God, as father. It is here just theos, or Theos if one reads Θεόν rather than θεόν, which after much reflexion, I am inclined to do.

The nature and attributes of Theos do become revealed, as the text proceeds, and to transliterate here is to approach the text as the evangel it was, and to thus possibly appreciate how it was received by those who first heard it or read it in the formative years of Christianity.

i) In respect of Theos, the lack of the definite article in θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος formed part of a certain theological controversy in the 4th and 5th centuries CE concerning the nature of Theos/God and the nature of Spiritus/The Holy Spirit (qv. 4.24). The basis of the controversy was whether 'the Theos' (ὁ θεός, The God) was the same or different from Theos, and if so whether Jesus, as the son of Theos, was always-existent (and thus the same as The God) or came-into-being afterwards, with the dispute later described as the Arian controversy, with 'Arianism' (the belief that Jesus was not equivalent to The God) denounced as a 'heresy'.

ii) In respect of the meaning of θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος there was also some dispute on grammatical grounds and which dispute continued into the Renaissance and beyond. The conventional reading was "the logos was Theos", with the minority reading (qv. Jean Daillé) being "Theos was the logos." Although my initial reading - as evident in earlier drafts of my translation - was 'Theos was the logos' I have, after much reflection and a re-reading of pertinent texts by John Chrysostom, Origen, and others, decided on "the logos was Theos."

2.

a) πρὸς τὸν θεόν

What does πρὸς τὸν θεόν mean? Perhaps not exactly what the conventional translation of 'with' implies, given πρὸς here is a preposition (with the accusative) which is generally indicative of movement (*toward*, or to interact with, or *unto*, something) and that, for the reader of the translation, 'the Logos was *with* Theos' is not very clear. With, the reader might well enquire, in what manner? As in the sense of being beside, or close? As in the Shakespearean Heaven doth with us as we with torches do? [1] As in – a sense not relevant to the Greek here but which English usage might suggest – supporting?

The English word *with* – with all its possible meanings, recent and otherwise – is not therefore in my view altogether satisfactory in suggesting the sense of the Greek. In the subsequent verse of John – 1.42 πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν – the sense is *to* Jesus, and in Hebrews 2:17 τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν suggests the sense of 'concerning', of relating to, which the English word *with* can also denote.

Positioned as it is between 'the primacy of the Logos' and the 'Logos was Theos', the sense – because of the repeated ἦν – suggests melded, with a free, non-literal, interpretation therefore being:

In primacy, the Logos, with Logos and Theos melded, for the Logos was Theos.

This evangel does not, therefore in my view, begin with some sort of philosophical statement of a neo-Platonist kind about some metaphysical principle termed Logos, but rather is a reminder that, for mortals, what has and had primacy was Logos understood, prior to Jesus, as the divine guidance manifest in the wisdom that is the Law, and that this wisdom, given to mortals by the divinity was, of itself and for us, a divine manifestation, a presencing, of the divinity. A sense which the mention of John the Baptist in v. 6-7 confirms, for John was sent by the divinity to testify – μαρτυρήσῃ – as to this truth. For God is Wisdom, the Law, and the Law is of God and, importantly according to the Old Testament context of this gospel and of the other gospels, how mortals could - before the birth of Jesus - know and understand and be in the presence of God. As Paul of Tarsus expressed it in relation to the evangel of Jesus of Nazareth:

πλήρωμα οὖν νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη

love is the completion of the law [2]

With arrival of Jesus, the Logos is manifest in and through his life, teachings, crucifixion, death and resurrection, with reverence of and trust in Jesus reverence of and trust in Theos, with Jesus saying in 4.21 that "there is a season arriving when you will reverence the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem," and in 3.16 that "all those trusting in him would not perish but might have life everlasting."

b) Οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν

This line, with its repetition of ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ and of πρὸς τὸν θεόν from line 1 is very interesting, especially in relation to οὗτος which here imputes the sense of "for *this* was in [that] primacy [already melded] with Theos," a translation which in my view is somewhat more meaningful than the conventional [3] "the same was in the beginning with God" and certainly more accurate than the "He was with God in the beginning" of some newer translations.

3.

πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο

ἐγένετο – born, or (even better) *came into being*, rather than the more prosaic 'made' as if in illusion to something having been manufactured. The sense is of things – of beings – coming into being, given existence, because of and by Theos.

4.

a) ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων

Literally, "in whom The Life was" (that is, in whom The Life had being, existence) and "which Life was [became] the φῶς of human beings."

b) ἄνθρωπος – human beings, rather than the archaic 'man/Mankind'.

An alternative for ζωὴ would be 'being' in the sense of having existence as opposed to non-existence (death), suggesting "Who was Being and which being became [through Theos] the φῶς [the being] of human beings."

Given that φῶς metaphorically (qv. Iliad, Odyssey, Hesiod, etcetera) implies the being, the life, 'the spark', of mortals, and, generally, either (i) the illumination, the light, that arises because of the Sun and distinguishes the day from the night, or (ii) any brightness that provides illumination and thus enables things to be seen, I am inclined to avoid the vague English word 'light' which all other translations use and which, as in the case of God, has, in the context of the evangel of Jesus of Nazareth, acquired particular meanings mostly as a result of centuries of exegesis and which therefore conveys or might convey something that the Greek word, as used by the author of this particular Greek text, might not have done.

Hence my transliteration – using the Homeric φῶς instead of φῶς – and which transliteration requires the reader to pause and consider what phaos may, or may not, mean, suggest, or imply. As in the matter of logos, it is most probably not some sort of philosophical principle, neo-Platonist or otherwise.

Interestingly, φῶς occurs in conjunction with ζωὴ and θεὸς and ἐγένετο and Ἄνθρωπος in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, thus echoing the evangel of John:

φῶς καὶ ζωὴ ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατήρ, ἐξ οὗ ἐγένετο ὁ Ἄνθρωπος [4]

Life and phaos are [both] of Theos, The Father, Who brought human beings into existence

c) τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει

Here, the value of using the transliteration phaos is evident, for 'phaos illuminates the dark' rather than 'light shines into the darkness' since the suggestion appears to that there is a revealing [5] of what has been obscured; that 'phaos dispels the obscurity' as the illumination brought by the Sun dispels the obscurity that is a feature of the night, or least was, in the days when the evangel of Jesus of Nazareth was revealed, when the dark night could only partially (and not very far, in distance) be illuminated by items such as small oil lamps or by candles or by the flicker of burning torches.

5. ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν

καταλαμβάνω is an interesting word to use, suggestive here, given the context, of an activity – overcome, seize, take -

rather than 'comprehend' which is somewhat anthropomorphic.

Hence, 'not overwhelmed by', as the dark of the night cannot overwhelm the illumination that the Sun brings but rather is itself overwhelmed.

12. Nomen: ὄνομα. Not simply 'name' as we understand a name but rather a term, an appellation, 'a word', which expresses or signifies his very nature, his being, his physis.

13. θέλημα - not 'will' but 'design/desire', giving thus "not by the design/desire of mortals/human beings."
The English term 'will' has too many modern and post-Hellenic connotations (qv. JS Mill, Nietzsche, JS Huxley, καὶ τὰ λοιπά)

14. καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ. Compare the beginning of the ἱερός Λόγος tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum: Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεὸς καὶ θεῖον καὶ φύσις θεία, The numen of all beings is theos: numinal, and of numinal physis.

As noted in my commentary on that tractate, 'numen' expresses the religious sense of δόξα better than ordinary (now overused) words such as 'splendour' and 'glory', and with 'numinal' more expressive and more appropriate there than 'divine'.

πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθεία. Regarding χάρις the English term benevolence is more appropriate than 'grace' given over a thousand years of exegesis in respect of 'grace', including the *sola gratia* of the Reformation. In respect of ἀληθεία I have chosen the Latin veritas in order to avoid the disputations - philosophical and otherwise - and the assumptions that the English word 'truth' so often now imputes and engenders, with the reader (or the listener) thus having to reflect on what veritas might, in this context, signify. In addition, ἀληθείας here suggests not some abstract, impersonal, 'truth' but rather truthfulness, sincerity, integrity: the type of person that Jesus of Nazareth is. In respect of 'veritas' suggesting such truthfulness and sincerity, qv. the entry for veritas in Lexicon Totius Latinitatis, volume 4b. Interestingly, Tyndale in his 1526 translation has "which worde was full of grace, and verite," and at 1.17 has "favour and verite cam by Jesus Christ."

15. ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν

The sense of γίνομαι here is 'came-into-being' (before me), rather than simply 'was before me' for the usage is metaphysical as often in the Corpus Hermeticum, for example Poemandres 17, tractate III:3, tractate IV:4.

17. νόμος. A transliteration - nomos - since as with logos a particular metaphysical principle is implied and one which requires contextual interpretation; a sense somewhat lost if the English word 'law' is used especially given what the word 'law' often now imputes.

18. Reading μονογενῆς θεὸς with NA28 and not the 'Byzantine textual' variant ὁ μονογενὴς υἱὸς which most translators - ancient and modern - have favoured given the difficulty of translating μονογενῆς θεὸς in context, although the meaning seems clear: "while no one so far has beheld Theos, the being [ὁ ὢν] in the greada [κόλπον] of the father has now explained [ξηγήσατο] him."

Regarding greada, this Old English word - qv. the tenth/eleventh century Anglo-Saxon version of Luke 16:23 - is a fitting translation of the Greek given that the alternatives, lap, and bosom, seem too anthropomorphic to be used in the context of Theos especially as "no one has ever seen him" with it only being said that Jesus has "explained" who and what Theos is. Interestingly, for this verse of the Gospel of John the Anglo-Saxon translator used the synonym 'barme' as does the Lindisfarne Gospel in respect of Luke 6:38.

19. ὅτε ἀπέστειλαν πρὸς αὐτὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων. After much consideration I have translated Ἰουδαία not by the conventional term 'Jews' but rather by Judaeans, given (i) that the English terms Jews and Jewish (deriving from the 13th/14th century words gvn/gyw and lewe) have acquired connotations (modern and medieval) which are not relevant to the period under consideration; and (ii) that the Greek term derives from a place name, Judaea (as does the Latin iudaeus); and (iii) that the Anglo-Saxon version (ASV) retains the sense of the Greek: here (iudeas) as elsewhere, as for example at 2.6, æfter iudea geclensunge, "according to Judaeans cleansing." [6]

23. ἔφη ἐγὼ φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῃ. I have opted for a fairly literal translation, with ἔρημος retaining its original meaning of an 'unpopulated, deserted, forsaken' place, and with βοάω suggestive of a caller 'calling out aloud' in such a place. Hence, "I, a call sounding out in forsaken places" rather than the conventional (KJV) "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness."

26. ὃν ὑμεῖς οὐκ οἴδατε. One - someone - "you do not know" in the sense of not perceiving (seeing) them; that is, not recognizing them. Cf. συννοίᾳ δὲ δάπτομαι κέαρ ὁρῶν ἑμαυτὸν ὥδε προυσελούμενον (Aeschylus, Prometheus Bound, 438), "disturbing things devour my heart since I recognize just how mistreated I have been."

Interestingly, the ASV of the Gospel of John has *ne cunnon* so that the text can be read "not acquainted/not familiar with." Cf. Beowulf:

metod hie ne cuþon,
dæda demend, ne wiston hie drihten god,
ne hie huru heofena helm herian ne cuþon,
wuldres waldend. (180-183)

[they were] unacquainted with The Chief,
Judger of deeds, and with the Lord God,
as well as unacquainted with how to praise

29. ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἀμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου. As mentioned in the Preface, I translate ἀμαρτία not by the conventional 'sin' but rather by 'error' or 'mistake', which is quite apposite here considering the use of the singular and the preceding mention of Jesus as the Lamb of God: of Jesus having arrived to remove the error, the fault, that 'the world' has made, has fallen into, with 'the Lamb of God' thus healing the injury so caused. Which is quite different from some preacher sternly preaching about 'sin' and warning about the 'fire and brimstone' that await sinners. As Thomas Aquinas noted in his commentary on this passage, "Alia ratio ut excluderet errorem." (Super Evangelium S. Ioannis lectura, caput I, Lectio 14)

32.

a) τὸ πνεῦμα. Almost without exception, since Wycliffe's Bible the Greek here has been translated as "the spirit", although the ASV has gast (gast of heofenum), whence the later English word 'ghost'. However, given what the terms 'spirit' and 'ghost' - both in common usage, and as a result of over a thousand years of Christian exegesis - now impute, it is apposite to offer an alternative and one which is germane to the milieu of the Gospels or which at least suggests something of the numinosity presenced, in this instance, via the Gospel of John. Given that the transliteration pneuma - with its modern association with terms such as pneumatic - does not unequivocally suggest the numinous, I have chosen spiritus, as referenced in respect of gast in Wright's *Anglo-Saxon And Old English Vocabularies* [7].

b) ἐξ οὐρανοῦ. Conventionally, οὐρανός here is always translated as 'heaven' although the term 'heaven' - used in the context of the Gospels - now has rather different connotations than the Greek οὐρανός, with the word 'heaven' now often implying something explained by almost two thousand years of exegesis and as depicted, for example, in medieval and Renaissance Christian art. However, those hearing or reading this particular Greek gospel for the first time in the formative years of Christianity would most probably have assumed the usual Greek usage of "the heavens" in the sense of the "the star-filled firmament above" or in the sense of "the sky" or as the abode of theos and/or of the gods (ἐν οὐρανῷ θεοί), an assumption consistent with the fact that the Evangelist explains and interprets certain non-Greek words (qv. the comment on 1.42) and considering also his use of a colloquial Greek expression (qv. the comment on 1.51).

It therefore seems apposite to suggest a more neutral word than 'heaven' as a translation of οὐρανός and one which might not only be understood in various 'classical' ways by an audience of Greek speakers (such as the ways described above) but also be open to a new, and Christian, interpretation consistent with the milieu that existed when the Gospel of John was written and first heard. That is, before the exegesis of later centuries and long before post-Roman Christian iconography. Hence my suggestion of the post-classical Latin term Empyrean, which can bear the interpretation of the abode of theos and/or of the gods, of "the sky", of the "the star-filled firmament above"; and a Christian one suggested by Genesis 2.8 - παράδεισον ἐν Εδεμ (the Paradise of Eden) - and also by shamayim, שָׁמַיִם

33. ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ. *in Halig Spiritus*. I have here used the Old English word Halig - as for example found in the version of John 17.11 in the Lindisfarne Gospel, 'Du halig fæder' - to translate ἅγιος rather than the later word 'holy' derived as that is from halig and used as it was by Wycliffe in his 1389 translation of this phrase, "in the Hooly Gost", which itself echoes the ASV, "on Halgum Gaste."

The unique phrase *in Halig Spiritus* - in place of the conventional 'with the Holy Spirit' - may thus express something of the numinosity, and the newness, of the original Gospel, especially as the word 'holy' has been much overused, imputes particular meanings from over a thousand years of exegesis, and, latterly in common parlance, has become somewhat trivialized.

In respect of ἐν, while most translators have opted here (as in respect of 1.26 ff) for "with", I have opted for "in", given that John baptized "in water" - for example, in Aenon - and given that Jesus baptizes "in, with" (in the name of) Halig Spiritus.

39. ὥρα ἣν ὡς δεκάτη. To translate ὥρα here as 'hour' is somewhat misleading given that the term 'hour' now means a fixed period of sixty minutes whereas the day of the ancient (Roman governed) milieu of the Gospel was divided into twenty-four durations or periods and which durations depended on the length of daylight (and thus the season) at the location in question, with there being twelve durations of daylight and twelve durations of night. Hence the 'tenth duration' mentioned in this verse - whether it be the tenth duration of the daylight hours or the tenth duration of the twenty-four - would not necessarily equate to what we would term 'ten o'clock' in the morning and certainly would not equate to a tenth 'hour' lasting sixty minutes. In addition, it depends on when the first duration was measured from: sunrise, or sunset, or from 'the mid-point of the night'. Which has led to debate among scholars as to whether or not John in this Gospel is, in respect of ὥρα, using Roman terminology for such periods, as well as to debates about whether the Roman durations were reckoned from 'the mid-point of the night' or from sunrise. If reckoned from sunrise, then allowing for latitude and seasonal variation, this 'tenth duration' was between mid to late afternoon. If reckoned from 'the mid-point of the night' then this 'tenth duration' was mid to late morning.

This fluid, local, sense of 'time' is well-expressed by the Old English word *tyd* - from whence the term *tide* - which signified a period, a duration, of the day or of a season when it was appropriate or propitious to undertake a specific task or tasks. Hence the ASV having - for ὥρα ἣν ὡς δεκάτη - *hyt wæs þa seo teoðe tyd*. Such a fluid sense of an appropriate or propitious duration - a tide, a moment, a season - is apposite in several instances when John uses the term ὥρα, as for example at vv. 2.4 and 7.30.

41. τὸν Μεσσίαν. The Messiah. Following Wycliffe and Tyndale, I have transliterated as Messiah (ASV has Messiam) rather than the more usual Messiah, given how the term Messiah is now commonly used in a non-Christian way. As John Chrysostom noted in his commentary on this verse (Migne Patrologia Graeca 59, Homily XIX), the use here of the

definite article by the Evangelist seems deliberate: with Jesus described as *The* Messiah, rather than a messias.

42. ὁ ἐρμηνεύεται Πέτρος. I have transliterated Πέτρος - rather than translate as 'Rock' - and for ἐρμηνεύω (the etymon of the relatively modern, c.1670's, term hermeneutic) have chosen 'explain' to compliment the previous use of μεθερμηνεύω, 'interpretation'.

44. ἐκ τῆς πόλεως Ἀνδρέου καὶ Πέτρου. While πόλις here is invariably translated as 'city' that English word is misleading given (i) the modern connotations of the term city, and (ii) with Bethsaida being described by Mark (8.22-23) - ἔξω τῆς κώμης - as a village, and (iii) that some archaeological evidence points to Bethsaida being et-Tell, which in New Testament times was a small fishing settlement beside the Sea of Galilee. Thus, I incline toward the view that πόλις here is best translated as 'community', qv. Sophocles, Oedipus Tyrannus, 22 and 28. [8]

51.

a) ὄψεσθε τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνεωγότα. Conventionally, "you will see [the] heaven[s] open" although as noted in the comment on 1.32 the term 'heaven' now has rather different connotations than the Greek οὐρανός. While, as at 1.32, Empyrean is suitable, the context suggests the ordinary meaning of "the sky", thus avoiding the colloquial "you will see the heavens open."

b) τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ θεοῦ. Conventionally, "the angels of God," but as seems apparent from the use by the Evangelist of expressions such as ἐρμηνεύω and μεθερμηνεύω - explaining and interpreting unusual (for Greek speakers) words such as Rabbi - those hearing or reading this particular gospel for the first time would have been familiar with ἄγγελος as an 'envoy' or as a 'messenger', not as an "angel" and certainly not as a being of the type described by later Christian iconography. Because of this, I incline toward the view that the English word 'angel' is unsuitable as a translation here leading as it does to retrospective reinterpretation of the text. Hence, "those envoys of Theos."

c) τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Is it possible to interpret this in English without defaulting to the masculine singular thus avoiding the conventional appellation *the Son of Man*, and thus providing 'gender inclusive' alternatives? In the case of υἱός this could be 'descendant' - or the later second/third century (CE) 'child' - although ἀνθρώπου is more problematic. For example the Oxford Inclusive version [9] has, for the Son of Man, "the Human One" which rather distorts the meaning of the Greek, missing at it does the reference to υἱός, while the inclusive terms 'human' and 'human being' combined with υἱός as child impart a particular meaning - the human child, child of human beings - which particular meaning does not readily convey the theological and Biblical resonances of the terms Son of Man/Son of Mankind.

Hence my choice of "the son of a mortal" - of a mortal (singular), not of *mortals* (plural) - which not only resonates with the narrative of the Virgin Birth but also provides a necessary contrast with expressions such as Ἀληθῶς θεοῦ υἱὸς ἦν οὗτος (in truth, this was the Son of Theos) in Matthew 27.54. Hence, Jesus as being a son born of one particular mortal and also being the son of an immortal, a mortal descendant of Theos/God who as a mortal suffers and dies, and yet who, as the Son of Theos, arose from the dead and ascended into Heaven.

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Chapter Two

4.

a) τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, γύναι. This has been somewhat misunderstood in two respects. Firstly, the rather colloquial Greek phrase τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί occurs in Epictetus (Discourses, Book II, 19) and means "what is this between you and me?" That is, what has this to do with us? [10] Secondly, to translate γύναι here as "woman" is misleading, giving the impression as it does of a rebuke. However, correctly understood in its cultural context, it is a polite honorific in the same way that the modern expression "ladies and gentlemen" is a polite form of address. The phrase in Epictetus is followed by ἄνθρωπε; here, the phrase is followed by γύναι, with the former approximating to "friend, fellow, sir" and the latter to "friend, my lady, wife" with 'wife' being, in such a cultural context, an expression of familial inclusion, or of friendship, or of politeness, and thus not restricted to one's partner by marriage, a fact expressed by the ASV version of this passage: *la wif, hwæt ys me & þe*, a literal translation of which is "Wife, what's this to me and thee?"

b) οὕτω ἦκει ἡ ὥρα μου. The sense of ὥρα here is 'season'. Which season is that of 'the signs' (σημεῖα), of the Passion, the death and resurrection of Jesus, and his Ascension.

8. ἀρχιτρίκλινος. Literally, 'the authority at the feast'. The English term 'master of ceremonies' suitably suggests the function of this person.

11. ταύτην ἐποίησεν ἀρχὴν τῶν σημείων. The fact that the Evangelist uses the word σημεῖον and not δυνάμεις as in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, is notable and thus should be reflected in the translation, with σημεῖον a 'sign', an 'indication', or an 'omen', and with δυνάμις literally implying 'force', 'power', 'authority', and which has generally - in respect of the other Gospels - been translated as 'miracle' (a manifestation of divine power).

13. τὸ πάσχα τῶν Ἰουδαίων. As with Ἰουδαία (qv. 1.19) I have retained the meaning of the Greek and thus have here transliterated πάσχα - pascha - rather than translated as 'Passover' especially as (i) the term Passover now has (often modern) connotations not relevant to the milieu of John the Evangelist and his Gospel, and (ii) that the Greek Orthodox Church retains the word πάσχα in respect of Easter, and (iii) there has been some theological debate as to whether the

Christian pascha (that is, Easter) has through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus voided the pascha (and the Temple in Jerusalem) of the type that the Evangelist goes on to describe.

Thus I incline toward the view that the conventional translation here of "the Passover of the Jews" may impose meanings (especially modern meanings) not merited by the original text while a literal translation - "the pascha of the Judaeans" - is open to contextual interpretation, the context here being what John the Evangelist narrates in his Gospel about the signs (σημεῖα) and about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. This literal sense is retained in the Latin version of the verse: et prope erat pascha iudaeorum et ascendit Hierosolyma Iesus.

As to whether the juxtaposition of κατέβη and ἀνέβη - 'went down', to Capernaum and 'went up', to Jerusalem - in verses 12 and 13 - have any significance is moot, with some suggesting that it is meant literally since Jerusalem was at a higher elevation in relation to Capernaum; others that it is metaphorical given that Jerusalem was the capital of Judea and the site of the Temple; while others, such as Thomas Aquinas, compared it to Ephesians IV, 10, and thus considered it in theological terms as a 'descending' and then an 'ascending', with Aquinas writing:

"Sed non vacat a mysterio, quod in Capharnaum descendit, et postmodum Ierosolymam ascendit. Nisi enim descendisset primum, non competisset ei ascendere: quia, ut dicitur Eph. IV, 10, qui descendit, ipse est et qui ascendit." *Super Evangelium S. Ioannis lectura*, caput II, Lectio 1

That he descended to Capernaum and then ascended to Jerusalem is not without its mystery since if he did not first descend he would not have been able to then ascend, for as has been related (Eph. IV, 10) "The one who descended is the same as the one who ascended." [11]

22. καὶ ἐπίστευσαν τῇ γραφῇ καὶ τῷ λόγῳ ὃν εἶπεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς.

a) The consensus is that γραφή here - as throughout the New Testament - has the meaning 'scripture' rather than its normal sense of 'that which is written', with the English word 'scripture' (usually written with a capital S) having the specific meaning "the writings of the Old and/or of the New Testament". However, this specific meaning only dates back to c.1300 and was used by Wycliffe in his 1389 translation, from whence, via Tyndale, it was used in the King James version. Prior to 1300, the ASV has *gewrite* - 'what was written', writing, inscription - with the Latin of Jerome having *scripturae*, as does Codex Palatinus of the earlier Vetus Latina. [12] Classically understood, the Latin has the same meaning as the Greek γραφή: writing, something written, an inscription. [13]

Considering what has been mentioned regarding how the Evangelist explained and interpreted certain non-Greek words (qv. the comment on 1.42) and considering also his use of a colloquial Greek expression (qv. the comment on 1.51) it seems probable that the Evangelist is using the word γραφή in its usual sense, and that it was only much later that the Greek word, and the Latin *scripturae*, were interpreted to mean 'Scripture' in the 14th century sense of the English word.

Thus I have retained here the ordinary meaning of the Greek, with the reference to the Old Testament being implied by the phrase "trusted what was written."

b) The use here of the singular - τῷ λόγῳ ὃν εἶπεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς, 'the word (logos) that Jesus had spoken' - is notable, and occurs several times in this Gospel in relation to Jesus, as for example at 5.24, 14.23, and 15.3.

23. ἐν τῷ πάσχα ἐν τῇ ἑορτῇ. The sense of the Greek is "at pascha on the feast-day." Interestingly, for πάσχα here the ASV has *eastron* - Ða he wæs on ierusalem on eastron on freols-daige; Wycliffe has *pask* - And whanne Jhesus was at Jerusalem in pask, in the feeste dai - and Tyndale has *ester*, "When he was at Ierusalem at ester in the feaste".

24. γινώσκειν πάντας. That is, as the Evangelist goes on to explain, he apprehended - he understood - the motivations, the character, of those who trusted him because he aware of, he knew, the person within.

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Chapter Three

1. ἄρχων τῶν Ἰουδαίων. In reference to Nicodemus, this can be, and has been, interpreted in several ways. As referring to "an Elder," to "a leader," to "a ruler," as well as to "a prince" (cf. 16.11, ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου, "Prince of this world," in reference to τοῦ διαβόλου, the Devil). Given Mark 8.31 - τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καὶ τῶν ἀρχιερέων καὶ τῶν γραμματέων - I have opted for "a leader of the Judaeans."

2. οὗτος ἦλθεν πρὸς αὐτὸν νυκτὸς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ. While many translations refer to Jesus here - as does the KJV, "the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him" - he is not named in the Greek verse, which verse together with the proceeding one might colloquially be translated as "Now there was a man of the Pharisees, Nicodemus by name, a leader of the Judaeans. The same it was who arrived at night and said to he himself..."

3. γεννηθῇ ἄνωθεν. The question that Nicodemus goes on to ask - πῶς δύναται ἄνθρωπος γεννηθῆναι γέρων ὢν - suggests the sense of ἄνωθεν here: 'anew', rather than 'from above.'

4. τὴν κοιλίαν τῆς μητρὸς. Although this literally means "the cavity of the mother" it is most often translated as "the womb of the mother" although the ASV has, instead of 'cavity', 'innoðe' - the 'inside' of the body - and Tyndale simply has 'body' (hys moders body). For the sake of clarity, I have chosen 'womb' here.

5. ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος. In respect of τὸ πνεῦμα as 'the Spiritus' - rather than the conventional 'the Spirit' - qv. the

comment on 1.32. Also, I have translated literally - ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς, of the flesh; and ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος, of the Spiritus - thus preserving the definite article, something sometimes lost in translation, although preserved in both Tyndale and the KJV.

8. δεῖ ὑμᾶς γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν. The plural 'you' is meant here: 'it is needful for you all [for everyone] to be born anew.'

10. σὺ εἶ ὁ διδάσκαλος τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ. Given the use here of the definite article, διδάσκαλος suggests something more than just 'teacher' - cf. 3.2 - and I have therefore opted to use the Latin term Magister, implying as it does a particular and high official status, rather than use the literal "the teacher of Israel".

Given the definite article, it is debatable as to whether the Evangelist here wants to convey that Jesus is using the appellation ὁ διδάσκαλος politely or as a rebuke, although I incline toward the view that it is meant politely. Whatever the intent, the effect is that Nicodemus stays silent either because of being rebuked or because he realizes that despite being known as a Magister he really does not know everything. That the Evangelist later on describes Nicodemus trying to ensure a fair trial for Jesus (7.50f) and assisting in the burial of Jesus (19.39ff) might indicate the latter.

In addition, in order to suggest something about the use here of the conjunctive (which allows for several interpretations of the interrogative) I have avoided the English 'and' and used dashes, thus placing the emphasis on whether or not Nicodemus is aware or unaware of such matters as Jesus has mentioned.

12.

a) οὐ πιστεύετε. As at 1.7, 2.11, and 2.24, the personal context suggests 'trust' rather than 'believe'. Here, 'trust' emphasises the person, the character, of Jesus, while 'belief' can convey a belief in something abstract, impersonal, such as a dogma or some particular interpretation of some faith.

b) τὰ ἐπουράνια πιστεύετε. As noted in the comment on 1.32, I have translated οὐρανός not by the conventional English word 'heaven' but by Empyrean. Similarly, for ἐπουράνιος here I have avoided the word 'heavenly' (with all its connotations, ancient, modern, and colloquial) and chosen 'caelestien', a 14th century variant spelling of the post-classical Latin 'caelestianus' which derives from the classical Latin caelestia (celestial).

The effect here of using 'caelestien', as with the use of words such as 'numen' and transliterations such as Theos and phaos, is to suggest the ancient milieu of those who were reading or who were listening to this Gospel in the early years of Christianity, centuries before now common words such as 'heaven', grace, God, and Light had acquired particular theological meanings and an associated iconography.

13. ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Reading the addition ὁ ὢν ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ with the Textus Receptus and Tischendorf, and which addition is followed by the ASV, Wycliffe, Tyndale, and the KJV.

In respect of "the son of a mortal" for ὁ υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, qv. the comment on 1.51.

19-20. ἦν γὰρ αὐτῶν πονηρὰ τὰ ἔργα. For their deeds were harmful; that is, caused pain and suffering. To impute to πονηρός here the meaning of a moral abstract 'evil' is, in my view, mistaken. Similarly with the following φαῦλος in v.20 which imparts the sense of being 'mean', indifferent.

Since the Phaos is Jesus, those who are mean, those who do harm, avoid Jesus because (qv. 2.25) he - as the only begotten son of Theos - knows the person within and all their deeds. Thus, fearing being exposed, they avoid him, and thus cannot put their trust in him and so are condemned and therefore lose the opportunity of eternal life.

21. ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν. Literally, 'they practising the disclosing.' That is, those who disclose - who do not hide - who they are and what deeds they have done, and who thus have no reason to fear exposure. Here, as in vv.19-20, the meaning is personal - about the character of people - and not about abstractions such as "evil" and "truth", just as in previous verses it is about trusting in the character of Jesus. Hence why here ἀλήθεια is 'sincerity', a disclosing, a revealing - the opposite of lying and of being deceitful - and not some impersonal 'truth'.

24. βεβλημένος εἰς τὴν φυλακὴν. A phrase deserving some consideration, for φυλακή is not 'prison' as prisons are understood today and in the past few centuries but rather 'a guarded cage', with βεβλημένος εἰς implying a forceful 'throwing' or a hurling into such a cage.

25. περὶ καθαρισμοῦ. *about the cleansing*. The term 'the cleansing' refers to the traditional ritual purification undertaken by Judaeans.

29. Here, as at 2.9, I have translated νυμφίος by the older (and gender neutral) English term 'spouse' rather than by the now common - rather overused - term bridegroom. In regard to νύμφη I have likewise avoided 'bride' and chosen espousess which - as with espouse - is a variant spelling of espousee, a 14th century term used by Wycliffe and contemporaries, and which term seems apposite here since from the 12th to the 14th centuries it also had a specific religious connotation, being used (as with spouse) in a gender neutral way in reference to those who were devoted to Jesus, although it later came to refer only to those women, such as nuns, who devoted their lives to Jesus.

33. The phrase "certifies by their seal" expresses the literal meaning of ἐσφράγισεν here. Similarly, the meaning of ἀληθής here is well-expressed by the Old English term *soothfast* - trustworthy, steadfast - and which term is used in

this verse in the ASV (god ys soðfestnysse) and in the translation by Wycliffe, with *soothe*, and various other derivatives, also used in the Lindisfarne Gospels.

36. οὐκ ὄψεται ζωὴν. There are two ways of understanding the literal 'shall not see life' depending on how ὄράω is understood in context: as a reference to life everlasting (will not see life everlasting) or as will not perceive, apprehend, understand, take heed of life (for the opportunity it is).

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Chapter Four

1. Ὡς οὖν ἔγνω ὁ Ἰησοῦς. The Textus Receptus, and Westcott and Hort, have κύριος (Lord, Master) instead of Ἰησοῦς.

4. Ἦδει δὲ αὐτὸν διέρχασθαι διὰ τῆς Σαμαρείας. The Evangelist states that it was necessary (δεῖ) for Jesus to walk through Samaria which given what follows (vv.9-10) suggests a certain historical antipathy between the people of Judaea and the people of Samaria even though the Samaritans - as is apparent from the Gospel - shared many, but not all, of the religious traditions of the Judaeans, as did most of the people of Galilee, including Jesus. Since the Evangelist specifically writes that it was Judaeans who sought to kill Jesus (5.18; 7.1; 7.19 et seq) it seems as if the antipathy by Judaeans to Jesus of Nazareth in particular and to Samaritans in general - with the Evangelist stating that Judaeans would not share or make use of (συγχράομαι) Samaritan things - arose from Judaeans in general believing that their religious practices based on their particular interpretation of the religion of Moses and the Prophets were correct and that they themselves as a result were 'righteous' - better than Samaritans - with Jesus the Galilean considered by many Judaeans, and certainly by the priestly authorities, as having committed (qv. 10.33) 'blasphemy' (βλασφημία) and thus should be killed.

Such differing religious traditions, such internecine feuds, such religious fanaticism and intolerance on behalf of some Judaeans - an intolerance exemplified also when (qv. 10.22) one of the guards of Caiaphas the High Priest (Καϊάφαν τὸν ἀρχιερέα) physically assaults Jesus for not showing the High Priest "due deference" - exemplifies why in this Gospel Ἰουδαία should (qv. my comment on 2.13) be translated not by the conventional term 'Jews' but rather by Judaeans.

6. ὥρα ἦν ὥς ἕκτη. In respect of ὥρα as 'duration' rather than 'hour' qv. the comment on 1.39. As noted there, there are two means of reckoning the durations, with this sixth duration thus being either around the middle of the day (reckoned from the time of sunrise at the location) or early evening.

7.

a) Ἔρχεται γυνὴ ἐκ τῆς Σαμαρείας. Given that the English word Samaritan now has meanings which are not relevant to the text here I have opted to use the term Samaritans - rather than Samaritans - to describe the people of Samaria. Hence here the phrase a 'Samaritan woman' rather than a 'Samaritan woman'.

b) δός μοι πεῖν. I take the sense of δίδωμι here to be the more polite 'grant' rather than 'give'. Combined with πεῖν - to drink - this (grant me to drink) imparts a somewhat different tone than the conventional "give me a drink."

9. πῶς σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὢν. This is interesting for three reasons. Firstly, the use of πῶς, 'how' (by what means). Secondly the statement σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὢν, 'you being Judaeans'. Thirdly the repetition of πεῖν.

The Evangelist then explains the reason for her asking 'how can' Jesus accept water from her: because Judaeans would not share or make use of (συγχράομαι) Samaritan things. Which leaves unexplained why the woman - who as the Evangelist goes on to explain has a similar religious heritage to Jesus of Galilee - considers him as being from Judaea.

10.

a) εἰ ἦδεις τὴν δωρεὰν τοῦ Θεοῦ. The ASV has *Gif þu wistes godes gyfe*, with 'wistes' - wistist, in Wycliffe - well-expressing in English the sense of ἦδεις here: "if you were witan to the gift of Theos," or more colloquially "if you were wise to the gift of Theos."

b) ὕδωρ ζῶν. Here, ὕδωρ ζῶν, 'living water' - that is, the water of life, ὕδωρ ζωῆς - has both a metaphysical and a literal meaning. The literal meaning of fresh, clean, water is evident from the reply of the Samaritan woman: οὐτε ἄντλημα ἔχεις, you have nothing to haul-out [water] with. The metaphysical meaning is explained by the Evangelist in the verses which follow: the living water is the gift of Halig Spiritus (the Holy Spirit) and which gift is eternal life.

20. οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ ὅρει τούτῳ προσεκύνησαν. Given that there is no context - no mention of the form or type of 'worship' - the term 'reverence' seems appropriate regarding προσκυνέω, expressing as it does both the lack of detail in the narrative and the ambiguity the Greek can have, from a profound 'reverence' - as in the custom of prostration - to an action of honourable respect - as in bowing or being in awe of or showing admiration for - to a silent or verbal (prayerful) personal or communal veneration. In addition, since the English term 'worship' has, over centuries, acquired many religious connotations - both Christian and otherwise - that are not or may not be relevant here, the term is unsuitable, projecting as it does or can do particular meanings onto the text.

21. γύναι. In respect of the polite form of address - here, 'My lady' - rather than the conventional (rather strident)

'woman', qv. the comment on 2.4.

22. ὅτι ἡ σωτηρία ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐστίν. Given (i) that σωτηρία is 'deliverance'; and (ii) that the term 'salvation' has acquired particular meanings through centuries of exegesis, and (ii) that Ἰουδαίων implies Judaeans, the statement is that "deliverance is of - arises from, is because of - the Judaeans." For it is Judaeans who seek to kill Jesus for blasphemy (qv. 10.33) and Judaeans who bring Jesus before Pontious Pilate and insist that he be crucified.

23. ὅτε οἱ ἀληθινοὶ προσκυνηταὶ προσκυνήσουσιν τῷ πατρὶ ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ. In respect of ἀλήθεια as 'sincerity' qv.3.21; hence οἱ ἀληθινοὶ as 'the sincere'. In respect of 'reverencers' - "the sincere reverencers will reverence the Father in spiritus and sincerity" - the English word reverencer dates back to the 16th century and has been regularly used since, denoting as it does a person who shows reverence toward someone or toward something deserving of reverence, qv. 4.20.

As to whether spiritus here is Spiritus as in 1.31-2 (the Halig Spiritus, Halgum Gaste, Holy Ghost, Holy Spirit) or refers to an interior 'spiritual' reverence (cf. 3.6) has been much discussed, with the consensus being that it refers to Halig Spiritus.

24. πνεῦμα ὁ θεός. This can be read "Theos: Spiritus," and - like θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος in v.1 - lead to some theological controversy in the 4th and 5th centuries CE concerning the nature of Theos/God and the nature of Spiritus/The Holy Spirit, for here, as with θεὸς in v.1, πνεῦμα lacks the definite article while in v.1 λόγος does not.

26. Ἐγὼ εἰμὶ ὁ λαλῶν σοι. The first part - Ἐγὼ εἰμὶ - literally means "I am." Most translations insert 'he' - "I am he" - which rather lessens the impact of what Jesus says, which is that he just "is", beyond causality itself and thus beyond any manifestation of Being - on Earth - as "a being", be such a being the mortal Messiah or some other mortal. Expressed less philosophically, Jesus says that it is the divinity who is speaking to her: "it is *I AM* who is speaking to you." Cf. 8.24.

34. ποιήσω τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός με καὶ τελειώσω αὐτοῦ τὸ ἔργον. Given (i) θέλημα not as 'will' but rather as 'design' in the sense of 'a plan' that someone can bring to fruition - qv. 1.13 - and (ii) that ποιέω can imply make, produce, construct, and (iii) the following ἔργον, then this suggests the more evocative "undertake the design of [the one] having sent me and accomplish His work."

35. τετράμηνος. Not 'of or lasting four months' but 'of four moons' (four new moons). The word 'month' - with its modern implications of a particular number of days and of there being twelve months in a year - imposes meanings on the text that are not relevant to life in ancient times in a rather remote Roman province during the reign of Tiberius.

I read ἤδη as part of v.35 and not as the beginning of v.36.

36. εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον. Here, while the English words 'for' or 'unto' for εἰς are not entirely satisfactory - since the sense is of *for* the purpose of entering into life everlasting - I can find no suitable alternatives.

37. ἐν γὰρ τούτῳ ὁ λόγος ἐστὶν ἀληθινός. The context suggests the meaning of ἀληθινός here. In this [matter] - ἐν γὰρ τούτῳ - of sowing and reaping Jesus says that one person has sown the crop and another person has reaped that crop, which as an objective statement of fact is not always 'true' since the same person can sow a crop and also later on reap the crop they had sown. Thus ἀληθινός here does not suggest 'true' in an objective way but 'real, genuine, trustworthy' - cf. Aristotle, Eudemian Ethics, Book VII, 1236b, ἀληθινὸς φίλος, a 'genuine friend'; also Plato, Republic, Book I, 347d, ἀληθινὸς ἄρχων, a trustworthy leader.

That is, in this particular instance the saying is trustworthy, correct; it is relevant. There is therefore no need to suggest, as some commentators have done, that this simple statement of fact is a spiritual maxim concerning the spiritual reality behind outward appearance.

42. ὁ σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου. Some MSS - including the Textus Receptus - have ὁ σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου ὁ χριστός. It possible that ὁ χριστός - 'the Christ' - was appended because σωτὴρ was an epithet of Zeus (qv. Pindar, Olympian Ode, 5.40, Σωτὴρ ὑπινεφὲς Ζεῦ) and other classical deities and in its Latin form, Servator, was often used in reference to the Roman Emperor and those who had done significant deeds beneficial to Rome or its Empire.

While generally translated in the Gospels as saviour, the classical sense is someone who protects, defends, and preserves; in respect of individuals, someone or some divinity who protects, can defend, them and preserve their life; in respect of communities, someone or some divinity who protects, defends, and maintains the community and thus the status quo, qv. Cicero:

ego tantis periculis propositis cum, si victus essem, interitus rei publicae, si vicissem, infinita dimicatio pararetur, committerem ut idem perditor rei publicae nominarer qui servator fuissem. (For Placinius, 36.89)

Since both 'Saviour' and 'Redeemer', in the almost two thousand years since the Gospel was written - and first read and heard - have acquired particular theological (and especially soteriological) meanings which are not or may not have been relevant all those centuries ago I have chosen to use the Latin term *servator*. This avoids imposing upon the text much later theological/soteriological meanings, iconography, and archetypes; as for example in the following: "est duplex salus: quaedam vera, quaedam non vera. Vera quidem salus, cum liberamur a veris malis, et conservamur in veris bonis." (Thomas Aquinas, *Super Evangelium S. Ioannis lectura*, caput 4, lectio 5)

The term servator also has the benefit of suggesting that the Evangelist, in using the expression ὁ σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου, might have been contrasting Jesus - as Servator of The World - with the Roman Emperor as servator of the Roman Empire.

44. ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ πατρίδι. This does not refer to Galilee itself - or to "in his own country" as in the KJV - but rather to "his home village," Nazareth. As to the size of Nazareth during the life of Jesus, and thus as whether it was a town or a village, scholarly opinion - based on the scant archaeological and historical evidence - indicates it was probably a village, not a town, and certainly not a city.

46. τις βασιλικὸς. The 'royal official' belonged to the court of King Herod and the term βασιλικὸς might well have been used by the Evangelist to distinguish this official from a Roman one.

47. ἡρώτα ἵνα καταβῇ. The use of καταβαίνω (descend, come down) is suggestive of topography, with Capernaum a town by the Sea of Galilee and Cana (wherever it was located historically) somewhat higher up, just as Nazareth is above that Sea.

52.

a) ἐν ᾗ κομψότερον ἔσχεν. I have translated literally - eschewing prosaic terms such as 'got better' and 'began' - in order to try and convey the meaning of the Greek, of a royal official using a precise expression: κομψότερον ἔσχεν, which implies a sudden 'betterment', a remarkable recovery, rather than 'began to get better.'

b) Ἐχθὲς ὥραν ἐβδόμην. In respect of ὥρα as 'duration' qv. 1.39. As noted there regarding determining durations, the 'sixth duration' mentioned here could be either early afternoon or early evening.

54. The exact meaning of the beginning here - of the final verse of chapter 4 - is difficult to deduce since the Greek text - τοῦτο πάλιν δεύτερον σημεῖον, in the Textus Receptus - even when amended to τοῦτο [δὲ] πάλιν δεύτερον σημεῖον is rather obscure. However the general sense seems clear, with the Evangelist narrating either that Jesus did two signs - 'miracles' - in Galilee after he left Judea for Galilee by way of Samaria with one of them being the healing of the son of royal official, or that the two signs in Galilee are the previous one at Cana (water into wine) and the healing of the son of royal official. I incline toward the former, hence: "that was the second sign that Jesus brought about when he arrived in Galilee from Judea."

ooo

Chapter Five

2.

the place of the sheep. Since the Greek προβατικός means "of or relating to sheep" and there is no mention of a 'gate' (or of anything specific such as a market) I prefer a more literal translation. It is a reasonable assumption that the sheep were, and had in previous times been, kept there prior to being offered as sacrifices, as for example sheep are still so held in particular places in Mecca during Eid al-Adha, the Muslim feast of sacrifice.

named in the language of the Hebrews. ἐπιλεγομένη Ἑβραϊστὶ.

3.

the infirm. The Greek word ἀσθενέω implies those lacking normal physical strength.

awaiting a change in the water. Reading ἐκδεχομένων τὴν τοῦ ὕδατος κίνησιν with the Textus Receptus, omitted by NA28, but included in ASV, Tyndale, and Wycliffe.

4. Reading ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου κατὰ καιρῶν κατέβαινεν (qv. Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on John, Book II, V, 1-4, Migne Patrologia Graeca 73) and ἐν τῇ κολυμβήθρα, καὶ ἐτάρασσεν τὸ ὕδωρ· ὁ οὖν πρῶτος ἐμβὰς μετὰ τὴν παραχὴν τοῦ ὕδατος, ὑγίης ἐγίνετο, ᾧ δὴποτε κατειχέτο νοσήματι with the Textus Receptus. Although the verse is omitted in NA28, and generally regarded as an interpolation, I include it since it is in ASV, Tyndale, Wycliffe, KJV, and Douay-Rheims.

a) *envoy.* As noted in the commentary on 1:51, interpreting ἄγγελος as 'envoy' (of theos) and not as 'angel', particularly given the much later Christian iconography associated with the term 'angel'.

b) *Theos.* Regarding ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου, qv. Matthew 28.2 ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου καταβὰς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, "an envoy of [the] Lord/Master descended from Empyrean/the heavens." Since here κύριος implies Theos (cf. John 20.28 where it is used in reference to Jesus), an interpretation such as "envoy of Theos" avoids both the phrase "envoy of the Master" - which is unsuitable given the modern connotations of the word 'master' - and the exegetical phrase "angel/envoy of the Lord" with all its associated and much later iconography both literal, by means of Art, and figurative, in terms of archetypes and one's imagination. An alternative expression would be "envoy of the Domine," with Domine (from the Latin Dominus) used in English both as a respectful form of address and as signifying the authority of the person or deity.

c) *became complete*. ὕγιής ἐγένετο. The suggestion is of the person becoming 'whole', complete, *sanus*, and thus ceasing to be 'broken', incomplete, infirm.

8. *bedroll*. κράβατος (Latin, grabatus) has no suitable equivalent in English since in context it refers to the portable bed and bedding of the infirm. The nearest English approximation is bedroll.

9. *And, directly, the man became complete*. καὶ εὐθέως ἐγένετο ὕγιής ὁ ἄνθρωπος. Metaphysically, the Evangelist is implying that 'completeness' - wholeness - for both the healthy and the infirm (whether infirm because of sickness or a physical infirmity) arises because of and through Jesus.

10. *treated*. Taking the literal sense of θεραπεύω here. Hence: cared for, treated, attended to. As a healer or a physician might care for, treat, or attend to, someone.

14. *no more missteps*. μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε. That is, make no more mistakes in judgement or in deeds. Qv. the Introduction regarding translating ἀμαρτία in a theologically neutral way as 'mistake' or 'error' instead of by the now exegetical English word 'sin'. Cf. 1.29, 8.7, et seq.

16. *harass*. διώκω. Cf. the Latin *persequor*, for the implication is of continually 'following' and pursuing him in order to not only try and worry or distress him but also (as becomes evident) to find evidence against him in order to have him killed, qv. 5.18, 7.1, 7.19 et seq.

18. *annulled the Sabbath*. ἔλυνεν τὸ σάββατον. They were more determined to kill Jesus not because he himself had 'broken' the Sabbath but because they believed he had publicly 'annulled' (λύω) the Sabbath by telling someone to do what the Judeans regarded as impermissible, and thus, by now equating himself to Theos, seemed desirous of replacing their Judaeian laws with new laws of his own.

19. *on his own*. ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ. Literally, of/from himself. The verse itself is evocative of a human son learning by observing what his father does.

21. *awakens*. Given the following ζωοποιέω - 'make alive, give life' - I am inclined to take the general sense of ἐγείρω - 'wake' - rather than the specific 'raise up' and which "raising up of the dead" now implies certain post-Hellenic iconographies.

22. *For the father does not choose anyone, having accorded all choosing to his son*. οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ πατήρ κρίνει οὐδένα, ἀλλὰ τὴν κρίσιν πᾶσαν δέδωκεν τῷ υἱῷ. The preceding θέλει and the context suggest κρίνω as 'choose' not 'judge', and which interpretation imparts a somewhat different meaning from the conventional one which involves Jesus giving life to 'whomsoever he wishes' and judging them; and a different meaning given how the term 'judgement' has for over two thousand years been interpreted in relation to the Old and the New Testaments.

Instead of such later interpretations, the Evangelist describes how Jesus simply gives life by design because his father - Theos - has given the task of choosing to his son. Which is why Jesus previously said (4:34)

Ἐμὸν βρῶμά ἐστιν ἵνα ποιήσω τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός με καὶ τελειώσω αὐτοῦ τὸ ἔργον

My food is that I undertake the design of the one having sent me and accomplish His work.

Thus here Jesus is affirming that he is indeed annulling the laws of the old covenant: it is he who now chooses who has life everlasting. Cf. Deuteronomy 32:39, 2 Kings 5:7, et seq.

24. *not entered into the choosing*. εἰς κρίσιν οὐκ ἔρχεται. Literally, "does not go to Choosing" - in conventional terms, does not go into judgement - because having heard, and trusted the father through the son, they already have the gift of life everlasting and thus pass straight from death to that new life.

25. *shall hear ... have listened*. ἀκούσουσιν ... ἀκούσαντες. The literal "shall hear" and "that hear" does not clearly express what is meant.

27. *and also gifted him - as the son of a mortal - with the authority of choosing*. καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ κρίσιν ποιεῖν ὅτι υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ἐστίν. Literally, "and he gifted him with authority to undertake choosing because he is the son of a mortal." Which explains the following μὴ θαυμάζετε τοῦτο, "be not astonished at this". In regard to υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου as 'son of a mortal' instead of Son of Man, qv. the comment on 1:51. Also, cf. 9:35, Σὺ πιστεύεις εἰς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, which makes perfect sense if Jesus is asking "Do you trust the son of a mortal?" but is somewhat problematic if conventionally interpreted as "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

28. *burial places*. While the choice in respect of μνημεῖον seems to be between the literal 'monument', and tomb or grave, a most suitable alternative - cf. ASV (byrgenum) and Wycliffe (in buriels) - is 'burial places'.

29.

a) *those that have acted honourably*. οἱ τὰ ἀγαθὰ ποιήσαντες. In various essays - such as *Cicero On Summum Bonum* [14] - and in my commentaries on tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum, I have explained my reasons for interpreting ἀγαθός not as some posited, abstract, 'good' but classically as, according to context, nobility, noble, honourable. This is apposite here given the emphasis on personal deeds, on what a person had done (ποιήσαντες) or not done. Cf. the

following from the Corpus Aristotelicum:

τῆς δὲ φρονήσεώς ἐστι τὸ βουλευσασθαι, τὸ κρίναι τὰ ἀγαθὰ καὶ τὰ κακὰ καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν τῷ βίῳ αἰρετὰ καὶ φευκτά, τὸ χρῆσθαι πᾶσι καλῶς τοῖς ὑπάρχουσιν ἀγαθοῖς, τὸ ὁμιλῆσαι ὀρθῶς [De Virtutibus et Vitiis Libellus 1250a]

It is part of wisdom to accept advice, to distinguish the honourable, the dishonourable, and all that is, in life, acceptable or to be avoided; to fairly use all resources; to be genuine in company.

b) *anastasis*. ἀνάστασις. A transliteration since the term 'resurrection' has, since it was first used in the 14th century, acquired various religious, doctrinal, and other associations (such as, in relation to Jesus, the resurrection of the physical body) and which associations may or may not be relevant here. In context, anastasis might refer here (contra Irenaeus) to a non-corporeal elevation or re-birth, and thus to the ψυχή - the spirit or soul - of those mortals who have been gifted with life everlasting proceeding to a place such as Empyrean.

c) *dishonourably*. The sense of φαῦλος is not some posited, abstract, impersonal, 'evil' but of personal deeds that are 'base', mean, and thus ignoble, dishonourable, and hence revealing of a rotten personal character, of a bad physis. Qv. πονηρός and φαῦλος at 3:19-20.

d) *to anastasis of the choosing*. εἰς ἀνάστασιν κρίσεως. Literally, 'to anastasis of choosing'. They - or their ψυχή - proceed forth from their place of burial to where Jesus chooses whether or not to gift them with life everlasting.

30. *I am not able to do anything on my own*. Qv. 5:19

33.

a) *you inquired after John*. ὑμεῖς ἀπεστάλκατε πρὸς Ἰωάννην. Literally, "you dispatched unto John," referring to 1:19, the priests and Levites dispatched from Jerusalem.

b) *and he was evidential to the veritas*. καὶ μεμαρτύρηκεν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ. That is, he attested - gave evidence concerning - the veritas. Regarding veritas, qv. the comment on πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας, 1:14.

35.

a) *lantern*. λύχνος. The term 'lamp' is inappropriate given its modern connotations.

b) *firefull and revealing*. καίόμενος καὶ φαίνων. I take this metaphorically - the burning fire of the lantern shines a bright revealing light - rather than the literal "burning and bright".

c) In regard to *phaos*, qv. 1:4-5. Cf. Poemandres, 32, ζῶν καὶ φῶς; Eusebius, Historia Ecclesiastica, I:2, τό τε φῶς τὸ προκόσμιον καὶ τὴν πρὸ αἰώνων νοερὰν καὶ οὐσιώδη σοφίαν τὸν τε ζῶντα.

36. *beyond that of John*. μείζω τοῦ Ἰωάννου. Not the rather strident 'greater than' - with its implication of 'better than' - but the comparative 'beyond that' as in an elder or someone fully-grown who is years beyond the age of someone younger, qv. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 358,

ὥς μήτε μέγαν μήτ' οὖν νεαρῶν τιν' ὑπερτελέσαι μέγα δουλείας γάγγαμον ἄτης παναλώτου

Such that neither the full-grown nor any young were beyond the limits of Misfortune's all-taking enslaving vast trawl. [15]

37. *whose likeness you have never observed*. οὔτε εἶδος αὐτοῦ ἐώρακατε. An interesting question of interpretation here is the meaning of εἶδος. Whether to translate as 'form' - with a possible implied reference to Plato's 'theory of forms' - or as the literal 'shape' or 'appearance'. Given the context - and 6:46, οὐχ ὅτι τὸν πατέρα ἐώρακέν τις εἰ μὴ ὁ ὢν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ, οὗτος ἐώρακεν τὸν πατέρα - I take the literal meaning; hence *likeness*, as in Wycliffe.

39. *you search the writings*. ἐραυνᾶτε τὰς γραφάς. Qv. 2:22 regarding γραφῇ not as the post-Hellenic exegetical 'scripture' but as having the usual Hellenistic meaning of 'that which is written', a writing. The ASV has Smeageað halige gewritu.

41. *I do not receive honours from people*. Δόξαν παρὰ ἀνθρώπων οὐ λαμβάνω. Regarding δόξα in respect of the supra-personal, qv. the comment on 1:14. Here, the human context implies receiving honour - praise, renown, a good reputation, a title or titles - from others and thus being regarded by people as an illustrious person: being 'glorified' by them on the basis of such human given honours.

44. *from Theos alone*. Reading παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ μόνου. NA28 has παρὰ τοῦ μόνου θεοῦ. There are two ways of interpreting the Greek of NA28: (i) that genuine honour is only from Theos, and thus that they do not seek such honour as is "only from Theos", or (ii) that they do not seek the honour that is from "the [one and] only Theos."

While the latter imposes a strictly grammatical interpretation on the text, such a restrictive interpretation does not in my view suit the context at all, which is of worldly honours in contrast to the (genuine) honour which Theos bestows. Jesus has emphasized that he has been sent by the father, that the father is his witness, that he does not receive honours from people, and goes on to say that Moses wrote about him. There seems no need to mention that his father is "the only Theos", given the Judaeans would assuredly know that "the father" meant their "one and only god" and

that Moses spoke and wrote of "the one God". Cf. John 17:3, τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν θεὸν and phrases such as ὁ μόνος θεός and ὁ θεὸς μόνος in the Old Testament. [16]

An interesting alternative Byzantine reading (Codex Petropolitanus Purpureus) is τοῦ μονογενοῦς θεοῦ, cf. 1:18, μονογενῆς θεός.

Footnotes

[1] Measure for Measure. Act One, Scene One, v. 32

[2] Romans 13.10

[3] King James version, following Tyndale.

[4] 1.21 (Ποιμάνδρης)

[5] φαίνω as a revealing is much in evidence in classical Greek literature, often in relation to theos. For example:

ἤτέομεν δὲ θεὸν φῆναι τέρας: αὐτὰρ ὃ γ' ἡμῖν
δεῖξε, καὶ ἠνώγει πέλαγος μέσον εἰς Εὐβοίαν
τέμνειν, ὄφρα τάχιστα ὑπὲκ κακότητα φύγοιμεν.

About this we asked the god to reveal to us a sign
And he exhorted us to cut through the middle of the sea to Euboea
In order to swiftly pass that bad luck by.

The Odyssey, Book 3, 173-5

[6] As noted in the Appendix - *A Note On The Term Jews In The Gospel of John* - in respect of the term Ἰουδαία, it is interesting to consider two writings by Flavius Josephus, and one by Cassius Dio Cocceianus (dating from c.230 CE). The two works by Josephus are conventionally entitled 'Antiquities of the Jews' (c. 93 CE) and 'The Jewish Wars' (c. 75 CE) although I incline toward the view that such titles are incorrect and that the former - entitled in Greek, Ἰουδαϊκῆς ἀρχαιολογίας - should be 'Judaean Antiquities', while the latter - entitled in Greek, Ἱστορία Ἰουδαϊκοῦ πολέμου πρὸς Ῥωμαίου - should be 'History of the Conflict Between Judaeans and Romaeans', and this because of how Josephus, in those works, describes himself and that conflict.

Ἰουδαϊκῆς ἀρχαιολογίας

In this work Josephus wrote:

1.4 τούτων δὴ τῶν προειρημένων αἰτιῶν αἱ τελευταῖαι δύο κάμοι συμβεβήκασιν· τὸν μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον ἡμῖν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις γενόμενον [...]

1.5 διάταξιν τοῦ πολιτεύματος ἐκ τῶν Ἑβραϊκῶν μεθρημνησμένην γραμμάτων [...]

1.6 δηλῶσαι τίνες ὄντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ἰουδαῖοι

a) 1.4. τὸν μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον ἡμῖν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις γενόμενον, "how that conflict between Romaeans and we Judaeans came about."

To be pedantic, Ῥωμαίους - Romaeans - implies those "of Rome". That is, the word suggests those associated with a particular place, as does the term Judaeans. Which association of people with a particular place or region is historically germane.

b) 1.5. διάταξιν τοῦ πολιτεύματος τῶν Ἑβραϊκῶν μεθρημνησμένην γραμμάτων, "the decrees of our civitatum as expounded in the writings of the Hebrews."

Less literally, "the laws of our communities as expounded in the writings of the Hebrews."

c) 1.6 δηλῶσαι τίνες ὄντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ἰουδαῖοι, "to make known how Judaeans came about."

Ἱστορία Ἰουδαϊκοῦ πολέμου πρὸς Ῥωμαίου

In the Προοίμιον of this book Josephus wrote:

a) Ἰώσηπος Ματθίου παῖς ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερεύς

That is, Josephus describes himself as "the son of Matthias, a priest, from Jerusalem." He does not write that he is

"Jewish" and nor does he write that he is from Judaea.

b) σχεδὸν δὲ καὶ ὧν ἄκοῦ παρειλήφαμεν ἢ πόλεων πρὸς πόλεις ἢ ἔθνῶν ἔθνεσι συρραγέντων.

A conventional translation would have πόλις as 'city' and ἔθνος as 'nation' so that the latter part would conventionally be translated along the following lines: "cities would have fought against cities, or nations against nations."

However, the terms 'nation' and 'city' are or can be misleading, given their modern connotations, whereas a historical approximation for ἔθνος would be 'tribe', 'people', or 'community', and for πόλις - understood here as referring to a particular named place with a history of settlement - town, fortified town, burg, borough, municipality. Such choices would produce a translation such as: "municipality would have fought municipality, community with community." The evocation is thus more parochial, more regional, as befits the historical past and the context: here, an insurrection, a conflict between the people of Judaea and the armed forces commanded by Roman citizens (those "of Rome") duly appointed to positions of power.

Regarding The Term Ἰουδαϊκός

While the term is conventionally cited as meaning Jewish - although LSJ provide no sources, with the English word 'Jew' not existing until the 13th/14th century CE - the sense of the term in Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία by Cassius Dio Cocceianus (for example, 67.14.2, 68.1.2) is Judaeian, referring to the people of Judaea and their customs and way of life, Ἰουδαϊκοῦ βίου, τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἥθη:

ὕφ' ἧς καὶ ἄλλοι ἐς τὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἥθη ἐξοκέλλοντες πολλοὶ κατεδικάσθησαν καὶ οἱ μὲν ἀπέθανον οἱ δὲ τῶν γούν οὐσιῶν ἐστερήθησαν (67.14.2)

[7] Thomas Wright. *Anglo-Saxon And Old English Vocabularies*. Second edition, London, 1884. pp.72, 156, 316.

[8]

ὄρᾱς μὲν ἡμᾶς ἡλίκοι προσήμεθα
βωμοῖσι τοῖς σοῖς: οἱ μὲν οὐδέπω μακρὰν
πτέσθαι σθένοντες, οἱ δὲ σὺν γήρᾳ βαρεῖς,
ἱερῆς, ἐγὼ μὲν Ζηνός, οἶδε τ' ἡθέων
λεκτοί: τὸ δ' ἄλλο φύλον ἐξεστεμμένον
20 ἀγοραῖσι θακεῖ πρὸς τε Παλλάδος διπλοῖς
ναοῖς, ἐπ' Ἰσμηνοῦ τε μαντεῖα σποδῶ.
πόλις γάρ, ὥσπερ καὶ τὸς εἰσορᾶς, ἄγαν
ἤδη σαλεύει κἀνακουφίσαι κάρᾳ
βυθῶν ἔτ' οὐχ οἷα τε φοινίου σάλου,
25 φθίνουσα μὲν κάλυξιν ἐγκάρποις χθονός,
φθίνουσα δ' ἀγέλαις βουνόμοις τόκοισί τε
ἀγόνοις γυναικῶν: ἐν δ' ὁ πυρφόρος θεὸς
σκήψας ἐλαύνει, λοιμὸς ἔχθιστος, πόλιν,
ὕφ' οὗ κενοῦται δῶμα Καδμεῖον, μέλας δ'
Ἄιδης στεναγμοῖς καὶ γόοις πλουτίζεται.

You see how many sit here
Before your altars - some not yet robust enough
To fly far; some heavy as I, Priest of Zeus, with age;
And these, chosen from our unmarried youth.
Enwreathed like them, our people sit in the place of markets,
By the twin shrines of Pallas
And by the embers of the Ismenian oracle.
Our community, as you yourself behold, already heaves
Too much - its head bent
To the depths bloodily heaving.
Decay is in the unfruitful seeds in the soil,
Decay is in our herds of cattle - our women
Are barren or abort, and that god of fever
Swoops down to strike our community with an odious plague,
Emptying the abode of Cadmus and giving dark Hades
An abundance of wailing and lamentation.

[9] *The New Testament and Psalms: An Inclusive Version*, Oxford University Press, 1995.

[10] The Discourses of Epictetus were compiled (by Arrian) some decades before the Gospel of John was written (which according to scholarly consensus was around or shortly after 90 CE). Given that both Epictetus and Arrian were native Greek speakers, the use of such a colloquial Greek phrase by the Evangelist perhaps indicates something not only about John himself but also about the audience and the readers who first heard or read his Gospel.

[11] For context, the Greek of the complete verse of Ephesians is: ὁ καταβὰς αὐτός ἐστιν καὶ ὁ ἀναβὰς ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν ἵνα πληρώσῃ τὰ πάντα. Literally, "The one having descended is the same as the one who, having ascended high above all the heavens, completes everything."

[12] For context, the verse in the Latin version of Jerome is: cum ergo resurrexisset a mortuis recordati sunt discipuli

eius quia hoc dicebat et crediderunt scripturae et sermoni quem dixit iesus

The Latin of Codex Palatinus, Vetus Latina: Cum ergo resurrexit a mortuis commonefacti sunt discipuli eius quoniam hoc dicebat et crediderunt scripturae et sermoni quem dixit IHS.

The Latin of Codex Brixianus, Vetus Latina: cum ergo resurrexisset a mortuis recordati sunt discipuli eius quia hoc dixerat et crediderunt scripturae et sermoni quem dixit IHS.

[13] Qv. Tacitus: "non diurna actorum scriptura reperio ullo insigni officio functam." *Annals*, Book III, 3.

[14] In *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum* Marcus Tullius Cicero, in criticizing Epicurus and others, presents his view of Summum Bonum, a term normally translated as 'the supreme good'. According to Cicero, honestum (honourable conduct) is the foundation of Summum Bonum which itself can be discerned by careful consideration (ratio) in conjunction with that knowing (scientia) of what is divine and what is mortal that has been described as wisdom (sapientia),

aequam igitur pronuntiabit sententiam ratio adhibita primum divinarum humanarumque rerum scientia, quae potest appellari rite sapientia, deinde adiunctis virtutibus, quas ratio rerum omnium dominas, tu voluptatum satellites et ministras esse voluisti. (II, 37)

He then writes that honestum does not depend on any personal benefit (omni utilitate) that may result or be expected but instead can be discerned by means of consensus among the whole community in combination with the example afforded by the honourable actions and motives of the finest of individuals:

Honestum igitur id intellegimus, quod tale est, ut detracta omni utilitate sine ullis praemiis fructibusve per se ipsum possit iure laudari. quod quale sit, non tam definitione, qua sum usus, intellegi potest, quamquam aliquantum potest, quam communi omnium iudicio et optimi cuiusque studiis atque factis, qui permulta ob eam unam causam faciunt, quia decet, quia rectum, quia honestum est, etsi nullum consecuturum emolumentum vident. (II, 45f)

In effect, Summum Bonum – what the Greeks termed τὸ ἀγαθὸν – depends on certain personal qualities such as a careful consideration of a matter; on a personal knowing of what is divine and what is mortal; on the example of personal noble deeds and motives, and on a communal consensus.

There is therefore nothing morally abstract or dogmatic about Cicero's understanding of Summum Bonum which so well expresses the Greco-Roman view, as does Seneca:

summum bonum est quod honestum est; et quod magis admireris: unum bonum est, quod honestum est, cetera falsa et adulterina bona sunt. *Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales*, LXXI, 4

Thus, perhaps a more apt translation of the term Summum Bonum would be *the highest nobility*.

[15] In context, the quotation from Aeschylus is:

ὦ Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ καὶ νύξ φιλία
μεγάλων κόσμων κτεάτειρα,
ἥτ' ἐπὶ Τροίας πύργοις ἔβαλες
στεγανὸν δίκτυον, ὥς μήτε μέγαν
μήτ' οὖν νεαρῶν τιν' ὑπερτελέσαι
360μέγα δουλείας
γάγγαμον, ἅτης παναλώτου

You, Zeus our Chief, and Nox, our companion -
Mistress of the mighty cosmos
Who cast over the Trojan towers a covering net
Such that neither the full-grown nor any young were beyond the limits
Of Misfortune's all-taking enslaving vast trawl.

[16] In respect of the article, τοῦ, here and the phrase ὁ μόνος θεός, cf. Philo, *De Profugis*, 71-72,

τοῦ μὲν γὰρ πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ἀνθρώπου, ὃς δὴ νοῦς ἐστὶ καθαρώτατος, εἷς ὁ μόνος θεὸς δημιουργός, τοῦ δὲ λεγομένου καὶ κεκραμένου μετ' αἰσθήσεως τὸ πλῆθος. οὗ χάριν ὁ μὲν κατ' ἐξοχὴν ἄνθρωπος σὺν τῷ ἄρθρῳ μεμνήνυται λέγεται γάρ· ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον, τὸν αἰδῆ καὶ ἄκρατον ἐκεῖνον λογισμόν, ὃ δὲ ἄνευ τῆς τοῦδε προσθήκης· τὸ γὰρ ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον ἐμφαίνει τὸν ἐξ ἀλόγου καὶ λογικῆς συνυφανθέντα φύσεως.

ΕΠΙΛΟΓΟΣ

A Question Of Interpretation

Vernacular translations are, by the nature of translation, interpretations, with the history of vernacular translations of the Bible - and especially of the Gospels - revealing how such interpretations could be used to support schisms; for example, in the case of Wycliffe's English, the Lollards, and in the case of Luther's German, the Protestant reformation. In addition, some translations enriched the vernacular language itself, as for example, the translations of Tyndale and the King James Bible did in respect of English.

My own interpretation of the Gospel of John is not intended to be schismatic but rather to be unfamiliar, with such unfamiliarity hopefully betaking some readers to the unfamiliar milieu of an ancient Judaea governed as it was by Rome and abode as it was of those Judaeans who believed in a Messias/Messiah, with it being written in the first chapter of the Gospel of John that in, reference to Jesus, Andrew - the brother of Simon Peter - announced: εὕρηκαμεν τὸν Μεσσίαν (we have found the Messias).

My interpretation is intended to be unfamiliar for several reasons. Firstly, because the Gospels were written in Hellenistic (Koine, κοινή) Greek, with the author of the Gospel of John by including colloquial Greek sayings and offering explanations for some particular terms [a] indicating that his intended or actual audience - those reading or hearing his Gospel in late first century and early second century CE - were most probably native speakers of Hellenistic Greek or at least quite familiar with that language.

Intended to be unfamiliar secondly because the standard English versions of the Gospel of John - and English versions of the other Gospels - have become so familiar to so many people in the West over so many centuries that certain words and terms have acquired particular meanings, with those meanings and certain passages - via iconography, exegesis, and preaching - assuming archetypal status. Hence, and to provide just some examples, our assumptions about God (theos), about 'angels' (τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ θεοῦ), about Heaven (οὐρανός), about sin (ἁμαρτία) and about 'the Holy Spirit' (τὸ πνεῦμα).

An interpretation intended to be unfamiliar, thirdly, because the Gospels were written at a time when Christianity was, in the lands of the Roman Empire, one small religious sect among many others and had yet to develop a standardized doctrinal theology or a centralized ecclesiastical authority, with the Gospel of John not providing any theological explanation of what is meant by theos, by τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ θεοῦ, by οὐρανός, by ἁμαρτία, by τὸ πνεῦμα, and by many other terms. Thus, there is a natural tendency for us to project medieval, Renaissance, and modern meanings onto such terms with the inevitable consequence of us assuming that we understand the message of the Evangelist and thus comprehend at least something of Christianity itself.

In contrast, what are we to make of such translated passages as the following:

I beheld the Spiritus as a dove descend from Empyrean and remain there with him. (1.32)

It was He who sent me to baptize in water, saying to me: 'Upon whosoever you behold the Spiritus descend and remain there with, is the same one who baptizes in Halig Spiritus.' (1.33)

Having spoken to you of earthly things and you lack trust, how can you trust if I speak of things caelestien? (3.12)

And this is the condemnation: That the Phaos arrived in the world but mortals loved the darkness more than the Phaos, for their deeds were harmful. (3.19)

Are we betaken to an unfamiliar milieu where, having read or listened to the evangel attributed to John from familiar translations, we believe we may know something about such things as Heaven (οὐρανός, Empyrean) and the Spirit (τὸ πνεῦμα, the Spiritus) but now may have some doubts about their meaning and doubts about how they may relate to the Light (φῶς, Phaos) and thus to a man named Jesus? Are such doubts relevant or perhaps even necessary given that the emphasis in the Gospel seems to be on individuals trusting in the person of Jesus after they had accepted that the narrated signs (σημεῖα) - such as the Passion, the death and resurrection of Jesus, and his Ascension - indicate that he may well be the only begotten Son of Theos so that, by trusting in him, we have the opportunity of life everlasting?

Such were some of the questions I pondered when a Christian monk, and my fallible interpretation of the Gospel of John, founded on some forty years of reflection and study, is my fallible attempt to find some answers.

David Myatt
2017

[a] Qv. my comments on 1.42 and 1.51.

Appendix

A Note On The Term Jews In The Gospel of John

In the past century or so there has been much discussion about the term 'the Jews' in standard English translations of the Gospel of John and thus whether or not the Gospel portrays Jews in a negative way given such words about them as the following, from the translation known as the Douay-Rheims Bible:

You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and he stood not in the truth; because truth is not in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof. (8.44)

In the Gospel of John the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι first occurs in verse 19 of chapter one:

ὅτε ἀπέστειλαν πρὸς αὐτὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερεῖς καὶ Λευίτας ἵνα ἐρωτήσωσιν αὐτόν

In the Douay-Rheims Bible this is translated as: "when the Jews sent from Jerusalem priests and Levites to him." In the King James Bible: "when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him."

In my translation of John I translated as: "when the Judaeans dispatched priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him."

For, after much consideration, I chose – perhaps controversially – to translate Ἰουδαία by Judaeans, given (i) that the English terms Jews and Jewish (deriving from the 13th/14th century words gyy/gyw and lewe) have acquired connotations (modern and medieval) which are not relevant to the period under consideration; and (ii) that the Greek term derives from a place name, Judaea (as does the Latin iudaeus); and (iii) that the Anglo-Saxon version (ASV) retains the sense of the Greek: here (iudeas) as elsewhere, as for example at 2.6, ἄφ' ἰουδαίας γεγενῆσθαι, "according to Judaeian cleansing."

Such a translation not only dispenses with the "portraying Jews in a negative way" discussion but also reveals a consistent narrative, with the Evangelist not writing that "the Jews" sought to kill Jesus, but only that some Judaeans desired to do so. In addition, as the story of the Samaritan (Samaritan) woman in chapter 4 makes clear, it places into perspective the difference between Judaea, Samaria, and Galilee, and why the Evangelist narrates that it was "necessary" for Jesus to pass through Samaria on the way to Galilee, Ἔδει δὲ αὐτὸν διέρχεσθαι διὰ τῆς Σαμαρείας.

Given what follows (chapter 4 vv.9-10) this suggests a certain historical antipathy between the people of Judaea and the people of Samaria even though the Samaritans – as is apparent from the Gospel – shared many, but not all, of the religious traditions of the Judaeans, as did most of the people of Galilee, including Jesus. Since the Evangelist specifically writes that it was Judaeans who sought to kill Jesus (5.18; 7.1; 7.19 et seq) it seems as if the antipathy by Judaeans to Jesus of Nazareth in particular and to Samaritans in general – with the Evangelist stating that Judaeans would not share or make use of (συγχράομαι) Samaritan things – arose from Judaeans in general believing that their religious practices based on their particular interpretation of the religion of Moses and the Prophets were correct and that they themselves as a result were 'righteous' – better than Samaritans – with Jesus the Galilean considered by many Judaeans, and certainly by the priestly authorities, as having committed (qv. 10.33) 'blasphemy' (βλασφημία) and thus should be killed.

Such differing religious traditions, such internecine feuds, such religious fanaticism and intolerance on behalf of some Judaeans – an intolerance exemplified also when (qv. 10.22) one of the guards of Caiaphas the High Priest (Καϊάφαν τὸν ἀρχιερέα) physically assaults Jesus for not showing the High Priest "due deference" – exemplifies why in this Gospel Ἰουδαία should be translated not by the conventional term 'Jews' but rather by Judaeans.

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In respect of the term Ἰουδαία, it is interesting to consider two writings by Flavius Josephus, and one by Cassius Dio Cocceianus (dating from c.230 CE). The two works by Josephus are conventionally entitled 'Antiquities of the Jews' (c. 93 CE) and 'The Jewish Wars' (c. 75 CE) although I incline toward the view that such titles are incorrect and that the former – entitled in Greek, Ἰουδαϊκῆς ἀρχαιολογίας – should be 'Judaeian Antiquities', while the latter – entitled in Greek, Ἱστορία Ἰουδαϊκοῦ πολέμου πρὸς Ῥωμαίων – should be 'History of the Conflict Between Judaeans and Romaeans', and this because of how Josephus, in those works, describes himself and that conflict.

Ἰουδαϊκῆς ἀρχαιολογίας

In this work Josephus wrote:

1.4 τούτων δὴ τῶν προειρημένων αἰτιῶν αἱ τελευταῖαι δύο κάμοι συμβεβήκασιν· τὸν μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον ἡμῖν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις γενόμενον [...]

1.5 διάταξιν τοῦ πολιτεύματος ἐκ τῶν Ἑβραϊκῶν μεθρημηνευμένην γραμμάτων [...]

1.6 δηλῶσαι τίνες ὄντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ἰουδαῖοι

a) 1.4. τὸν μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον ἡμῖν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις γενόμενον, "how that conflict between Romaeans and we Judaeans came about."

To be pedantic, Ῥωμαίους – Romaeans – implies those "of Rome". That is, the word suggests those associated with a particular place, as does the term Judaeans. Which association of people with a particular place or region is historically germane.

b) 1.5. διάταξιν τοῦ πολιτεύματος τῶν Ἑβραϊκῶν μεθερμηνευμένην γραμμάτων, "the decrees of our civitatum as expounded in the writings of the Hebrews." Less literally, "the laws of our communities as expounded in the writings of the Hebrews."

Thus he does not write about the "Jewish scriptures" or about "the scriptures of the Jews", even though the consensus is that γραφή here – as throughout the New Testament – has the meaning 'scripture' rather than its normal sense of 'that which is written', with the English word 'scripture' (usually written with a capital S) having the specific meaning 'the writings of the Old and/or of the New Testament'. However, this specific meaning only dates back to c.1300 and was used by Wycliffe in his 1389 translation, from whence, via Tyndale, it was used in the King James version. Prior to 1300, the ASV has *gewrite* – 'what was written', writing, inscription – with the Latin of Jerome having *scripturae*, as does Codex Palatinus of the earlier Vetus Latina. [2] Classically understood, the Latin has the same meaning as the Greek γραφή: writing, something written, an inscription. [3]

c) 1.6 δηλῶσαι τίνες ὄντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ἰουδαῖοι, "to make known how Judaeans came about."

Ἱστορία Ἰουδαϊκοῦ πολέμου πρὸς Ῥωμαίου

In the Προοίμιον of this book Josephus wrote:

a) Ἰώσηπος Ματθίου παῖς ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερεύς

That is, Josephus describes himself as "the son of Matthias, a priest, from Jerusalem." He does not write that he is "Jewish" and nor does he write that he is from Judaea.

b) σχεδὸν δὲ καὶ ὧν ἀκοῇ παρειλήφαμεν ἢ πόλεων πρὸς πόλεις ἢ ἔθνῶν ἔθνεσι συρραγέντων.

A conventional translation would have πόλις as 'city' and ἔθνος as 'nation' so that the latter part would conventionally be translated along the following lines: "cities would have fought against cities, or nations against nations."

However, the terms 'nation' and 'city' are or can be misleading, given their modern connotations, whereas a historical approximation for ἔθνος would be 'tribe', 'people', or 'community', and for πόλις – understood here as referring to a particular named place with a history of settlement – town, fortified town, burg, borough, municipality. Such choices would produce a translation such as: "municipality would have fought municipality, community with community." The evocation is thus more parochial, more regional, as befits the historical past and the context: here, an insurrection, a conflict between the people of Judaea and the armed forces commanded by Roman citizens (those "of Rome") duly appointed to positions of power.

Regarding The Term Ἰουδαϊκός

While the term is conventionally cited as meaning Jewish – although LSJ provides no sources, with the English words 'Jew' and 'Jewish' not existing until the 13th/14th century CE – the sense of the term in Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία by Cassius Dio Cocceianus (for example, 67.14.2, 68.1.2) is Judaeans, referring to the people of Judaea and their customs and way of life, Ἰουδαϊκοῦ βίου, τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἥθη:

ὕφ' ἧς καὶ ἄλλοι ἐς τὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἥθη ἐξοκέλλοντες πολλοὶ κατεδικάσθησαν καὶ οἱ μὲν ἀπέθανον οἱ δὲ τῶν γούν οὐσιῶν ἐστερήθησαν (67.14.2)

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Corpus Hermeticum

Eight Tractates

I, III, IV, VI, VIII, XI, XII, XIII

Translation and Commentary

David Myatt

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Preface

This work collects together my translations of and commentaries on the eight tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum which were published separately between 2013 and 2017. From the fourteen Greek tractates that have been traditionally referred to as the Corpus Hermeticum, I chose the eight (the ogdoad) whose texts I considered were the most metaphysical and mystical and thus which can provide an understanding of what came to be termed hermeticism.

In the case of the Corpus Hermeticum, the task of translating ancient Greek into English is complicated by the terminology used in the text. Words such as λόγος, νοῦς, πνεῦμα, δημιουργόν, φῶς, ψυχή (καὶ τὰ λοιπά), all require careful consideration if the text is to be understood in relation to the cultural milieu existing at the time of its composition; a milieu where a Hellenistic paganism, of various types and hues, thrived alongside the still relatively new religion of Christianity.

All too often, such Greek words are translated by an English word which has, over centuries, acquired a meaning which is not or which may not be relevant to that milieu, resulting in a 'retrospective reinterpretation' of the text. One thinks here of (i) θεός translated as god or as God, and of λόγος translated as 'word' (or Word) which thus suffuse, or can suffuse, the text with the meanings that nearly two thousand years of Christian exegesis have ascribed to those terms; of (ii) νοῦς translated as either "intellect" or as "mind", neither of which is satisfactory especially given what both of those English words have come to denote, philosophically and otherwise, in the centuries since the Greek tractates were written. In an effort to avoid such retrospective reinterpretation here, and the preconceptions thus imposed upon the text, I have sometimes used transliterations, sometimes used a relatively obscure English word, and sometimes used a new term.

However, given that the goal of the translator is to provide for the general reader an intelligible interpretation of the text, to utilize transliterations for every problematic word would fail to accomplish that goal. Which is why the translator has to use their judgement and why every translation is 'a fallible interpretation of meaning'.

The methodology of using some transliterations, some relatively obscure

English words, and some new term or expression (such as noetic sapientia) results in a certain technical - an 'esoteric' - vocabulary which requires or may require contextual, usually metaphysical, interpretation. Often, the interpretation is provided by reference to the matters discussed in the particular tractate; sometimes by reference to other tractates; and sometimes by considering Ancient Greek, and Greco-Roman, philosophy and mysticism. Occasionally, however, the interpretation is to leave some transliteration - such as physis, φύσις - as a basic term of the particular hermetic weltanschauung described in a particular tractate and, as such, as a term which has no satisfactory English equivalent, metaphysical or otherwise, and therefore to assimilate it into the English language. All of which make these translations rather different from other English versions, past and present, with these translations hopefully enabling the reader to approach and to appreciate the hermetic texts sans preconceptions, modern and otherwise, and thus provide an intimation of how such texts might have been understood by those who read them, or heard them read, in the milieu of their composition.

One of the intentions of these translations of mine of various tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum is provide an alternative approach to such ancient texts and hopefully enable the reader without a knowledge of Greek (and of the minutiae of over a century of scholarly analysis of the Greek text) to appreciate the texts anew and understand why they have - in the original Greek - been regarded as important documents in respect of particular, ancient, weltanschauungen that have, over the centuries, proved most influential and which can still be of interest to those interested in certain metaphysical speculations and certain esoteric matters.

Why an alternative approach to such ancient texts? Because current, and past interpretations - based on using terms such as God, Mind, and Soul - make them appear to be proto-Christian or imbued with an early Christian weltanschauung or express certain philosophical and moralistic abstractions. Also, because I incline toward the view that such texts, in the matter of cosmogony and metaphysics, are more influenced by the classical Greek and the Hellenistic ethos than by any other, and thus in many ways are representative of that ethos as it was being developed, or as it was known, at the time texts such as those in the Corpus Hermeticum were written. An ethos, a cosmogony and a metaphysics, exemplified - to give just a few examples - by terms such as ἀρρενόθηλυς (Poemander), by the shapeshifting of Poemander (τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἡλλάγη τῇ ἰδέᾳ), by mention of a septenary system (Poemander, Tractate XI), by the 'voyages of the psyche' (Tractate XI: 20) and by terms such as ἱερός Λόγος (Tractate III) and which term dates back to the time of Hesiod [1].

In respect, for example, of the ἱερός Λόγος tractate, my view is that it is the story of genesis according to an ancient pagan, and esoteric, weltanschauung; a text in all probability older than the other texts in the Corpus Hermeticum and certainly older, as an aural tradition, than the story given in the Biblical

Genesis; and a text which the author of the Poemandres tractate might well have been familiar with, as a reading of both texts indicates.

As an example of my alternative approach (and perhaps the most controversial example) is my interpretation of ἀγαθός as honour/nobility /honesty, τὸ ἀγαθόν as the honourable/the noble/nobility, and thus as embodied in noble, trustworthy, honest, individuals, and which interpretation I am inclined to view as an expression of both the classical Greek and the Greco-Roman (Hellenic) ethos, including the ethos of Greco-Roman mysticism, just as the expression τί ἐστὶν ἀλήθεια, attributed to a certain Roman, is an expression of that ethos; whereas ἀγαθός as some disputable 'abstract', impersonal or philosophical 'good' does not in my view exemplify that ethos and the milieu in which it flourished. Furthermore, given how such a disputable 'abstract', moral, good has been generally understood for the last millennia (partly due to the influence of Christianity, partly due to post-Renaissance philosophy, and partly due to Western jurisprudence) then it seems desirable to avoid using the term 'good' in translations of such ancient texts - as also elsewhere, in other metaphysical tractates of the Hellenic era - since 'good' now has certain post-Hellenic connotations which can distance us from what such ancient tractates may well have expressed. [2]

In respect of the texts, I incline toward the view that they generally represent the personal weltanschauung of their authors germane to their time. That is, that rather than being representative of some axiomatical pre-existing philosophy or of some religious school of thought, they reproduce the insight and the understanding of individuals regarding particular metaphysical matters; an insight and an understanding no doubt somewhat redolent of, and influenced by, and sometimes perhaps paraphrasing, some such existing philosophies and/or some such schools of thought; and an insight which often differs from tractate to tractate.

Regarding my translation, some may well consider the words of Diogenes Laertius - *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 3.1 (64) - in relation to Plato, quite apposite:

χρῆται δὲ ὁ Πλάτων ἐνίοτε αὐτῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ κακοῦ: ἔστι δ' ὅτε καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ μικροῦ. πολλάκις δὲ καὶ διαφέρουσιν ὀνόμασιν ἐπὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ σημαυνομένου χρῆται.

For I have sometimes translated the same Greek word in two different ways in order to try and elucidate the meaning of the text [exempli gratia: ἀπερίοριστον, as undefinable and unmeasurable] just as I have idiosyncratically translated certain Greek words [exempli gratia: ἅγιος, as numinous], differences and idiosyncrasies I have endeavoured to explain in my commentary.

The Greek text used is that of A.D. Nock & A-J. Festugiere, *Corpus*

Hermeticum, Third Edition, 1972. Occasionally I have followed the reading of the MSS or the emendations of others rather than Nock's text with such variations noted in my commentary. Text enclosed in angled brackets < > indicates a conjectural editorial addition, and <...> indicates a lacuna.

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[1] a) ἔστι λόγος περὶ αὐτοῦ ἱρὸς λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 48, s3. (b) ἔστι ἱρὸς περὶ αὐτοῦ λόγος λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 62, s2. (c) ἔστι δὲ περὶ αὐτῶν ἱρὸς λόγος λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 81, s2.

[2] I have endeavoured to explain such interpretations in various essays, including (i) *Some Examples Regarding Translation and Questions of Interpretation*, (ii) *Concerning ἀγαθός and νοῦς in the Corpus Hermeticum*; and (iii) *Cicero On Summum Bonum*.

Ποιμάνδρης

Pœmandres

Tractate I

Introduction

The Greek text of the tractate often referred to as the Pœmandres/Pymander part of the Corpus Hermeticum was first published by Turnebus in Paris in 1554 and of the origin of the knowledge expounded in the text, the author declares at v.2 that

εἰμὶ ὁ Ποιμάνδρης ὁ τῆς αὐθεντίας νοῦς οἶδα ὃ βούλει καὶ σύνειμί σοι
πανταχοῦ

Which implies - qv. my translation, and notes and commentary on the text - that what Pœmandres is about to reveal is an authentic perceivration, and this supernatural being [or archetype] knows what is desired/wanted because, like the guardian daemons of classical and Hellenic culture, Pœmandres is close by.

What is revealed is a summary of that weltanschauung that has been termed hermetic philosophy; a summary widely regarded as an important hermetic text and as dating from the second or the third century CE; and a summary which contains many interesting notions and allusions, such as logos, physis/Physis, the septenary system, the gospel of John, the feminine character of Physis/Nature, the doxology Agios o Theos, and θεός as being both male and female in one person - that is, either *ἀνδρόγυνος* or (more controversially) bisexual.

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Translation

[1] Once, while concentrating on and pondering what is real, my intuitions freely flowed, and, my alertness dulled as from an excess of wearisome bodily toil or too much eating, it seemed as if a huge being - too large to measure -

chanced by calling out my name and asking what it was I wanted to see and hear about and learn and have knowledge of.

[2] Who are you, I asked.

I am Pœmandres, the perceivration of authority, knowing your desires and eachwhere with you.

[3] I answered that I seek to learn what is real, to apprehend the physis of beings, and to have knowledge of theos. That is what I want to hear.

So he said to me, remember all those things you wanted to learn, for I shall instruct you.

[4] So saying, his form altered whereupon I at once sensed everything; an indefinity of inner sight, with everything suffused in phaos - bright and clear - so that from this seeing, a desire. But all too soon there came down upon it a heavy darkness - stygian, strange - and slithering <as a serpent> until that darkness changed in physis: flowing, of an untellable disorder, with smoke as from a fire and an indescribable sound followed by some aphonous noise as if phaos was calling out.

[5] And then, from the phaos, a numinous logos came upon that physis with pure Fire going forth to the height of that physis; easily and effective and efficient. Since Air is agile, it followed the pneuma, up and above Earth and Water and as far as Fire, to be as if it were hanging from that, there.

Earth and Water remained, coagulating together such that <Earth> could not be seen apart from Water until they were stirred by the sound of the pneumal logos that came down upon them.

[6] Pœmandres asked, had I apprehended the sense of that inner seeing? And I said I shall have knowledge of it.

I am, he said, that phaos; perceivration, your theos, and prior to the flowing physis brought forth from darkness. [And] the phaomal logos, from perceivration, is the child of theos.

So I said for him to continue.

Then know that within you - who hears and sees - is logos kyrios, although perceivration is theos the father. They are not separated, one from the other, because their union is Life.

Thank you, I said.

Then discover phaos and become familiar with it.

[7] So saying, he stared at me for so long a duration that I shivered because of the way he looked. But, as he tilted his head back, I, observing, discovered the phaos of unmeasurable forces and an undefinable cosmic order coming-into-being. While the fire, embraced by a strong force, was subdued and kept in stasis.

Such I observed and discovered because of those words of Pœmandres. But, since I was vexed, he spoke to me again. From your seeing, an awareness of the quidditas of semblance; of the primal before the origin without an end.

This was what Pœmandres said to me, then.

[8] So I asked from what place, then, the parsements of physis?

To which he answered, from the deliberations of theos, who, having comprehended the logos and having seen the beauty of the cosmic order, re-presented it, and so became a cosmic order from their own parsements and by the birth of Psyche.

[9] Theos, the perceivation, male-and-female, being Life and phaos, whose logos brought forth another perceivation, an artisan, who - theos of Fire and pneuma - fashioned seven viziers to surround the perceptible cosmic order in spheres and whose administration is described as fate.

[10] Directly, from the downward parsements, the logos of theos bounded to the fine artisements of Physis and joined with the perceivation of that artisan, for it was of the same essence. Thus the descending parsements of Physis were left, devoid of logos, to be only substance.

[11] The perceivation of that artisan, in combination with logos, surrounded the spheres, spinning them around, a twizzling of artisements of some indefinite origin and some undeterminable end, finishing where they began. Turning around and around as perceivation decreed, the spheres produced, from those descending parsements, beings devoid of logos, for they were not given logos, while Air produced what flew, and Water what swam. Divided, one from the other, were Earth and Water, as perceivation had decreed, with Earth delivering from within herself beings four-footed and crawling, and animals savage and benign.

[12] Perceivation, as Life and phaos, father of all, brought forth in his own likeness a most beautiful mortal who, being his child, he loved. And theos, who loved his own image, bequeathed to him all his works of Art.

[13] Thus, having discovered what that artisan with that father's assistance had wrought, he too determined on such artisements, which the father agreed to. Ingressing to the artisan's realm, with full authority, he appreciated his

brother's artisements, and they - loving him - each shared with him their own function.

Having fully learned their essence, and having partaken of their physis, he was determined to burst out past the limit of those spheres to discover the one who imposed their strength upon the Fire.

[14] With full authority over the ordered cosmos of humans and of beings devoid of logos, he burst through the strength of the spheres to thus reveal to those of downward physis the beautiful image of theos.

When she beheld such unceasing beauty - he who possessed all the vigour of the viziers and was the image of theos - she lovingly smiled, for it was as if in that Water she had seen the semblance of that mortal's beautiful image and, on Earth, his shadow. And as he himself beheld in that Water her image, so similar to his own, he desired her and wanted to be with her.

Then, his want and his vigour realized, and he within that image devoid of logos, Physis grasped he whom she loved to entwine herself around him so that, as lovers, they were intimately joined together.

[15] Which is why, distinct among all other beings on Earth, mortals are jumelle; deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal. Yet, although deathless and possessing full authority, the human is still subject to wyrd. Hence, although over the harmonious structure, when within become the slave. Male-and-female since of a male-and-female father, and wakeful since of a wakeful one. <...>

[16] <...> my perceivation, for I also love the logos. Then Pœmandres said, this is a mysterium esoteric even to this day. For Physis, having intimately joined with the human, produced a most wondrous wonder possessed of the physis of the harmonious seven I mentioned before, of Fire and pneuma. Physis did not tarry, giving birth to seven male-and-female humans with the physis of those viziers, and ætherean.

Pœmandres, I said, a great eagerness has now arrived in me so that I yearn to hear more. Do not go away.

Then, Pœmandres replied, be silent for this primary explanation is not yet complete.

I shall, I said, therefore, be silent.

[17] To continue, those seven came into being in this way. Earth was muliebral, Water was lustful, and Fire maturing. From Æther, the pneuma, and with Physis bringing forth human-shaped bodies. Of Life and phaos, the human came to be of psyche and perceivation; from Life - psyche; from phaos - perceivation; and with everything in the observable cosmic order cyclic until its completion.

[18] Now listen to the rest of the explanation you asked to hear. When the cycle was fulfilled, the connexions between all things were, by the deliberations of theos, unfastened. Living beings - all male-and-female then - were, including humans, rent asunder thus bringing into being portions that were masculous with the others muliebral. Directly, then, theos spoke a numinous logos: propagate by propagation and spawn by spawning, all you creations and artisements, and let the perceiver have the knowledge of being deathless and of Eros as responsible for death.

[19] Having so spoken, foreknowing - through wyrd and that harmonious structure - produced the coagulations and founded the generations with all beings spawning according to their kind. And they of self-knowledge attained a particular benefit while they who, misled by Eros, love the body, roamed around in the dark, to thus, perceptively, be afflicted by death.

[20] But why, I asked, do the unknowing err so much that they are robbed of immortality.

You seem, he said, not to have understood what you heard, for did I not tell you to discover things?

I said I do recall and am discovering, for which I am obliged.

Then tell me, if you have discovered, why death is expected for those in death.

Because originally the body began with that stygian darkness, from whence the flowing physis which formed the body within the perceptible cosmic order which nourishes death.

[21] Your apprehension is correct. Yet why, according to the logos of theos, does the one of self-discovery progress within themselves?

To which I replied, phaos and Life formed the father of all beings, from whence that human came into being.

You express yourself well. For phaos and Life are the theos and the father from whence the human came into being. Therefore if you learn to be of Life and phaos - and that you perchance are of them - then you progress to return to Life. Thus spoke Pœmandres.

Can you - who are my perceiviation - therefore tell me how I may progress to Life? For does not theos say that the human of perceiviation should have self-knowledge?

[22] And do not all humans posses perceiviation?

Again you express yourself well. I, perceivration, attend to those of respectful deeds, the honourable, the refined, the compassionate, those aware of the numinous; to whom my being is a help so that they soon acquire knowledge of the whole and are affectionately gracious toward the father, fondly celebrating in song his position.

Before they hand over their body to its death they loathe the influencing impressions, for they know their vigour. That is, I - perceivration - do not allow what the vigour of the body embraces to be achieved. For, as guardian, I close the entrance to the bad and the dishonourably vigorous, preventing their procrastinations.

[23] I keep myself distant from the unreasonable, the rotten, the malicious, the jealous, the greedy, the bloodthirsty, the hubriatic, instead, giving them up to the avenging daemon, who assigns to them the sharpness of fire, who visibly assails them, and who equips them for more lawlessness so that they happen upon even more vengeance. For they cannot control their excessive yearnings, are always in the darkness - which tests them - and thus increase that fire even more.

[24] You, perceivration, have instructed me well about all those things I sought. But could you tell me how the Anados will occur?

To which Pœmandres replied, first, the dissolution of the physical body allows that body to be transformed with the semblance it had disappearing and its now non-functioning ethos handed over to the daimon, with the body's perceptions returning to their origin, then becoming separated with their purpose, transplanted, and with desire and eagerness journeying toward the physis devoid of logos.

[25] Thus does the mortal hasten through the harmonious structure, offering up, in the first realm, that vigour which grows and which fades, and - in the second one - those dishonourable machinations, no longer functioning. In the third, that eagerness which deceives, no longer functioning; in the fourth, the arrogance of command, no longer insatiable; in the fifth, profane insolence and reckless haste; in the sixth, the bad inclinations occasioned by riches, no longer functioning; and in the seventh realm, the lies that lie in wait.

[26] Thus, stripped of the activities of that structure, they enter into the ogdoadic physis, and, with those there, celebrate the father in song for they, together, rejoice at this arrival who, now akin to them, hears those forces beyond the ogdoadic physis celebrating theos in melodious song. Then, in order, they move toward the father to hand themselves over to those forces, and, becoming those forces, they become united with theos. For to so become of theos is the noble goal of those who seek to acquire knowledge.

Why, therefore, hesitate? Should it not be that, having received all these things,

you should become a guide to those who are suitable so that, because of you, descendants of mortals may - through theos - escape?

[27] Having so spoken to me, Pœmandres joined with those forces, while I, having given thanks to and expressed my gratitude toward the father of all beings, went forth strengthened and informed regarding the physis of everything and with an insight of great importance.

So it was that I began to tell mortals about how beautiful knowledge and an awareness of the numinous were. You earth-bound mortals, you who have embraced intoxicating liquor, sleepfulness, and are unknowing of theos: soberize, stop your drunkenness, for you are beguiled by irrational sleepfulness.

[28] Hearing this, they, with the same purpose, gathered round. And I said, you who are earth-bound, why do you embrace death when you have the means to partake of immortality? Change your ways, you who have accompanied deception and who have kinship with the unknowing ones. Leave the dark phaos, partake of immortality, move away from your destruction.

[29] Then some of them, having ridiculed, went away, embracing as they did the way of death; although some others, desirous of being informed, threw themselves down at my feet. I asked them to stand, and thus became a guide to those of my kind, informing them of the logoi - of the way and the means of rescue - and engendered in them the logoi of sapientia, with the celestial elixir to nurture them.

And with the arrival of evening with the rays of Helios beginning to completely wane, I bid they express their gratitude to theos, after which - with that expression of gratitude completed - they each retired to their own bed.

[30] Commemorating within myself the noble service of Pœmandres - replete with what I had desired - I was most pleased, for the sleep of the body engendered temperance of psyche, the closing of the eyes a genuine insight, with my silence pregnant with the noble, and the expression of the logos breeding nobility.

Such is what transpired for me, received from perceivization - that is, Pœmandres; for it was by being theos-inspired that I came upon this revealing. Therefore, from my psyche and with all my strength, I offer benedictions to theos, the father.

[31]

Agios o Theos, father of all beings.

Agios o Theos, whose purpose is accomplished by his own arts.

Agios o Theos, whose disposition is to be recognized and who is recognized by his own.

Agios es, you who by logos form all being.
Agios es, you who engender all physis as eikon.
Agios es, you whom the Physis did not morph.
Agios es, you who are mightier than all artifice.
Agios es, you who surpass all excellence.
Agios es, you who transcend all praise.

You - ineffable, inexpressible, to whom silence gives voice - receive these respectful wordful offerings from a psyche and a heart that reach out to you.

[32] I ask of you to grant that I am not foiled in acquiring knowledge germane to our essence; to invigorate me, so that - by that favour - I may bring illumination to the unknowing who, kindred of my kind, are your children.

Such I testify and believe; to advance to Life and phaos. For you, father, a benediction. Your mortal's purpose is to share in your numinosity, for which you have provided every means.

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Notes and Commentary on the Text

The numbers refer to the sections of the Greek text, 1-32.

1.

what is real. Regarding τῶν ὄντων cf. Plato, Republic, Book 7 (532c) - πρὸς δὲ τὰ ἐν ὕδασι φαντάσματα θεῖα καὶ σκιάς τῶν ὄντων ἀλλ' οὐκ εἰδώλων σκιάς δι' ἑτέρου τοιούτου φωτὸς ὡς πρὸς ἥλιον κρίνειν ἀποσκιαζομένους - where the φάντασμα (the appearance) of some-thing natural (god-given), such as the σκιά (image) that is reflected by water, is stated to be real, and contrasted with what is not considered to be real (what is an unsubstantial image) such as that cast by a fire rather than by the Sun.

intuition. For διανοίας. As with νοῦς (see 2. below) a term which deserves some scrutiny. Conventionally, it is translated as 'thought', or 'thinking', as if in reference to some sort of idealized faculty we human beings are said to possess and which faculty deals with ideations and their collocations and is considered as necessary to, or the foundation of, understanding and reason.

More accurately, in a classical context, διανοίας is (i) 'intelligence' (or intuition) in the sense of understanding some-thing or someone (i.e. in being able to perceive some-thing correctly or to correctly understand - to know - a person), or (ii) 'intention'.

I have opted for 'intuition' as suggesting, and as manifesting, insight, often from

contemplation, as the etymology, from the Latin *intueri*, suggests. For the English word 'thought' now conveys modern meanings which, in my view, are not relevant here. And an 'intuition' that is related to, but somewhat different from, the perceivment that is νοῦς.

Alertness. αἴσθησις. Alertness here in the sense that the normal, alert, awareness of the physical senses is dulled by interior intuition, insight, or revelation. An appropriate alternative translation would thus be *awareness*, as in awareness of one's surroundings.

Huge. ὑπερμεγέθη - qv Plutarch *Romulus*, 16.5 ἐπὶ στρατοπέδου δρῶν ἔτεμεν ὑπερμεγέθη - chopped down a huge tree there in that encampment.

Huge, and too large to measure by ordinary means. I do not see any need to exaggerate what is implied, as some other translations do.

Have knowledge of. In the tractate, γινῶναι is related to νοῦς and διανοίας as an expression of what is perceived, or one is aware of. Here, of what one discerns in the sense of distinguishing some-thing from something else and thus 'knowing' of and about that thing.

2.

Pœmandres. Ποιμάνδρης. The older interpretation of 'shepherd of men' is unacceptable because speculative; the speculation being that it derives from ποιμήν, which has a variety of meanings other than shepherd, for example, chief, and owner.

A more recent etymology involves some ancient Egyptian term associated with the god Re. However, this etymology, first proposed by Francis Griffith in the 1920's [qv. W. Scott and A. S. Ferguson: *Hermetica: the ancient Greek and Latin writings which contain religious or philosophical teachings ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924-1936] was based on a linguistic and stylistic analysis of Coptic sources dating well over a millennia after the god Re was worshipped in ancient Egypt.

Also, the book *From Poimandres to Jacob Bohme: Hermetism, Gnosis and the Christian Tradition*, edited by Roelof van den Broek and published in 2000 (Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica) which mentions this etymology by Griffiths and which is often cited as confirming this etymology, does not provide further context in the form of extant Egyptian hieroglyphic inscriptions or references to papyrus fragments from long before the Coptic period, but instead makes various conjectures, as for example in respect of an alternative Coptic form of the genitive n-re, and relies on other linguistic/stylistic analysis of much later texts.

Until a link can be established to such primary Egyptian sources, or to reliable

sources much earlier than such Coptic texts, I remain unconvinced in respect of the ancient Egyptian origins of the name Ποιμάνδρης, and therefore am inclined to leave it as a personal name, transliterated Poemandres.

perceivance. νοῦς. The conventional interpretation here is 'mind', as if in contrast to 'the body' and/or as if some fixed philosophical and abstract principle is meant or implied.

This conventional interpretation is in my view incorrect, being another example of not only retrospective reinterpretation but of using a word which has acquired, over the past thousand years or more, certain meanings which detract from an understanding of the original text. Retrospective reinterpretation because the assumption is that what is being described is an axiomatic, reasoned, philosophy centred on ideations such as Thought, Mind, and Logos, rather than what it is: an attempt to describe, in fallible words, a personal intuition about our existence, our human nature, and which intuition is said to emanate from a supernatural being named Poemandres.

In addition, one should ask what does a translation such as 'I am Poimandres, mind of sovereignty' [*vide* Copenhagen] actually mean? That there is a disembodied 'mind' which calls itself Poemandres? That this disembodied 'mind' is also some gargantuan supernatural shapeshifting being possessed of the faculty of human speech? That some-thing called 'sovereignty' has a mind?

I incline toward the view that the sense of the word νοῦς here, as often in classical literature, is perceivance; that is, a particular type of astute awareness, as of one's surroundings, of one's self, and as in understanding ('reading') a situation often in an instinctive way. Thus, what is not meant is some-thing termed 'mind' (or some faculty thereof), distinguished as this abstract 'thing' termed 'mind' has often been from another entity termed 'the body'.

Perceivance thus describes the ability to sense, to perceive, when something may be amiss; and hence also of the Greek word implying resolve, purpose, because one had decided on a particular course of action, or because one's awareness of a situation impels or directs one to a particular course of action. Hence why, in the Oedipus Tyrannus, Sophocles has Creon voice his understanding of the incipient hubris of Oedipus, of his pride without a purpose, of his apparent inability to understand, to correctly perceive, the situation:

εἴ τοι νομίζεις κτῆμα τὴν αὐθαδίαν
εἶναί τι τοῦ νοῦ χωρίς, οὐκ ὀρθῶς φρονεῖς.

If you believe that what is valuable is pride, by itself,
Without a purpose, then your judgement is not right.

Translating νοῦς as perceivance/perceivation thus places it into the correct context, given αὐθεντίας - authority. For "I am Pœmandres, the perceivation of authority" implies "What [knowledge] I reveal (or am about to reveal) is authentic," so that an alternative translation, in keeping with the hermeticism of the text, would be "I am Pœmandres, the authentic perceivation." [The English word authentic means 'of authority, authoritative' and is derived, via Latin, from the Greek αὐθεντία]

eachwhere. An unusual but expressive (c.15th century) English word, suited to such an esoteric text. The meaning here is that, like a guardian δαίμων of classical and Hellenic culture, Pœmandres is always close by: eachwhere with you.

3.

Apprehend. νοέω. To apprehend also in the sense of 'discover'. Again, I have tried to make a subtle distinction here, as there is in the text between the related νοῦς, γνῶναι, and διανοίας.

physis. A transliteration, to suggest something more than what 'nature' or 'character' - of a thing or person - denotes. That is, to know what is real and apprehend the physis of those real things - νοῆσαι τὴν τοῦ τῶν φύσιν; to discern the physis, the true nature, of beings. That is, to have an understanding of ontology; for physis is a revealing, a manifestation, of not only the true nature of beings but also of the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being.

γνῶναι τὸν θεόν. To have - to acquire - knowledge of θεός. Does θεός here mean God, a god, a deity, or the god? God, the supreme creator Being, the only real god, the father, as in Christianity? A deity, as in Hellenic and classical paganism? The god, as in an un-named deity - a god - who is above all other deities? Or possibly all of these? And if all, in equal measure, or otherwise?

The discourse of Pœmandres, as recounted in the tractate, suggests two things. First, that all are meant or suggested - for example, Τὸ φῶς ἐκεῖνο, ἔφη, ἐγὼ νοῦς ὁ σοῦ θεός could be said of Pœmandres as a god, as a deity, as the god, and also possibly of God, although why God, the Father - as described in the Old and New Testaments - would call Himself Pœmandres, appear in such a vision, and declare what He declares about θεός being both male and female in one person, is interesting. Second, that the knowledge that is revealed is of a source, of a being, that encompasses, and explains, all three, and that it is this knowing of such a source, beyond those three conventional ones, that is the key to 'what is real' and to apprehending 'the physis of beings'.

Hence, it is better to transliterate θεός - or leave it as θεός - than to use god; and a mistake to use God, as some older translations do.

remember all those things you want to learn. Ἔχε νῶ: 'hold the awareness' [be aware] of what you said you wanted to learn - that is, 'remember' them; which is better, and more expressive, than the somewhat colloquial and modern 'keep in mind'.

4.

So saying, his form [ἰδέα] altered. For τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἠλλάγη τῇ ἰδέᾳ. Or - more expressively - 'he shapeshifted'. A common theme in Greek mythology and literature, as in the ancient Hymn to Demeter:

ὥς εἰποῦσα θεὰ μέγεθος καὶ εἶδος ἄμειψε γῆρας ἀπωσαμένη

Having so spoken, the goddess changed in height and cast off that aged appearance

[An] indefinity of inner sight [inner seeing]. ὁρᾷ θεᾶν ἀόριστον. The sense of ὁράω here is metaphorical, of an interior knowing or apprehension not occasioned by the faculty of sight; the inner knowing, for example, that the blind Tiresias has in respect of Oedipus in the *Oedipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles - his apprehension of what Oedipus has done and what he will do. Such an 'inner seeing' includes the Tiresian kind a prophetic knowing as well as the 'interior visions' of a mystic.

In respect of ἀόριστος, I have opted for indefinity, an unusual [read obscure] English word derived c.1600 from indefinite.

phaos. A transliteration of φῶς - using the the Homeric φάος. Since φάος metaphorically (qv. Iliad, Odyssey, Hesiod, etcetera) implies the being, the life, 'the spark', of mortals, and, generally, either (i) the illumination, the light, that arises because of the Sun and distinguishes the day from the night, or (ii) any brightness that provides illumination and thus enables things to be seen, I am inclined to avoid the vague English word 'light' which other translations use, and which English word now implies many things which the Greek does not or may not; as for instance in the matter of over a thousand years of New Testament exegesis, especially in reference to the gospel of John. A transliteration requires the reader to pause and consider what phaos may, or may not, mean, suggest, or imply; and hopefully thus conveys something about the original text.

Also, φῶς δὲ πάντα γεγεννημένα suggests '[with] everything *suffused in phaos*' and not 'everything *became* light' as if to imply that suddenly everything was transformed into 'light'.

clear and bright. εὐδιόν τε καὶ ἱλαρόν - if one accepts the emendation εὐδιόν [clear] then ἱλαρόν might suggest the metaphorical sense of 'bright' (rather

than the descriptive 'cheery') which fits well with the contrasting and following φοβερόν τε καὶ στυγνόν.

Downward. κατωφερές - cf. Appian, *The Civil Wars*, Book 4, chapter 13 - κατωφερές δ' ἐστὶ τὸ πεδίον.

stygian. For στυγνόν, for stygian is a word which in English imputes the sense of the original Greek, as both its common usage, and its literary usage (by Milton, Wordsworth, Ralph Waldo Emerson, et al) testify. Some-thing dark, gloomy, disliked, abhorred. One might, for example, write that "that river looks as stygian", and as unforgiving, as the water of Styx - ἀμείλικτον Στυγὸς ὕδωρ.

serpent. ὄφει is one of the emendations of Nock, for the meaning of the text here is difficult to discern. Given what follows - re the smoke and fire - it is tempting to agree with Reitzenstein that what may be meant is a not an ordinary serpent but a dragon, δράκοντι, qv. the Iliad (II, 308) and the seven-headed dragon of Revelation 12, 3-17.

flowing (as in fluidic). The sense of ὑγρός here, since what follows - ἀφάτως τεταραγμένην καὶ καπνὸν ἀποδιδοῦσαν - does not suggest either 'watery' or 'moist'. Cf. Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 314 - ταῦτ' ἄρ' ἐποιοῦν ὑγρᾶν Νεφελᾶν στρεπταιγλᾶν δάιον ὁρμάν - where clouds are described as flowing and in their flowing-moving obscure the brightness (of the day).

aphonous ... phaos calling out. I follow the MSS which have φωτὸς, which Nock emended to πυρός. While the emendation, given the foregoing mention of fire, makes some sense, it does render what follows, with the mention of φωτὸς, rather disjointed. However, if - as I suggested above - φῶς is not translated as 'light', but, as with physis and λόγος [qv. 5. below], is transliterated, then φωτὸς here is fine, for it is as if "phaos was calling out" in an aphonous - an un-human, animal-like, and thus wordless - way from beneath the covering of darkness that has descended down, and descended with an indescribable noise. And aphonous here because covered - smothered, obscured, muffled - by the indescribably noisy darkness. Which leads directly to the mention of φῶς and λόγος in the next part of the text; that is, to the ascension of φῶς and λόγος.

If one reads πυρός, then the interpretation would be that it is the fire which is calling out in an un-human, animal-like, and thus wordless way.

5.

Logos. λόγος. A transliteration, which as with my other transliterations, requires the reader to pause and reflect upon what the term may, or may not, mean, suggest, or imply. The common translation as 'Word' does not express or even suggest all the meanings (possible or suggested) of the Greek, especially as Word - as in Word of God - now imputes so much (in so many different often

doctrinal ways) after two thousand years of Christianity and thus tends to lead to a retrospective re-interpretation of the text.

Numinous. ἅγιος. Numinous is better - more accurate - than 'holy' or 'sacred', since these latter English words have been much overused in connexion with Christianity and are redolent with meanings supplied from over a thousand years of exegesis; meanings which may or may not be relevant here.

Correctly understood, numinous is the unity beyond our perception of its two apparent aspects; aspects expressed by the Greek usage of ἅγιος which could be understood in a good (light) way as 'sacred', revered, of astonishing beauty; and in a bad (dark) way as redolent of the gods/wyrd/the fates/morai in these sense of the retributive or (more often) their balancing power/powers and thus giving rise to mortal 'awe' since such a restoration of the natural balance often involved or required the death (and sometimes the 'sacrifice') of mortals. It is the numinous - in its apparent duality, and as a manifestation of a restoration of the natural, divine, balance - which is evident in much of Greek tragedy, from the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus (and the *Orestia* in general) to the *Antigone* and the *Oedipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles.

The two apparent aspects of the numinous are wonderfully expressed by Rilke:

Wer, wenn ich schrie, hörte mich denn aus der Engel
Ordnungen? und gesetzt selbst, es nähme
einer mich plötzlich ans Herz: ich verginge von seinem
stärkeren Dasein. Denn das Schöne ist nichts
als des Schrecklichen Anfang, den wir noch grade ertragen,
und wir bewundern es so, weil es gelassen verschmäht,
uns zu zerstören. Ein jeder Engel ist schrecklich.

Who, were I to sigh aloud, of those angelic beings might hear me?
And even if one of them deigned to take me to his heart I would dissolve
Into his very existence.
For beauty is nothing if not the genesis of that numen
Which we can only just survive
And which we so admire because it can so calmly disdain to betake us.
Every angel is numinous

wenn ich schrie. 'Were I to sigh aloud' is far more poetically expressive, and more in tune with the metaphysical tone of the poem and the stress on *schrie*, than the simple, bland, 'if I cried out'. A sighing aloud - not a shout or a scream - of the sometimes involuntary kind sometimes experienced by those engaged in contemplative prayer or in deep, personal, metaphysical musings.

der Engel Ordnungen. The poetic emphasis is on Engel, and the usual translation here of 'orders' - or something equally abstract and harsh (such as hierarchies) - does not in my view express the poetic beauty

(and the almost supernatural sense of strangeness) of the original; hence my suggestion 'angelic beings' - of such a species of beings, so different from we mortals, who by virtue of their numinosity have the ability to both awe us and overpower us.

came upon that physis. Came upon that which had the physis of darkness and then changed to become fluidic.

Fire. A capitalization, since 'fire' here is suggestive of something possibly elemental.

Air. A capitalization, as with Fire; ditto with the following Water and Earth.

A possible alternative here might be to use the Homeric meaning of ἀήρ - mist - since 'air' is just too general, does not describe what is happening, and thus is confusing.

pnuema. For πνεύματι/πνεῦμα. A transliteration, given that the English alternatives - such as 'spirit' or 'breath' - not only do not always describe what the Greek implies but also suggest things not always or not necessarily in keeping with the Hellenic nature of the text.

This particular transliteration has a long history in English, dating back to 1559 CE. In 1918, DeWitt Burton published a monograph - listing, with quotations, the various senses of πνεῦμα - entitled *Spirit, Soul, and Flesh: The Usage of Πνεῦμα, Ψυχή, and Σάρξ in Greek Writings and Translated Works from the Earliest Period to 225 AD* (University of Chicago Press, 1918)

I incline toward the view that πνεῦμα here - like λόγος - does not necessarily imply something theological (in the Christian sense or otherwise) but rather suggests an alternative, more personal, weltanschauung that, being a weltanschauung, is undoctinal and subtle, and which weltanschauung is redolent of Hellenic culture. Subtle and undoctinal in the way that early alchemical texts are subtle and undoctinal and try to express, or hint at (however obscurely to us, now), a weltanschauung, and one which is more paganus than Christian.

coagulating. For συμμεμιγμένα, which suggests something more elemental - more actively joined - than just 'mixed or mingled' together.

pneumal logos. πνευματικὸν λόγον. The term *pneumal logos* is interesting and intended to be suggestive and thus open to and requiring interpretation. In contrast, the usual translation is verbo spirituali (spiritual word), as if what is meant or implied is some-thing theological and clearly distinct from the corporeal, as Thomas Aquinas wrote in *Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate*: Ex quo patet quod nomen verbi magis proprie dicitur de verbo spirituali quam de

corporali. Sed omne illud quod magis proprie invenitur in spiritualibus quam in corporalibus, propriissime Deo competit. Ergo verbum propriissime in Deo dicitur. (*De veritate*, q. 4a. 1s. c2).

6.

apprehended the sense of that inner seeing. Given what follows, the English word 'sense' is perhaps appropriate here, rather than the inflexible word 'meaning'.

phaomal logos. φωτεινὸς λόγος. As with *pneumal logos*, this is suggestive, and open to interpretation.

child of theos. υἱὸς θεοῦ. The scriptural sense - 'son of god', for example Mark 15.39, Ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν - is usually assumed; a sense which follows the general usage of υἱὸς (son) as in Homer et al. But the later (c.2nd/3rd century CE) usage 'child' is possible here, a usage known from some papyri (qv. *Papiri Greci e Latini*, edited by Girolamo Vitelli). This also has the advantage of being gender neutral, for which see the note under ἀναγνωρίσας ἑαυτὸν in section 19.

logos kyrios. λόγος κυρίου (cf. *pneumal logos* and *phaomal logos*). Invariably translated as 'word of the lord', echoing the formula found in LXX (qv. for example Jeremiah 1.4 ἐγένετο λόγος κυρίου πρὸς με) although, as attested by many papyri, kyrios was also used in the Hellenic world as an epithet both of a deity and of a powerful potentate [hence 'logos kyrios' rather than 'kyrios logos'] implying respect and an acknowledgement of their authority and power.

7.

duration. For reasons I outlined in the *The Art of Translation, and A Question About Time* section of Appendix I, I prefer to translate χρόνος as duration (or something akin) and not as 'time'. Briefly explained, the English word 'time' now denotes what the term χρόνος did not.

tilted his head back. Perhaps suggestive of looking up toward the heavens, qv. the c. 2nd century CE writer Achilles Tatius (writing around the time the *Corpus Hermeticum* was written) who, in *Leucippe and Clitophon*, Book V, 3.3, wrote - ἀνανεύσας εἰς οὐρανὸν ὧ Ζεῦ, τί τοῦτο ἔφην φαίνεις ἡμῖν τέρας

unmeasurable. ἀπερίοριστον - beyond being countable, impossible to be counted; from ἀριθμητός - countable.

cosmic order. κόσμος. The word 'cosmos' by itself is probably insufficient here, for the Greek term κόσμος carries with it the suggestion that the cosmos is an ordered structure, an order evident in the observed regularity of heavenly bodies such as the moon, the constellations, and the planets.

undefinable. ἀπεριόριστον: A slightly different sense here to previously, and an interesting contrast with εὐπεριόριστον - well-defined - as used by Strabo when describing the process of measuring and defining, in geographical terms, a region of the Earth:

τὸ γὰρ σημειῶδες καὶ τὸ εὐπεριόριστον ἐκεῖθεν λαβεῖν ἔστιν, οὗ
χρεῖαν ἔχει ὁ γεωγράφος: εὐπεριόριστον δέ, ὅταν ἢ ποταμοῖς ἢ ὄρεσιν
ἢ θαλάττῃ δυνατὸν ᾖ (Geography, 2.1.30)

coming-into-being. γεγεννημένον. The meaning here is somewhat obscure. Is what is described a discovery of how the already existing and known cosmic order *came* into being, or the apprehension of a - or some sort of - cosmic order coming-into-being? Or does γεγεννημένον refer to phaos?

8.

quidditas of semblance. ἀρχέτυπον εἶδος. The transliteration 'archetype' here is, unfortunately, unsuitable, given what the term archetype now suggests and implies (vide Jungian psychology, for example) beyond what the Greek of the text means. Appropriate words or terms such as 'primal-pattern' or 'protoform' are awkward, clumsy. Hence quidditas (11th/12th century Latin), from whence came 'quiddity', a term originally from medieval scholasticism which was then used to mean the natural (primal) nature or form of some-thing, and thus hints at the original sense of ἀρχέτυπον. As used here, quidditas means exactly what ἀρχέτυπον does in the text, sans Jungian psychology; sans modern 'popular psychology'; sans expositions of hermetic/gnostic philosophy (or what is assumed to be a hermetic/gnostic philosophy) and sans expositions of Plato's philosophy.

The whole passage - τὸ ἀρχέτυπον εἶδος, τὸ προάρχον τῆς ἀρχῆς τῆς ἀπεράντου - is concerned with various shades of ἀρχή, and is rather obscure. ἀρχή as the origin - 'the beginning' - of beings and thus of their εἶδος (the ἀρχέτυπον), of their semblance, their type; and ἀρχή - the primal before (προάρχον) that beginning, of beings - as that origin (that beginning) which has no end, no known limits, ἀπεράντου.

parsements. For στοιχεῖον, and thus avoiding the word 'elements' whose meanings, being now many and varied, somewhat detract from the meaning of the text. By a parsement - an unusual variant of partiment (from the Latin partimentum) - is meant the fundamental (the basic, elemental, primal) components or principles of 'things' as understood or as posited in Hellenic times; and whether or not these are undescribed or described in terms of a particular philosophy or weltanschauung (for example, as Air, Fire, and so on).

deliberations of theos. βουλῆς θεοῦ. 'Deliberations' is the sense here; as in theos - whomsoever or whatever theos is - having pondered upon, or considered, a

particular matter or many matters. cf. Herodotus [Histories, 9.10] - ὁ μὲν σφί ταῦτα συνεβούλευε: οἱ δὲ φρενὶ λαβόντες τὸν λόγον αὐτίκα - where a similar following expression (λαβόντες τὸν λόγον) occurs.

Translations such as 'will/decreed of god' are, in my view, far too presumptive.

ἥτις λαβοῦσα τὸν λόγον. This is suggestive of theos having fully comprehended - completely understood - logos [qv. the passage from Herodotus, where the result of the deliberations was understood, approved of: 'taken to heart'], rather than of God 'taking in the Word' or 'receiving the Word'. A 'taking in' from whence to where? A 'receiving' from where?

re-presented. In the sense of a divine mimesis - *μίμησις* - which is the Greek word used here, and which mimesis is a important theme in ancient pagan culture, from Art to religion. It is tempting therefore to consider the suggestion that this mimesis by theos is akin to a masterful, a sublime, work of Art.

Psyche. For ψυχή, and leaving untranslated so as not to impose a particular meaning on the text. Whether what is meant is *anima mundi* - or some-thing else, such as the 'soul' of a human being - is therefore open to debate, although I have used a capital P to intimate that it is, in the text, an important, and primal, principle, and might imply here the original sense of 'spark' (or breath) of life; of that 'thing' [or being] which [or who] animates beings making them 'alive'.

9.

male-and-female. ἀρρενόθηλυσ. The theos - or deity/divinity/God - is both male and female, which can be interpreted as implying a bisexual nature, or androgyny, or hermaphroditism, or a being with the unique ability to both give birth and inseminate, or a being beyond all such mortal (causal) categories and assumptions.

whose logos brought forth another perceiviation. ἀπεκύησε λόγῳ ἕτερον Νοῦν δημιουργόν. An interesting phrase, possibly open to interpretation, for it might suggest 'whose utterance [who by speaking] brought forth...'

Consider, for example, Psalms 33.6:

τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ κυρίου οἱ οὐρανοὶ ἐστερεώθησαν καὶ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ
στόματος αὐτοῦ πᾶσα ἡ δύναμις αὐτῶν

בְּדִבְרֵי יְהוָה שָׁמַיִם נִעֲשְׂוּ וּבְרִיּוֹתָיו כָּל־צָבָאִם

with the Greek of LXX, literally translated, meaning "By the logos of the master [κύριος] the heavens were established and, by the pneuma from his mouth, all

their influence" [δύναμις], with the Hebrew stating it is יהוה [Yhvh - Jehovah] who has established שמים [shamayim, the heavens] and His רוח [ruach, pneuma] their power.

Hence, Pœmandres might well be saying that is was by speaking, by the act of uttering or declaiming a logos, that this theos - whomsoever or whatever theos is - brought forth a[nother] perceiv[er]ation; that is, another way or means of apprehending - of knowing, understanding, and appreciating - the cosmic order.

artisan. δημιουργόν. It is tempting to transliterate - as demiourgos - so as not to impose a meaning on the text. Does the word here imply - as possibly with Fire, pneuma, etcetera - an assumed elemental force of principle? Or a demiurge who is a (or the) theos of Fire and pneuma? Or does it imply some creator, the Theos of Fire and Pnuema? Or is some sort of artisan meant? And is this an artisan who, possibly by memesis, can create/manufacture a sublime work of Art that at the very least enables us to perceive the cosmic order - the world - in a new way and who, being a theos, can also possibly create, perhaps as a work of Art, a new cosmic order?

However, I incline toward the view, given what follows - ἐδημιούργησε διοικητάς τινάς ἐπτά [see below, *fashioned seven viziers*] - that what is meant here is artisan, rather than demiurge.

fashioned seven viziers. ἐδημιούργησε διοικητάς τινάς ἐπτά.

The word ἐδημιούργησε occurs in Diogenes Laertius [*Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 3.1 (71) - ὅτι καὶ τὸ ὑπόδειγμα ἐν ᾧ ἄφ' οὗ αὐτὸν ἐδημιούργησε] in the section concerned with Plato, where the meaning is what someone (such as a worker or artisan) has wrought, fashioned, or produced.

Viziers captures the meaning of διοικητάς (at the time the text was written) in a way that terms such as controllers, procurators, governors, do not, given the modern senses such terms now have and especially given the context, ἡ διοίκησις αὐτῶν εἰμαρμένη καλεῖται: that their administration - how these viziers discharge their duties; how they operate given their powers - "is described as fate." That is, is understood, by we mortals, as fate or destiny.

Vizier is a term used in Persia (in its various older forms) and ancient Egypt (a transcription of a hieroglyph), and also later on in the Middle East and North Africa following the rise of Islam, to denote a person who governed or who ruled over - in the name of a higher authority - a particular region or territory or who had a particular sphere of influence; a role similar to the Viceroy of the British Empire.

The seven viziers are the seven classical planetary bodies, named Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Sun, Jupiter, and Saturn, and well-described in ancient

texts, from ancient Persia onwards. Copenhaver [*Hermetica, The Greek Corpus Hermeticum and the Latin Asclepius*, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p.105] refers to some of the scholarly literature regarding these 'seven'.

spheres. The context - the cosmic order, and especially the seven planetary viziers who surround or encompass - suggest the meaning of spheres (or orbs) rather than 'circles'. Cf. Sophocles, *Antigone*, 415-6 where κύκλος could suggest sphere, or orb, or circle, but where circle seems apposite:

χρόνον τάδ' ἦν τοσοῦτον, ἔστ' ἐν αἰθέρι μέσω κατέστη λαμπρὸς ἡλίου
κύκλος καὶ καῦμ' ἔθαλπε

And long this continued until Helios with his radiant circle had established himself in middle-sky, burning us

10.

downward parsements ... logos of theos. Given that the MSS have στοιχείων τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος the meaning here is conjectural.

'Downward parsements' implies that the fundamental (elemental, primal) components by their nature had a tendency to descend, rather as rain descends down by nature and not because it is 'heavy' [cf. Xenophon, *On Hunting*, 5.3: ἀφανίζει δὲ καὶ ἡ πολλὴ δρόσος καταφέρουσα αὐτά] Hence 'descending parsements' would also be an appropriate translation here.

Regarding θεοῦ λόγος, I have again opted for a transliteration since the common translation here of 'word of God' imposes a particular, Christian, interpretation on the text, (i) given that 'word of god' is most probably what Cyril of Alexandria meant by the phrase, since τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος interestingly occurs in *Cyrilli Epistula Tertia ad Nestorium*:

μονογενῆς τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος ὁ ἐξ αὐτῆς γεννηθεὶς τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ
πατρὸς ὁ ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ θεὸς ἀληθινός τὸ φῶς τὸ ἐκ τοῦ φωτός ὁ
δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο τά τε ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ τὰ ἐν τῇ γῇ

only-offspring of the logos of theos, born from the essence [οὐσία] of the father, genuine god from genuine god, the phaos from the phaos, by whom all things in heaven and on Earth came into being

and (ii) given that this paraphrases the Nicene creed of 325 CE, with the notable exception of μονογενῆς τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος instead of τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ, the latter conventionally translated as 'only begotten Son of God'.

Thus, were the translation of 'word of god' to be accepted, with the implied meaning from the *Epistula Tertia ad Nestorium*, then Pœmandres is, apparently,

here stating that 'the Word of God' - Jesus of Nazareth, true god from true god, Light from Light, and the only begotten son of God by whom all things in heaven and on Earth came into being - somehow bounded up to be reunited with the work of the artisan-creator (presumably, in this context, God) who is of the same essence [ὁμοούσιος].

While this is a possible interpretation of the text given that Poemandres uses the same word, in reference to logos, as Cyril of Alexandria - οὐσία (which correctly understood means the very being - the essential nature/physis, or essence - of someone or some-thing) - it does seem somewhat restrictive, considering (i) the many possible meanings, and shades of meaning, of both λόγος and θεός (before and after the advent of Christianity and especially in the context of pagan, Hellenic, weltanschauungen) and (ii) how theos is described by Poemandres (for example, as being both male and female).

fine artisements of Physis. Fine - καθάρος; clean and free of defects. Artisement - the product of the skilled work of the artisan and the artist; their artisanship (cf. the 16th century English verb artize) and which artisements include beings of various kinds (including living and/or 'archetypal' ones).

It thus becomes clear, especially given what follows, why transliterating φύσις is better than translating it always as 'nature', as if φύσις here implied what we now, after hundreds years of scientific observation and theories such as that of Darwin, understand as 'the natural world', as a 'nature' that we are or can be or should be masters of and can and do and should control, and which we can (or believe we can) understand.

Physis is capitalized here, as in section 14, to suggest the objectification that the text here implies; and objectified as possibly a being - whomsoever or whatever such a being is - or possibly as some apprehension/emanation of theos (whomsoever or whatever theos is), or some fundamental principle, or some form such as what we now understand as an archetype. This Physis, therefore, might or might not be Nature (as Nature was understood in Hellenic times) although, given what follows about Earth delivering (from her womb) living beings [ἡ γῆ ἐξήνεγκεν ἀπ' αὐτῆς ἃ εἶχε ζῶα...] it might be that it is not Nature but something else, for example what may have been understood as the genesis of what we now denote by Nature.

It is interesting that here it is "the descending parsements of physis" (not Physis) who were "left, devoid of logos" while in section 14 it is Physis that is, by implication, described as 'devoid of logos' - ὥκησε τὴν ἄλογον μορφήν. This is often understood in the pejorative sense, as if this Physis, and the living beings devoid of logos - ζῶα ἥνεγκεν ἄλογα - in section 11, are somehow [to quote one translation] 'unreasoning' beings (or forms) - lacking in reason - and thus somehow [to quote another translation] 'irrational' compared to (and by extension somewhat inferior to) the 'son of theos', which mistaken and unnecessary value-judgements arise from interpreting and translating λόγος as

'Word' or as meaning/implying 'reason'. However, logos is just logos, and devoid of (without) logos - ἄλογος - could be, depending on how logos is interpreted, akin to ἀθάνατος said in respect, for example, of theos [Θεὸν δ' εἶναι ζῶον ἀθάνατον] or implying 'cannot be reduced to something else' and thus heterogeneous [αἱ δὲ ταύτη ἀσύμμετροι ἄλογοι καλείσθωσαν], or lacking the faculty of human speech (as in animals, who are not all 'brutish') or (more esoterically) suggestive of *sans denotatum*, of not denoting things or beings by assigning names or terms to them and thus not distinguishing them or marking them as separate from the whole, the unity, of which one type of wholeness is Physis understood as the goddess of Nature, as the creative force that is the genesis of, and which maintains the balance of, the life which inhabits the Earth.

Substance. ὕλη. Since the Greek term does not exactly mean 'matter' in the modern sense (qv. the science of Physics) it is better to find an alternative. Hence 'substance' - the *materia* of 'things' and living beings - contrasted with οὐσία, essence.

11.

the perceivization of that artisan. As previously, and like physis, both νοῦς and λόγος are here objectified.

spinning them around. δυνῶν ροίζω.

12.

brought forth...a mortal. ἀπεκύησεν ἄνθρωπον. The word ἀπεκύησεν in relation to πατήρ perhaps refers back to where theos, the perceivization, is described as being both male and female [ἀρρενόθηλος] although whether the meaning here is the literal 'gave birth' or the descriptive 'brought forth' is interesting, especially a different word, ἐξήνεγκεν [which the English word delivered - in the sense of giving birth, of 'a woman having disburdened herself of a foetus' - usefully describes] is used in reference to the (female) Earth. This different usage, and the Epistle of James, written not long before the Pœmandres tractate where 'brought forth' is apposite [v.1.15 ἡ δὲ ἀμαρτία ἀποτελεσθεῖσα ἀποκύει θάνατον] incline me toward 'brought forth' here.

In respect of ἄνθρωπος (often emended to ἄνθρωπος) the sense here, as often, is the gender neutral 'human being' - a mortal - and not 'a man'.

image. μορφή. Image in both senses of the English term - as outward physical appearance, and as the impression (or concept) that others may have of, or see in, a person.

Image plays an important part in what follows; the image that the son of theos

has of himself and sees reflected back to him and which image he loves. The image Physis has of him and sees a reflection of, and the image which he has of her and which makes him desire her.

bequeathed to him all his works of Art. παρέδωκε τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πάντα δημιουργήματα. This is a very interesting phrase; theos as artisan, as artist, whose works - whose creations, whose artisements, whose divine re-presentations (μίμησις) - apparently include both the cosmic order, the artisan mentioned previously, and we mortals. Less suggestive of the meaning is 'bequeathed to him all his (various) artisements'.

13.

that father. Reading πατρί, with the MSS, and not the emendation παρί.

Ingressing to the artisan's realm. γενόμενος ἐν τῇ δημιουργικῇ σφαίρᾳ. The realm of the artisan: where the artisan works, and produces artisements and divine works of art, and where someone - here, the mortal, son of theos - can learn and master that skill and produce his own works. This realm is that of the seven spheres, the seven viziers.

function. τάξεως. Cf. Plato, *Laws*, 809d - ἡμερῶν τάξεως εἰς μηνῶν περιόδους καὶ μηνῶν εἰς ἕκαστον τὸν ἐνιαυτὸν ἵνα ὥραι καὶ θυσίαι καὶ ἑορταὶ τὰ προσήκοντ' ἀπολαμβάνουσαι ἑαυταῖς ἕκασται τῷ κατὰ φύσιν ἄγεσθαι - where the sense is of the periodic, the orderly, functioning of things; of days into weeks, weeks into months, and of months into a year; and which functionality enables us to know when to celebrate and undertake the seasonal festivals and feasts.

limit. περιφέρεια. Not here the literal Euclidean meaning of circumference [for example, Euclid, *Elements*, Book 13, Proposition 10 - ἐπεὶ ἴση ἐστὶν ἡ ΑΒΓΗ περιφέρεια τῇ ΑΕΔΗ περιφερείᾳ] but rather of the limits, the boundary, set or marked by the seven spheres; a limit that the mortal, son of theos, is "determined to burst out past".

imposed their strength upon the Fire. Cf. section 7 - περισχεσθαι τὸ πῦρ δυνάμει μεγίστη (the fire, embraced by a strong force).

14.

burst through the strength of the spheres. I follow the reading of the MSS, which have ἀναρρήξας τὸ κράτος τῶν κύκλων, amended by Scott and Nock to ἀναρρήξας τὸ κύτος [burst through the container].

harmonious structure. Here, ἁρμονία implies the 'structure' of the κόσμος, the

cosmic order [qv. the note on κόσμος in section 7] and which structure is harmonious [qv. ἀρμονίας ἐναρμόνιος in section 15].

vigour. ἐνέργεια. The words 'force' and 'energy' bring too many irrelevant modern connotations to the text, and 'vigour' well expresses the meaning of ἐνέργεια here, with the suggestion, as often elsewhere, of 'vigorous activity'.

When she beheld. This, as what follows suggests, is Physis, personified. In respect of beholding such beauty, cf. section 8 - *having seen the beauty of the cosmic order*.

on Earth, his shadow. τὸ σκίασμα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. Cf. Diogenes Laertius [*Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.146, Zeno] not especially for the similarity - τὸ τῆς γῆς σκίασμα - but more for the interesting section, preceding this mention of the shadow of the moon on Earth during an eclipse, of how the cosmic order came into being [142] and for the equally interesting following discussion [147] which concerns the attributes and images of theos - the god - who is described as 'the father of all', who has both male and female aspects, and which aspects of the divinity are given their classical pagan names with their areas of authority specified. The interest lies in how the classical gods, and the creation of the cosmic order, and thus Hellenic paganism, were understood and remembered not long after the *Hermetica* was written, and thus how they echo in part some of the metaphysical themes in, and the cosmogony of, the *Pœmandres* tractate.

Physis grasped [...] intimately joined together. ἡ δὲ φύσις λαβοῦσα τὸν ἐρώμενον περιεπλάκη ὅλη καὶ ἐμίγησαν ἐρώμενοι γὰρ ἦσαν. The sense of μίγνυμι here is that of a physical union, a sexual joining together - not of some 'philosophical mingling' of 'forms'. Similarly, περιπλέκω is not some ordinary 'embrace' but a sexual twinning (of limbs). Cf. Hesiod, *Theogony*, 375 - Κρίω δ' Εὐρυβίην τέκεν ἐν φιλότῃ μιγεῖσα Ἀστραῖόν.

jumelle. For διπλοῦς. The much underused and descriptive English word jumelle - from the Latin gemellus - describes some-thing made in, or composed of, two parts, and is therefore most suitable here, more so than common words such as 'double' or 'twofold'.

deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal. θνητὸς μὲν διὰ τὸ σῶμα, ἀθάνατος δὲ διὰ τὸν οὐσιώδη ἄνθρωπον. Here, in respect of my choice of English words, I must admit to being influenced by Chapman's lovely poetic translation of the Hymn to Venus from the Homeric Hymns:

That with a deathless goddess lay a deathful man

In respect of οὐσιώδης, I prefer, given the context, 'inner' - suggestive of 'real' - rather than the conventional 'essential'; although 'vital' is an alternative

translation here, suggested by what Eusebius wrote (c.326 CE) about φῶς [phaos] pre-existing even before the cosmic order, with φῶς used by Eusebius to mean Light in the Christian sense:

τό τε φῶς τὸ προκόσμιον καὶ τὴν πρὸ αἰώνων νοερὰν καὶ οὐσιώδη σοφίαν τὸν τε ζῶντα [Historia Ecclesiastica, Book 1, chapter 2]

The Light of the proto-cosmos, the comprehension and vital wisdom existing before the Aeons

wyrd. For ἡ εἰμαρμένη. A much better choice, here, than either 'fate' or 'destiny' given how overused both those words now are and how their interpretation is also now so varied. An overview of how the concept may have been understood in the late Hellenic period (around the time the Hermetica was probably written) is given in the 2nd century CE discourse *De Fato*, attributed to Plutarch, which begins by stating that εἰμαρμένη has been described in two ways, as ἐνέργεια (vigorous activity) and as οὐσία (essence) -

πρῶτον τοίνυν ἴσθι, ὅτι εἰμαρμένη διχῶς καὶ λέγεται καὶ νοεῖται: ἡ μὲν γάρ ἐστιν ἐνέργεια ἡ δ' οὐσία

of a wakeful one <...> There is some text missing, indicated by <...>, for after ἄϋπνος ἀπὸ ἄϋπνου the MSS have κρατεῖται [mastered/ruled by - cf. 4 Maccabees 2.9 ἢ ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου κρατεῖται διὰ τὸν λογισμὸν]. Although some suggestions have been made as to this missing text (such as "ruled by love and sleep" [ἔρωτος καὶ ὕπνου] - they are purely conjectural.

16.

<...> *my perceivervation*. Again, the suggestions for the missing text are purely conjectural.

a mysterium esoteric. For κεκρυμμένον μυστήριον. The term mysterium - a truth or insight or knowledge about some-thing, which is considered religious and/or metaphysical ('hermetic') and which is unknown/unrevealed to or as yet undiscovered by others, and hence 'mysterious' to them - expresses the meaning of the Greek here (as the word mystery by itself does not). Likewise in respect of esoteric - kept concealed or which is concealed/hidden to most or which is revealed to an individual by someone who already 'knows' what the mysterium in question is.

Hence why I write *a* mysterium here rather than *the* mysterium, and why "a mysterium, esoteric even to this day", is better than the rather bland "the mystery kept hidden until this very day".

possessed the physis of the harmonious seven. The seven viziers. A more literal translation would be 'possessed the physis of the [harmonious] structure of the

seven'. Here, physis could mean 'character' (of a person) or some-thing more archetypal/elemental of which such character or personal characteristics are an outward manifestation.

seven male-and-female humans. These seven humans, born from Physis, are thus akin to both theos and the child of theos who also have a male (a masculous) and a female (a muliebral) aspect. That is, although mortal - having been brought forth by and from divinities - these humans are, in their very being, both male and female and thus, in their creation, dissimilar to ordinary mortals, for reasons which Pœmandres goes on to explain.

In addition, these seven mortals have the same or a similar physis as the 'harmonious seven'.

ætherean. For μεταρσίους. Ætherean is the metaphorical sense of μεταρσίους here, not 'exalted' or 'sublime' (which imply some sort of human admiration or some sort of religious attitude/apprehension). For the sense is similar to what Dio Chrysostom wrote, in his tract on leadership, about the sons of Boreas, who - semi-divine - have the attributes of their father and who are depicted in and belonging to their natural realm:

ὁποίους τοὺς Βορεάδας ἐνεθυμήθησάν τε καὶ ἔγραψαν οἱ γραφεῖς
ἐλαφρούς τε καὶ μεταρσίους ταῖς τοῦ πατρὸς αὔραις συνθέοντας
[Orationes, 4.1]

Ætherean is used in the poetic sense - that is, 'supernal', meaning of the harmonious - the heavenly - cosmic order and also refined: of the essence, οὐσία, and thus not just ὕλη, substance (qv. section 10).

Primary explanation. πρῶτον λόγον [cf. Plato, *Republic*, Book 3 [395b] εἰ ἄρα τὸν πρῶτον λόγον διασώσομεν]. An explanation of our origins, as mortals, and thus of the 'first principle' that forms the basis of the 'hermetic weltanschauung'.

17.

those seven came into being in this way. It is interesting to compare 'these seven' with 'the 'nine' and the seven spheres (Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sol, Venus, Mercury, Moon) of the Somnium Scipionis described by Cicero:

Novem tibi orbibus vel potius globis conexas sunt omnia, quorum unus est caelestis, extimus, qui reliquos omnes complectitur, summus ipse deus arcens et continens ceteros; in quo sunt infixi illi, qui volvuntur, stellarum cursus sempiterni. Cui subiecti sunt septem, qui versantur retro contrario motu atque caelum. Ex quibus summum globum possidet illa, quam in terris Saturniam nominant. Deinde est hominum

generi prosperus et salutaris ille fulgor, qui dicitur Iovis; tum rutilus horribilisque terris, quem Martium dicitis; deinde subter mediam fere regionem Sol obtinet, dux et princeps et moderator luminum reliquorum, mens mundi et temperatio, tanta magnitudine, ut cuncta sua luce lustret et compleat. Hunc ut comites consequuntur Veneris alter, alter Mercurii cursus, in infimoque orbe Luna radiis solis accensa convertitur. Infra autem iam nihil est nisi mortale et caducum praeter animos munere deorum hominum generi datos; supra Lunam sunt aeterna omnia. Nam ea, quae est media et nona, Tellus, neque movetur et infima est, et in eam feruntur omnia nutu suo pondera. [*De Re Publica*, Book VI, 17]

Nine orbs - more correctly, spheres - connect the whole cosmic order, of which one - beyond the others but enfolding them - is where the uppermost deity dwells, enclosing and containing all. There - embedded - are the constant stars with their sempiternal movement, while below are seven spheres whose cyclicity is different, and one of which is the sphere given the name on Earth of Saturn [...]

Muliebral. For θηλυκή. The term muliebral derives from the classical Latin word *muliebris*, and is used here to refer to those positive traits, abilities, and qualities, that are conventionally and historically associated with women. Muliebral is more expressive - and more redolent of the meaning of the Greek - than 'feminine', especially given how the word 'feminine' is so often misused (sometimes in a pejorative way).

It should be noted that the older reading of θηλυκή γὰρ ὁ ἄηρ makes Air - not Earth - the muliebral one.

Lustful. For ὀχευτικόν. The sense is similar to ἐπιθυμία as used, for example, in Romans 14.13 - τῆς σαρκὸς πρόνοιαν μὴ ποιῆσθε εἰς ἐπιθυμίας [make no intention regarding the flesh, to gratify its carnal desires]

From Æther, the pneuma. ἐκ δὲ αἰθέρος τὸ πνεῦμα ἔλαβε. It is best to transliterate αἰθήρ - as Æther - given that it, like Earth, Air, Fire, Water, and pneuma, is an elemental principle, or a type of (or a particular) being, or some-thing archetypal.

cyclic until its completion. μέχρι περιόδου τέλους. I follow the reading of the Turnebus MS, taking περίοδος to refer to a posited cyclic - periodic - cosmic order, of Aeons, which periodicity continues until its purpose is achieved/fulfilled/completed.

18.

the connexions between all things. Compare this unbinding of the cosmic bonds with the 'connexions' that make up the nine spheres in the Somnium Scipionis

[qv. the quotation from Cicero, above].

bringing into being portions that were masculous with the others muliebral. ἐγένετο τὰ μὲν ἀρρενικὰ ἐν μέρει τὰ δὲ θηλυκὰ ὁμοίως. The meaning of ἀρρενικὰ and θηλυκὰ are not 'male' and 'female' but rather masculous (masculine) and muliebral (of or considered appropriate to women).

propagate by propagation and spawn by spawning. The same Greek words - αὐξάνεσθε and πληθύνεσθε - occur in LXX, Genesis 1.22: ἡὺλόγησεν αὐτὰ ὁ θεὸς λέγων αὐξάνεσθε καὶ πληθύνεσθε ["Theos praised them, saying: propagate and spawn"; Tyndale - "God blessed them saying, grow and multiply"; KJV - "God blessed them saying, Be fruitful and multiply"].

creations and artisements. κτίσματα καὶ δημιουργήματα. Although κτίσμα is generally translated here as 'creature' (as also for example in most translations of Revelation 5.13) I incline toward the view, given the context, that the more general sense of a 'creation' (or 'created thing') is meant - cf. Strabo, Geography, Book 16. 1 [ἥς ἐστὶ κτίσμα ἢ Βαβυλῶν] where what is described is a construct, a creation - a work constructed by or on behalf of someone. Here, what is described are the creations of theos.

In respect of 'artisements', see section 10.

the perceiver. ὁ ἔννοους.

Eros as responsible for death. τὸν αἴτιον τοῦ θανάτου ἔρωτα. The consensus is, and has been, that ἔρωτα here signifies 'carnal desire' - or something similar - so that it is assumed that what is meant is some sort of ascetic (or Gnostic or puritanical) statement about how sexual desire should be avoided or at the very least controlled. However, this seems rather at variance with the foregoing - regarding propagating and spawning - which inclines me to suggest that what is meant here is 'eros', not necessarily personified as the classical deity (ἡδ' Ἔρος ὃς κάλλιστος ἐν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι πάντων δὲ θεῶν πάντων τ' ἀνθρώπων δάμναται ἐν στήθεσσι νόον καὶ ἐπίφρονα βουλήν), although the comparison is interesting, but rather as an elemental or archetypal principle, akin to νοῦς and λόγος. Consider, for example, the following from *Daphnis and Chloe*, written by Longus around the same time as the *Corpus Hermeticum*: πάντως γὰρ οὐδεὶς ἔρωτα ἔφυγεν ἢ φεύζεται μέχρις ἂν κάλλος ᾗ καὶ ὀφθαλμοὶ βλέπωσιν [Book 1, Proem, 4 - "no one can avoid or has ever been able to avoid Eros, while there is beauty and eyes which perceive"]. In modern terms, few - poetically, metaphorically, none - have avoided or could avoid, at some time in their life, the unconscious power of the anima/animus.

Eros - as some-thing similar to an archetypal principle, applicable to or of (existing in/part of) "all beings/creations/things" - might also go some way toward explaining the καὶ πάντα τὰ ὄντα that follows in the text (for example in the Turnebus MS) for which various emendations have been proposed,

including omitting it altogether.

19.

foreknowing, through wyrd.....coagulations. The foreknowing of theos, which enabled theos through wyrd and the cosmic structure to 'found the generations'. The coagulations, the copulation, of beings (created things).

self-knowledge. ἀναγνωρίσας ἑαυτὸν. A pedantic aside: here, as often elsewhere, I have gone against convention (grammatical and otherwise) by, where possible, choosing neutral personal pronouns, thus avoiding sentences such as "And he who has self-knowledge..." This sometimes results in using third person plural pronouns - such as 'their' and 'they' - as if they were personal pronouns, or using constructs such as "the one of self-knowledge" or "whoever has self-knowledge". In addition, it should be noted that the grammatical categorization of a word (male, female, gender neutral) is only a grammatical categorization and does not always reflect the nature of the being that that word denotes or refers to.

a particular benefit. τὸ περιούσιον ἀγαθόν. Literally, 'the particular benefit' [an alternative, possibly better, translation would be 'the esoteric benefit']. What the text refers to is not some abstract 'good' but rather what is good for, what benefits, the person. Thus, self-knowledge can lead to a particular, a specific, benefit.

perceptively. αἰσθητῶς - cf. Strabo, *Geography*, Book 3, chapter 5.1, a description of a high tide; of the sea, due to the moon, begin to perceptively/visibly both rise and go far onto the shore - ἀρχεσθαι διοιδεῖν τὴν θάλατταν καὶ ἐπιβαίνειν τῆς γῆς αἰσθητῶς μέχρι μεσουρανήσεως.

20.

to discover things. That is, discover/apprehend for yourself, to reveal (dis-cover) the nature of things, and thus fully understand them; qv. section 3 ('apprehend the physis of beings') and section 6 ('then discover phaos and become familiar with it') and section 7 ('such I observed and discovered because of those words of Pœmandres').

why death is expected for those who are in death. διὰ τί ἄξιοί εἰσι τοῦ θανάτου οἱ ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ ὄντες. Somewhat obscure, given the phrase 'in death' and given that what follows - "because originally..." - does not really offer an explanation of it.

I take the meaning of ἀξιώ here to be 'expect' rather than 'worthy' given (i) what the English phrase 'they are worthy of death' (or 'they deserve death') implies, an implication - a moralizing attitude - that is not justified by either the immediate context or the rest of the text, and (ii) usages such as (a) νῦν παρ'

ὁμῶν τὸ αὐτὸ ἀξιοῦμεν κομίζεσθαι ['we now expect to receive the same from you'; Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, Book 1, chapter 43] and (b) ὥστε οὐκ οἴκτου οἱ τοιοῦτοι ἀξιοί εἰσιν, ἀλλὰ τιμωρίας ['they are expected to be punished not pitied', Hyperides, *Orations Against Philippides*, 2.12]

Nourishes. ἀρδεύεται here is obviously metaphorical, as it literally means "is irrigated/watered" as in Diodorus Siculus when he describes India - τὰ πολλὰ δὲ τῆς χώρας ἀρδεύεται καὶ διὰ τοῦτο διττοὺς ἔχει τοὺς κατ' ἔτος καρπούς ['much of the land is irrigated which is why there are two yields a year'; *Bibliotheca Historica*, Book 2, 35.3]

21.

progress within themselves. εἰς αὐτὸν χωρεῖ. Literally, 'progress to (or proceed/advance toward) him', with the usual assumption being that it is theos that is meant (hence, 'proceed toward theos'), with the alternative translation, of 'progress to themselves', ignored. However, given the immediate context - of a self-discovery - and given examples such as Mark 7.15 (εἰσπορευόμενον εἰς αὐτὸν, entering *into* him) and given that (insofar as I understand it) the tractate concerns (i) self-knowing, (ii) a 'mysterium' that is esoteric, and (iii) a desire to know and to understand 'the physis of beings', rather than a religious 'progressing toward god' à la Thomas à Kempis, then I am inclined to favour the somewhat radical translation of 'within themselves'.

the father of all beings. ὁ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων. The word 'all' by itself does not really capture the sense of ὅλων here, which is 'all beings'. The phrase ὁ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων occurs in many other writings, some of which are Christian. For instance in the Τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰουστίνου πρὸς Τρύφωνα Ἰουδαῖον Διάλογος [The Dialogue of Justinus with Trypho, a Jew] where it is said in the context of Christ being crucified, dying, and then being raised again by 'the father of all' for the benefit of all human beings - τὸν ἑαυτοῦ Χριστὸν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐκ παντὸς γένους ἀνθρώπων ὁ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων τὰς πάντων κατάρας ἀναδέξασθαι ἐβουλήθη (xcv, 2).

However, interestingly and relevant here, the phrase also occurs in the polemic by Irenaeus against the 'heresy of gnosticism' - the *Adversus Haereses* [ἔλεγχος καὶ ἀνατροπή της ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως] - written not long before the Poemandres tractate:

μεταδοῦναί σοι θέλω τῆς ἐμῆς χάριτος ἐπειδὴ ὁ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων τὸν ἄγγελόν σου διαπαντὸς βλέπει πρὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ ὁ δὲ τόπος τοῦ μεγέθους ἐν ἡμῖν ἐστὶ δι' ἡμᾶς ἐγκαταστήσαι (Book I, Chapter 13, 3)

I desire to pass on to you my Charis because the father of all beings has observed that your angel is constantly before him

These are the words Irenaeus ascribes to a person called Marcus, 'the heretic'; words used by this person skilled in the trickery of sorcery (μαγικῆς κυβείας ἐμπειρότατον) to, apparently, entice men and wealthy women to be his followers. Irenaeus then goes on, in a passage also quoted by Eusebius in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* (4.11.5), to describe some of the rites - the 'disgusting initiation into the mysteries' - of these people, and which rites include a 'mystical marriage' (πνευματικὸν γάμον) as well as a doxology to 'the father and the mother', εἰς ὄνομα ἀγνώστου πατρὸς τῶν ὅλων εἰς ἀλήθειαν μητέρα τῶν πάντων, and which doxology, with its contrast between ὅλων (ascribed to the father) and πάντων (ascribed to the mother) may go some way toward explaining the meaning of ὅλων as used here, in the Pœmandres tractate, given that μητέρα πάντων - as Γαία, Earth Mother - is the subject of, among other things, one of the Homeric hymns, Εἰς Γῆν Μητέρα Πάντων, where She is described as πρέσβιστος, the elder among beings, and the mother of the gods, θεῶν μήτηρ.

Thus, πατρὸς τῶν ὅλων as the father of all beings, and μητέρα τῶν πάντων as the mother of being, of all Life, both mortal and immortal.

22.

respectful deeds. ὀσίοις. A difficult word to translate, given that most of the English alternatives - such as religious, pious, holy, devout, blessed, sinless, saintly, humble - have acquired, over centuries, particular religious meanings, often associated with Christianity or types of asceticism; meanings which, in my view, are not or may not be relevant here, and whose use would distort one's understanding of the text.

The correct meaning is someone who, aware of or sensitive to the difference between the numinous and un-numinous [regarding 'numinous', see the note on ἅγιος in section 5], seeks to avoid, in their behaviour, what might cause them to hubriatically 'overstep the limits' and thus unbalance them, so taking them away from that natural balance and that respect for the numinous, which they personally, by their (or a particular) way of living (personal, religious, spiritual, mystical, or otherwise) seek or desire to cultivate, or which (and importantly) is a natural part of their admirable (and often admired) character. For example:

ἐκεῖνός γε μὴν ὑμνῶν οὐποτ' ἔληγεν ὥς τοὺς θεοὺς οἶοιτο οὐδὲν ἧττον ὀσίοις ἔργοις ἢ ἀγνοῖς ἱεροῖς ἡδεσθαι ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ ὁπότε εὐτυχοίη οὐκ ἀνθρώπων ὑπερεφρόνει ἀλλὰ θεοῖς χάριν ἥδει καὶ θαρρῶν πλείονα ἔθυσεν ἢ ὀκνῶν ἠῤῥχετο εἴθιστο δὲ φοβούμενος μὲν ἱλαρὸς φαίνεσθαι εὐτυχῶν δὲ πρᾶος εἶναι [Xenophon, *Agésilas*, 11.2]

this person, whom I praise, never ceased to believe that the gods delight in respectful deeds just as much as in consecrated temples,

and, when blessed with success, he was never prideful but rather gave thanks to the gods. He also made more offerings to them when he was confident than supplications when he felt hesitant, and, in appearance, it was his habit to be cheerful when doubtful and mild-mannered when successful.

For these reasons, I have translated not as one English word, but as the phrase 'respectful deeds'. See also the note on εὐσεβέω below.

honourable. ἀγαθός. The sense is not of being 'good' in some moralistic, sanctimonious, superior, way, but rather of being of noble character, as for example described in the Corpus Aristotelicum:

τῆς δὲ φρονήσεώς ἐστι τὸ βουλευσασθαι, τὸ κρίναι τὰ ἀγαθὰ καὶ τὰ κακὰ καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν τῷ βίῳ αἰρετὰ καὶ φευκτά, τὸ χρῆσθαι πᾶσι καλῶς τοῖς ὑπάρχουσιν ἀγαθοῖς, τὸ ὁμιλῆσαι ὀρθῶς [*De Virtutibus et Vitiis Libellus* 1250a]

It is part of wisdom to accept advice, to distinguish the honourable, the dishonourable, and all that is, in life, acceptable or to be avoided; to fairly use all resources; to be genuine in company

refined. καθαροίς. Literally it means 'physically clean', often in the sense of being in a state of ritual purification: qv. the inscription on one of the ancient tablets (totenpasse) found in Thurii - ἔρχομαι ἐκ καθαρῶν καθαρὰ χθονίων βασίλεια (in arrivance, purified from the purified, mistress of the chthonic).

Since the English word 'pure' is unsuitable given its connotations - religious, sanctimonious, political, and otherwise - I have opted for the not altogether satisfactory 'refined'.

compassionate. ἐλεήμοσι. Those who undertake merciful, charitable, humane, deeds; qv. Luke 11.41 (πλὴν τὰ ἐνόντα δότε ἐλεημοσύνην, καὶ ἰδοὺ πάντα καθαρὰ ὑμῖν ἐστίν), Acts 10:2, κτλ.

aware of the numinous. εὐσεβοῦσι. As with ὁσίους, εὐσεβέω is a difficult word to translate, given that most of the English alternatives - such as reverent, pious - have acquired, over centuries, particular religious meanings, often associated with Christianity or types of asceticism. The correct sense is 'aware of the numinous', and thus imbued with that sense of duty, that sense of humility - or rather, an awareness of their human limitations - which makes them appreciate and respect the numinous in whatever form, way, or manner they appreciate, feel, intuit, apprehend, or understand, the numinous, be it in terms of the gods, the god, Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες, God, or whatever. It is this

awareness which inclines a person toward 'respectful deeds' [qv. ὁσίους, above].

soon acquire knowledge of the whole. εὐθὺς τὰ πάντα γνωρίζουσι. Knowledge of 'the whole picture'; of what has been and is being discussed: perceivization; the cosmic structure; the nature of humans; the seven viziers; and so on. The sense is not "gnosis of all things", which - in its hubris - is incompatible with the immediately proceeding mention of εὐσεβέω and ὁσίους.

affectionately gracious toward. There are two ways of interpreting τὸν πατέρα ἱλάσκονται ἀγαπητικῶς and what follows. (i) As if it is some kind of Christian eulogy by the faithful, with mention of "lovingly propitiating the father" and the "singing of hymns" to him; and (ii) in a rather more religiously neutral way with phrases such as ἱλάσκονται ἀγαπητικῶς and words such as ὕμνεῦσιν suggesting the more Hellenic "affectionately gracious" and "celebrating in song". I have chosen the latter, as it is, in my view, more in harmony with the rest of the text.

the influencing impressions. αἰσθήσεις. What is meant here is not simply 'the [bodily] senses' nor what is perceptible to or perceived by the senses, but rather those particular impressions, conveyed by the senses, which influence a person in a way which is disliked because they do or they can affect a person in a manner detrimental to their immortality. That is, not all 'feelings' nor all 'sensations' are meant but only those which impresses upon [cf. Cicero, *Academica*, 2.6, impressum effictumque] a person in a certain way and thus affect that person also in a certain way, as 'impressionable feelings' do:

αὐτὸς δὲ διὰ ποιημάτων φιλοσοφεῖ, καθάπερ Ἡσίοδος τε καὶ
Ξενοφάνης καὶ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς κριτήριον δὲ τὸν λόγον εἶπε: τάς τε
αἰσθήσεις μὴ ἀκριβεῖς ὑπάρχειν φησὶ γοῦν [Diogenes Laertius,
Parmenides, 9.3]

he himself, through the form of verse, presented his knowledge, as did Hesiod, Xenophanes and Empedocles, stating that it was a way of judging what was reasonable since impressionable feelings were not an accurate enough starting point

This is the type of 'impression' - the type of influence - meant by some alchemical texts, for example, in the *Compound of Alchymy*, by Ripley, contained in the *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* ['the Body of the Spryte taketh impression' (ix. xi)] and also, some centuries later, by Hume in his *Treatise on Human Nature* ['those perceptions, which enter with most force and violence, we may name impressions' (I. i. 12)]. Cf. also Aristotle, *Poetics* 1451a - τοῦ δὲ μήκουσ ὅρος ὁ μὲν πρὸς τοὺς ἀγῶνας καὶ τὴν αἴσθησιν οὐ τῆς τέχνης ἐστίν - where what is meant is the 'impression' made upon an audience, which thus influences them.

the bad. The usual translation of κακός here, as often elsewhere, is 'evil'.

However, I regard such a translation as unhelpful, given that the English word 'evil' is (1) now often interpreted and understood in a moralistic, preconceived, way according to some theological dogma/criteria and/or according to some political/social doctrine, and (2) that it does not denote what the classical and the Hellenic term κακός does.

Classically understood κακός is what is bad in the sense of some-thing rotten or unhealthy, or – the opposite of κάλος – what is displeasing to see. κακός is also what is unlucky, a misfortune, and/or injurious, as for example in The Agamemnon

τὸ μὲν γυναιῖκα πρῶτον ἄρσενος δίχρα
ἦσθαι δόμοις ἔρημον ἔκπαγλον κακόν (vv. 862-3)

Primarily, for a lady to be separate from her mate -
To remain unprotected by family – is a harsh misfortune

When applied to a person, the sense is of a 'rotten' person; someone with bad, harmful, physis; a bad - dishonourable, weak, cowardly - personal character; someone whose nature, for examples, inclines them toward doing harm and doing what is generally considered to be wrong.

This sense is still appropriate to Hellenic usage. For example, in respect of Romans 12.17 with its contrast of κακός and κάλος:

μηδενὶ κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἀποδιδόντες προνοούμενοι καλὰ ἐνώπιον πάντων ἀνθρώπων

Do not render what is bad with what is bad; rather, show concern for what all humans see is good

Similarly with the synonym σαπρός, as for example in Luke 6.43-5:

Οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν δένδρον καλὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν σαπρὸν, οὐδὲ πάλιν δένδρον σαπρὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν καλόν, ἕκαστον γὰρ δένδρον ἐκ τοῦ ἰδίου καρποῦ γινώσκεται· ὁ ἀγαθὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ θησαυροῦ τῆς καρδίας προφέρει τὸ ἀγαθόν, καὶ ὁ πονηρὸς ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ προφέρει τὸ πονηρόν· ἐκ γὰρ περισσεύματος καρδίας λαλεῖ τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ

For no healthy tree brings forth rotten fruit just as a rotten tree cannot bring forth healthy fruit. For each tree is judged by its fruit. A good person from the store of good in their heart brings forth what is good, and a bad person from their bad store brings forth what is bad; for it is because of an overflowing heart that the mouth speaks.

23.

hubriatic. ἄσεβέσι; someone lacking in or who is arrogantly disdainful of σέβομαι, of what is regarded as honourable, revered, respected. Someone who is thus 'hubriatic'. It is the opposite of εὐσεβέω, that is, the opposite of someone who is aware of and respectful of the numinous.

the avenging daemon. τῷ τιμωρῷ δαίμον.

Τιμωρῷ is an epithet of the god Mars, mentioned by Cassius Dio Cocceianus in his *Historiae Romanae* when he recounts how Caligula, celebrating the murder of someone, sent three daggers to the temple of Mars the Avenger, in Rome, as offerings to the god - ξιφίδια τρία τῷ Ἄρει τῷ Τιμωρῷ ἐς [Book 59, chapter 22 v.7].

Correctly understood, a δαίμων (daemon) is neither a 'demon' nor one of the pantheon of major Greek gods - θεοί - but rather a lesser type of divinity who might be assigned by those gods to bring good fortune or misfortune to human beings and/or to watch over certain human beings and especially particular numinous (sacred) places.

which tests them. καὶ τοῦτον βασανίζει. The sense here is rather obscure, with some proposed emendations (for example, οὕτως, and τοῦτο for τοῦτον). I take the sense here of βασανίζω to be 'tested', as in being 'put to the test'; a sense in accord with what precedes and with what follows.

24.

Anados. ἄνοδος. A transliteration, as the word has specific meanings in ancient Greek 'mystery cults' and in Hellenic 'mysticism', one of which meanings is the ascent, or progress, or journey, of the initiate/individual toward their goal, however that goal/ascent/progress/journey is described and/or understood, and/or represented (symbolically, mythologically, or otherwise). Quite often, the journey - the 'way up' - is described as the one between the living and the dead (the next life) or as one from the chthonic (the underworld) to our mortal world; which journey sometimes involves a symbolic/mythological death and then a rebirth.

the dissolution of the physical body allows that body to be transformed. ἐν τῇ ἀναλύσει τοῦ σώματος τοῦ ὑλικοῦ παραδίδως αὐτὸ τὸ σῶμα εἰς ἀλλοίωσιν. Literally, 'in the dissolution of the material body it hands over that body to alteration'.

ethos. ἦθος. Here, ethos in the personal sense; the 'spirit' - the personality - of an individual: their traits, character, disposition, nature, temperament.

25.

in the first realm. The sphere of the Moon, the first of the seven planetary/alchemical/astrological spheres, realms, or emanations - the ἑβδομάς; hebdomad, septenary system - that, in respect of the journey (ἄνοδος) of the mortal toward immortality, form the basis of, are emanations of, the harmonious cosmic structure (qv. sections 9 and 14). On this journey, the mortal passes through each realm - sphere - in turn.

which grows and which fades. Cf. Sextus Empiricus - ταύτην δὲ ἤτοι αὐξητικήν ἢ μειωτικήν [Adversus Mathematicos, IX, 393]

arrogance of command. Reading ὑπερηφανίαν not προφανίαν.

26.

ogdoadic physis. ὀγδοατικήν φύσιν. An interesting and important term, often overlooked and often misinterpreted. What is meant is not a realm - ζώνη - or sphere, similar to but 'beyond' the seven realms, but rather 'of what' the mortal has become, is reborn as, at the end of the journey: partaking in and being of 'the ogdoadic physis', and thus sharing the being/existence of those who have, or who have attained, that particular type of being/existence/physis. The existence, that is, of an immortal beyond the seven emanations.

with the others there, celebrates the father in song. ὑμνεῖ σὺν τοῖς οὓσι τὸν πατέρα. Again - qv. section 22 - not 'hymns' in the Christian sense but rather celebrating in song/verse/chant; celebrating the father of this mortal, the parent of all mortals, and ὁ πατήρ τῶν ὅλων, the 'grandfather' of all beings (qv. section 21).

force. δύναμις. Cf. section 7. Those forces, those particular powers - or, more precisely, that type (or those types) of being(s) or existence - that are not only beyond the septenary system but beyond the ogdoadic physis of those mortals who have, because of their journey (ἄνοδος) through the septenary system, achieved immortality.

It is therefore easy to understand why some considered there were, or represented their understanding/insight by, 'nine' (seven plus two) fundamental cosmic emanations, or by nine realms or spheres [qv. the quote from Cicero in section 17] - the seven of the hebdomad, plus the one of the 'ogdoadic physis' mentioned here, plus the one (also mentioned here) of what is beyond even this 'ogdoadic physis'. However, as this text describes, there are seven realms or spheres - a seven-fold path to immortality, accessible to living mortals - and then two types of existence (not spheres) beyond these, accessible only after the mortals has journeyed along that path and then, having 'offered up' certain things along the way (their mortal ethos), 'handed over their body to its death'. Ontologically, therefore, the seven might somewhat simplistically be described as partaking of what is 'causal' (of what is mortal) and the two types of

existence beyond the seven as partaking of - as being - 'acausal' (of what is immortal). Thus, Poemandres goes on to say, the former mortal - now immortal - moves on (from this first type of 'acausal existence') to become these forces (beyond the ogdoadic physis) to thus finally 'unite with theos': αὐτοὶ εἰς δυνάμεις ἑαυτοὺς παραδιδόασιν καὶ δυνάμεις γενόμενοι ἐν θεῷ γίνονται.

26.

become united with theos. ἐν θεῷ γίνονται. Literally, '[they] become in theos', or '[they] enter into theos', although given what follows - θεωθῆναι - what is meant is 'become of/be united with theos', and thus 'become-of' what is no longer mortal but rather both immortal and 'of theos'.

become of theos. θεωθῆναι. This does not mean 'made divine/god', or 'achieve divinity' or 'become god/a god', or deification, but rather, having become immortal, to be (re)united with theos and thus, by such a 'becoming', re-present (become-of) in that new (acausal) existence the numinosity of theos, and which return and re-presentation is the real aim of our mortal lives and the function of λόγος, and of the λόγοι (such as pneumatic logos and the phallic logos). That is, as explained in some of the rather neglected works of Maximus of Constantinople [qv. Migne Patrologiae Graeca, 90 and 91], Θεώσις in the sense of reunited with theos - ultimately because of ἀγάπη - without actually being or becoming 'a divinity' or 'God':

τῆς ἐπὶ τῷ θεωθῆναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον μυστικῆς ἐνεργείας λήψεται
πέρας κατὰ πάντα τρόπον χωρὶς μόνης δηλονότι τῆς πρὸς αὐτὸν κατ'
οὐσίαν ταυτότητος. *Quaestiones ad Thalassium de Scriptura Sacra*,
XXII [Patrologiae Graeca, 90, c.0318]

the end of the opus mysterium of human beings becoming of Theos
can be in all ways except one, namely that of having the identity of
His Essence

the noble goal. τὸ ἀγαθὸν τέλος. This might well be taken as an axiom of the 'hermetic' weltanschauung presented in this tractate. In respect of ἀγαθός as honourable/noble, see the note in section 22.

those who seek to acquire knowledge. Given the use here of the word γνῶσις, the sense could be interpreted, and has by others been interpreted, to mean 'those who seek to acquire/attain gnosis'.

other mortals can - through theos - escape. I take the sense of σώζω here to be 'escape', for the English word 'saved' now imposes, after nearly two thousand years of scriptural exegesis and preaching, various religious preconceptions on the text. Also, the usual translation of 'saved by god' is somewhat at variance with the hermetic/gnostic weltanschauung which suggests a progression -

ἄνοδος - through the realms/spheres in order to attain immortality.

For the 'escape' is from the mortal to the immortal, and therefore to be 'saved', because of theos, so that (qv. section 21) they can "progress to return to Life"

27.

joined with those forces. The meaning here is somewhat obscure, although it possibly signifies that Pœmandres leaves the mortal realm and rejoins - returns to - his existence, beyond the hebdomad, where those forces/powers exist.

an insight of great importance. μεγίστην θέαν. An important 'insight into' the workings of the cosmos, immortality, and the nature of mortals, rather than 'a vision' or a 'revelation'.

awareness of the numinous. See the note on 'aware of the numinous'/εὐσεβέω in section 22.

earth-bound mortals. ἄνδρες γηγενεῖς. The literal meaning is 'earth-born mortals', which is rather obscure here, although what is meant is probably not the somewhat pejorative 'primordial/primitive' type [qv. ἔστι ἐν τῇ ἀκροπόλει ταύτῃ Ἐρεχθεὺς τοῦ γηγενέος λεγομένου εἶναι νηός, Herodotus, 8.55; and ἄλλοι δὲ γηγενεῖς καὶ χαλκασπίδας, Strabo, 10.3] nor even the 'earthy/rural' type [qv. μὴ μισήσης ἐπίπονον ἐργασίαν καὶ γεωργίαν ὑπὸ Ὑψίστου ἐκτισμένην, LXX, Sirach 7.15] but rather the contrast, mentioned in section 15, between those 'deathful of body' and the 'deathlessness of the inner mortal'; with a similar contrast occurring in Plato [οὐδὲν γὰρ γηγενὲς Ὀλυμπίων ἐντιμότερον ἄλλ' ὁ περὶ ψυχῆς ἄλλως δοξάζων ἀγνοεῖ ὡς θαυμαστοῦ τούτου κτήματος ἀμελεῖ, Laws 727e]. Hence my suggestion of 'earth-bound', which is apposite considering what follows - οἱ μέθη καὶ ὕπνω ἑαυτοὺς ἐκδε δωκότες.

sleepfulness. To translate ὕπνος here as simply 'sleep' is not particularly helpful to the reader, as what seems to be implied is not normal everyday 'sleep' - a necessity for all humans - since such normal healthy sleep is a strange companion for 'intoxicating liquor'. Regarding ὕπνος, Jebb in his commentary on *Antigone* in respect of ὕπνος ὁ παντογῆρως (v.606) mentioned that "sleep, the renewer of vigour, could not be described as 'bringing old age to all'. Nor can the epithet be explained as 'enfeebling all', in the sense of 'subduing them'; nor, again, as 'attending on all, even to old age'," which led him to write that παντογῆρως was probably corrupt and to suggest, as some others had done, an emendation.

The fact that sleep personified, as Hypnos/Somnus, is the brother of Death [qv. ἔνθ' Ὑπνῷ ξύμβλητο κασιγνήτῳ Θανάτῳ, Iliad, 14.231] is also in favour of normal, healthy, sleep not being meant, as does what follows - θελγόμενοι ὕπνῳ ἀλόγῳ. Thus a possible alternative would be to interpret ὕπνος here somewhat metaphorically, either as a 'state of mind' (such as 'sleepwalking through life')

or as something akin to soporation (an underused English word, from the Latin) with the meaning here of 'an inclination or a tendency to sleep excessively or unnecessarily; to be inactive, drowsy, sleepful; disconnected from reality'. Hence my tentative interpretation - 'sleepfulness'.

unknowing of theos. ἀγνωσία τοῦ θεοῦ. Unknowing is a more suitable English word - given its meaning, usage (past and present) and given the context - than 'ignorance'

stop your drunkenness. παύσασθε δὲ κραιπαλῶντες. Literally, 'cease to be intoxicated'. It is interesting to compare this preaching to what Plutarch wrote about Demosthenes:

ὁδυρομένου δὲ τοῦ Δημοσθένους πρὸς αὐτόν ὅτι πάντων φιλοπονώτατος ὢν τῶν λεγόντων καὶ μικροῦ δέων καταναλωκέναι τὴν τοῦ σώματος ἀκμὴν εἰς τοῦτο χάριν οὐκ ἔχει πρὸς τὸν δῆμον, ἀλλὰ κραιπαλῶντες ἄνθρωποι ναῦται καὶ ἀμαθεῖς ἀκούονται καὶ κατέχουσι τὸ βῆμα, παρορᾶται δ' αὐτός [Demosthenes, 7.1]

To him, Demosthenes complained that although he was an industrious orator and had expended much bodily vigour in pursuing that duty, he was not favoured by the people who ignored him but listened to those who were intoxicated, the ignorant, and sailors, when they and their like held the floor.

28.

change your ways. μετανοήσατε. Not 'repent', which imposes a particular religious interpretation upon the text.

have kinship with the unknowing ones. συγκοινωνήσαντες τῇ ἀγνοίᾳ. Kinship in the sense of being 'kindred spirits', or 'fellow travellers'.

dark phaos. σκοτεινοῦ φωτός. An interesting phrase, lost in translation when φως is translated as 'light'. See the note on phaos in section 4.

29.

threw themselves down at my feet. ἑαυτοὺς πρὸ ποδῶν μου ῥίψαντε. A literal translation, although, given what follows, it seems unlikely that this is a metaphorical expression of their eagerness to learn. Indeed, this whole section seems rather at variance with the rest of the text - especially considering the following καθοδηγὸς ἐγενόμην τοῦ γένους - although perhaps 'the guide', having only just been informed of certain esoteric matters by Pœmandres, is here in this section somewhat obliquely revealing that he himself has yet (qv. section 25) to offer up "that eagerness which deceives; the arrogance of command; profane insolence."

became a guide to those of my kind. That is, not 'a guide to my race/mankind' but a guide to those who, seeking immortality, desire to undertake the journey through the seven spheres and thus are akin to - of the same type as - the guide.

informing them of the logoi. τοὺς λόγους διδάσκων. The logoi [plural of logos] are - qv. the note on θεωθῆναι in section 26 - the various apparent forms (or emanations) of the logos, and include the pneumatic logos, the phasmal logos, and the logos kyrios, previously mentioned in the text. They are often considered to be how the logos is sometimes manifest to us, as mortals who are yet to begin or are yet to progress far along the septenary path toward immortality. Furthermore, those who are on the journey - following the way to theos - are also logoi.

logoi of sapientia. σοφίας λόγους. Something more than just 'words of [the] wisdom' is meant, especially as the English word 'wisdom' does not fully reflect the meaning (and the various shades) of σοφία, especially in a metaphysical (or esoteric) context, in this case of 'the opus mysterium'. The use here, in my translation, of the terms *logoi* and *sapientia* is intended - as with transliterations such as phaos - to cause the reader to pause and perhaps engender in them a certain curiosity as to what the terms may, or may not, mean, suggest, or imply, and to thus (and hopefully) convey something about the original text.

celestial elixir. ἀμβροσίου ὕδατος. Literally, 'ambrosial water'; the food/drink that, in mythology, confers and maintains the immortality of the gods and chosen mortals.

30.

temperance of [the] psyche. τῆς ψυχῆς νῆψις. Again transliterating ψυχῆς, since the English word 'soul' imposes particular - religious/philosophical, and/or modern - meanings on the text, whereas it may well be used here in its classical/Hellenic sense of 'spark' (or breath) of life; that is, as referring to that 'thing' (principle, or cause) which animates mortal beings making them 'alive', and which principle or cause was also personified as Psyche.

genuine insight. ἀληθινὴ ὄρασις. Cf. μεγίστην θέαν in section 27.

expression of the logos. It not clear how or in what form this manifestation of the logos occurs, although the context - of silence - might suggest that 'utterance' or 'speech' is not meant.

the logos of authority. τῆς αὐθεντίας λόγου. A similar expression occurs in section 3 also in reference to Pömandres - τῆς αὐθεντίας νοῦς, the perceivance of authority.

this revealing. I take the sense of ἀληθείας here to be not some abstract

(undefined, probably contentious and thus possibly undefinable) 'truth' but rather as a revealing of what is 'genuine' as distinct from what is mere 'appearance'. Here, literally, '*the* revealing' - of the nature of mortals, of the way to immortality, of logos and of theos.

31.

Agios o theos, father of all beings. ἅγιος ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων. For πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων, see the note in section 22.

I have given, as an intimation, a transliteration of the first part, as these are doxologies, similar to the Kyrie eleison [Κύριε ἐλέησον], and much (if not all) of their numinous/sacred/mystical/esoteric quality and meaning are lost when they are translated into plain - or into archaic, KJV type - English. Although they are best read/recited in the original Greek, the Latin preserves much of the numinosity of these and other such doxologies. The Latin of the nine doxologies given here is:

Sanctus deus pater universorum.
Sanctus deus, cuius consilium ad finem deducitur a propriis potentiis.
Sanctus deus, qui cognosci vult et cognoscitur a suis.
Sanctus es, qui verbo constituisti entia omnia.
Sanctus es, cuius universa natura imago nata est.
Sanctus es, quem natura non formavit.
Sanctus es, qui omni potentia es fortior.
Sanctus es, qui omni excellentia es maior.
Sanctus es, qui omnes superas laudes.

The Greek text is:

ἅγιος ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων.
ἅγιος ὁ θεός, οὗ ἡ βουλὴ τελεῖται ἀπὸ τῶν ιδίων δυνάμεων.
ἅγιος ὁ θεός, ὃς γνωσθῆναι βούλεται καὶ γινώσκεται τοῖς ἰδίοις.
ἅγιος εἶ, ὁ λόγῳ συστησάμενος τὰ ὄντα.
ἅγιος εἶ, οὗ πᾶσα φύσις εἰκὼν ἔφυ.
ἅγιος εἶ, ὃν ἡ φύσις οὐκ ἐμόρφωσεν.
ἅγιος εἶ, ὁ πάσης δυνάμεως ἰσχυρότερος.
ἅγιος εἶ, ὁ πάσης ὑπεροχῆς μείζων.
ἅγιος εἶ, ὁ κρείττων τῶν ἐπαίνων.

ἅγιος ὁ approximates to 'Numinous is' [theos] - qv. the note on ἅγιος in section 5 - and ἅγιος εἶ to 'Numinous are' [you].

As to why there are nine doxologies, it may be (and probably is) just a coincidence, or it may reflect the 7+2 structure of the 7 causal aspects (the hebdomad) and the 2 'acausal' modes of being beyond them (qv. the note on δύναμις in section 26).

his own arts. I take the sense of δυνάμεων here to be not 'powers', forces (or something similar) but 'arts'; that is, those abilities, qualities, skills, and strengths - of the 'artisan-creator' - which are inherent in theos and express the very nature of theos. Abilities, qualities, skills, and strengths, which an artisan - with assistance and help and instruction from theos, the chief artisan - uses, for example, to 'fashion seven viziers' and the 'fine artisements of physis'. See sections 9-13 and the notes thereon.

whose disposition is to be recognized. γνωσθῆναι here with γινώσκεται is not exactly the straightforward '[who] wills/desires to be known' but rather the more subtle '[whose] disposition is to be recognized', and (i) disposition/inclination as an expression of the nature, the very being, of theos, (ii) to be recognized in the sense of to be perceived for who and what theos is, in essence, in very being. Those who so recognize theos - who thus understand and 'appreciate' theos and are cognizant of the type of Being theos is - are those who partake in some way, or who re-present or emanate, or who 'imitate' [qv. Thomas à Kempis, The Imitation of Christ] the nature of that Being; and which Being is therefore 'recognized/understood by those who are of his [type of] being,' although the Greek literally means "is recognized by his own".

Agios es. For ἅγιος εἶ. Combining the Latin with the Greek, for readability and expressiveness.

form all being. In both senses of the term 'form' - constitute, and form being into beings and which beings are or can be re-united with Being (theos) by logos.

you who engender all physis as eikon. The meaning and significance of this are often overlooked and often lost in translation. I have transliterated εἰκὼν as here it does not only mean what the English words 'image' or 'likeness' suggest or imply, but rather it is similar to what Maximus of Constantinople in his *Mystagogia* [Patrologiae Graeca, 91, c.0658] explains. Which is of we humans, and the cosmos, and Nature, and psyche, as eikons, although according to Maximus it is the Christian church itself (as manifest and embodied in Jesus of Nazareth and the Apostles and their successors and in scripture) which, being the eikon of God, enables we humans to recognize this, recognize God, be in communion with God, return to God, and thus find and fulfil the meaning of our being, our existence.

According to the hermetic weltanschauung, as outlined by Pœmandres here, all physis - the being, nature, character, of beings - their essence beyond the form/appearance their being is or assumes or is perceived as - re-presents (manifests, is an eikon of) theos. That is, the physis of beings can be considered not only as an emanation of theos but as re-presenting his Being, his essence. To recognize this, to recognize theos, to be in communion with theos, to return to theos, and thus become immortal, there is the way up (anados) through the

seven spheres:

Thus does the mortal hasten through the harmonious structure, offering up, in the first realm, that vigour which grows and which fades, and - in the second one - those dishonourable machinations, no longer functioning. In the third, that eagerness which deceives, no longer functioning; in the fourth, the arrogance of command, no longer insatiable; in the fifth, profane insolence and reckless haste; in the sixth, the bad inclinations occasioned by riches, no longer functioning; and in the seventh realm, the lies that lie in wait. [Section 25]

you whom the Physis did not morph. Given the construction - ὃν ἡ φύσις - I have capitalized Physis here (see sections 14 and 17]. By 'morph' is meant what the Greek term (ἐμόρφωσεν) implies, which is 'shape or transform' into some-thing-else, to give some-thing the 'semblance' of theos . That is, theos was, is, and remains, theos; there is no-thing resembling theos.

you who are mightier than all artifice. The artifice - the works, expedients, skill, manifestations, artifices, products, machinations, ingenuity, the 'domination', and the force - of others.

It is interesting to compare this might, the strength and power of theos, with what Epictetus writes about human strength in his *Discourses*:

οὔτε τύραννος κωλύσει με θέλοντα οὔτε δεσπότης οὔτε οἱ πολλοὶ τὸν ἕνα οὔθ' ὁ ἰσχυρότερος τὸν ἀσθενέστερον: τοῦτο γὰρ ἀκώλυτον δέδοται ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκάστω [4.5]

neither a tyrannos nor some Lord shall negate my intent; nor some crowd although I be just one; nor someone stronger although I be weaker, since such unhindrance is a gift, to everyone, from theos

wordful. The expressive term 'wordful' is more suitable here than 'speech', and also contrasts well with 'ineffable' and 'inexpressible'.

32.

the knowledge. For τῆς γνώσεως, although 'acquiring the knowledge' and 'the gnosis' are alternatives, so that with the latter it reads "I ask of you to grant that I am not foiled in the gnosis germane to our essence", with the phrase 'our essence' referring to the essence - οὐσία - of both mortals and theos.

favour. χάρις. A gift, favour, or kindness, here from theos [χάρις θεοῦ] and which type of gift is also mentioned in the New Testament (for example, Luke, 2.40). See also the quotation from Irenaeus in the note on *the father of all beings* in section 21.

the unknowing. In respect of 'unknowing' see the note in section 27.

who are your children. In respect of υἱὸς as the gender neutral 'child', rather than 'son', see the note on υἱὸς θεοῦ in section 6, and also the note on gender neutrality under ἀναγνωρίσας ἑαυτὸν in section 19.

share in [your] numinosity. For συναγιάζειν.

Ιερός Λόγος

An Esoteric Mythos

Tractate III

A Pagan And Esoteric Mythos

While the title - Ιερός Λόγος - of the third tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum is generally translated as either "A Sacred Discourse" or "A Holy Sermon", it would perhaps be more accurate to translate as *An Esoteric Mythos* given (i) that it describes a numinous theogony of the kind recounted to initiates of the mystery traditions of ancient Greece, and thus recounts a mythos that pre-dates the Biblical story of Genesis, as given in the Septuagint (LXX), by centuries, and (ii) that ἱερός λόγος/ἱεροί λόγοι (an esoteric mythos/esoteric mythoi) were phrases often used to describe such mystery traditions, both Greek and Greco-Egyptian, as, for example, by Herodotus {1}.

For it is possible that the often-stated belief of the tractate being influenced by the story recounted in LXX is incorrect, and that whatever similarities there are between the text of the tractate and Greek text of the Biblical story of Genesis might be due either to the scribe of what was a previously esoteric aural tradition being familiar with LXX or some parts of it and borrowing a particular word or words to try and express an aspect of that paganus tradition (an opinion held by the Christian Byzantine historian Mikhael Psellus, d. 1078 CE), or to the Biblical story of creation itself being influenced by a more ancient Greek mythos or mythoi, just as it was influenced by similar, more ancient, mythoi from Sumeria and elsewhere. In addition, the overt polytheism of the tractate, and Greek concepts such as φύσις (physis) and Πνεῦμα (pneuma) {2}, are at odds with such influence and with that Biblical story.

Furthermore, far from it being (again, as has often been previously believed) a very corrupt, or overwritten text, the *Ἱερός Λόγος* most probably reasonably represents, like the *Pymander tractate*, a pagan metaphysical *weltanschauung* germane to the period of its composition and one which is based upon or recounts an earlier, and most probably aural, tradition. Furthermore, as Wildberg has suggested, the text might simply incorporate some marginalia {3}.

Such an esoteric mythos, as recorded in the *Ἱερός Λόγος* hermetic tractate, had - like the Biblical Genesis story - antecedents. Such as

οἱ Γῆς ἐξεγένοντο καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος

those who came-into-being from Gaia and the starry heavens {4}

from the *theogony* of Hesiod (106) - written c. 700 BCE - of which there is a remarkably similar expression in funerary inscriptions, from some four centuries later (c. 300 BCE) in Pharsalos, Thessalyon,

Γῆς παῖς εἰμι καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστ<ερόεντος>

I am a child of Gaia and the starry heavens

and on a gold funerary tablet (c. 200 BCE) found at Eleutherna, Crete,

ΓΑΣ ΥΙΟΣ ΕΙΜΙ ΚΑΙ ΟΥΡΑΝΟΥ ΑΣΤΕΡΟΕΝΤΟΣ

Γᾶς υἱός ἡμι καὶ Ὀρανῶ ἀστερόεντος {5}

and also in a, purportedly Orphic, religious text (the *Derveni papyrus*) dating from c. 330 BCE {6} which contains the Hesiodian phrase οἱ Διὸς ἐξεγένοντο [those who came-into-being from Zeus]. Thus, it is part of this ancient esoteric mythos, and/or its antecedents, that may well be echoed in LXX (Genesis, 1:1), written centuries later:

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν

In the beginning, Theos produced the heavens and the Earth {7}

and which Biblical text is, interestingly, given by Aquila - qv. the *Hexapla* {8} - as:

Ἐν κεφαλαίῳ ἐκτίσεν ὁ Θεὸς σὺν τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ σὺν τὴν γῆν

As foundation, Theos formed the heavens and the Earth {9}

It is thus my view that the third tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum is a valuable hermetic document, presenting as it does - probably after centuries of aural transmission as befitted ἱεροί λόγοι - an esoteric weltanschauung that pre-dates, and thus is independent of, not only Christianity but also of the myths, stories, and theology, manifest in the Old Testament.

Understood thus, the Ἱερός Λόγος tractate is the story of genesis according to an ancient pagan, and esoteric, weltanschauung; a text in all probability older than the other texts in the Corpus Hermeticum; and a text which the author of the Pœmandres tractate might well have been familiar with, as a reading of both texts indicates.

Commentary, Translation, and Text

The references in the commentary here to the *Pœmandres* tractate are to my translation of and commentary on that text for I have retained the transliterations, and some of the English phrases, used and explained there, such as physis, phaos, theos. I have also, as there, occasionally used some particular, or some quite obscure English words - or forms of them - in order to try and elucidate the meaning of the text or to avoid using, in what is a metaphysical text, some commonplace term with various connotations (contemporary or otherwise) that may lead to a misunderstanding of the text. I have endeavoured to explain such obscure words in the commentary. There is thus in this translation, as in my translation of *Pœmandres*, a certain technical - or rather, esoteric - vocabulary.

Purely for readability, I have arranged the translation into (non-poetic) verses rather than long paragraphs. All translations in the commentary and notes are mine.

Notes

{1} (a) ἔστι λόγος περὶ αὐτοῦ ἱρὸς λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 48, s3. (b) ἔστι ἱρὸς περὶ αὐτοῦ λόγος λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 62, s2. (c) ἔστι δὲ περὶ αὐτῶν ἱρὸς λόγος λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 81, s2.

{2} In ἱεροί λόγοι and in many hermetic texts, φύσις suggests something more than what the terms 'nature' or 'character' - of a thing or person - denote. That is - qv. the Pœmandres tractate (see footnote 8) - it suggests to "know what is real" and to apprehend the physis of those real things - νοῆσαι τὴν τοῦ τῶν φύσιν; to thus have an understanding of ontology. For physis is a revealing, a manifestation, of not only the true nature of beings but also of the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being.

In respect of pneuma, qv. DeWitt Burton: *Spirit, Soul, and Flesh: The Usage of Πνεῦμα, Ψυχή, and Σάρξ in Greek Writings and Translated Works from the Earliest Period to 225 AD* (University of Chicago Press, 1918)

{3} Christian Wildberg: *The Genesis of a Genesis: Corpus Hermeticum, Tractate III*, in Lance Jenott and Sarit Kattan Gribetz: *Jewish and Christian Cosmogony in Late Antiquity* (pp.139-166). *Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum*, 155. Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen, 2013.

{4} Pedantically, a more accurate translation of ἀστερόεντος would be stelliferous - hence the 'stelliferous heavens' - but 'starry heavens' is far more poetic.

{5} Interestingly, some similar inscriptions - such as another one from Eleutherna - are gender neutral and simply say ΓΥΑΤΗΡΚΑΙΩΠΑΝΩΑΣΤΕΡΟΕΝΤΟΣ. That is, 'of Gaia and the starry heavens'.

{6} Bernabé, Alberto, and Francesc Casadesús. *Orfeo y la tradición órfica: Un reencuentro*. Madrid: Akal. 2008.

{7} Although I give here, for Ἐν ἀρχῇ, the conventional 'In the beginning', I am inclined to prefer 'In primacy' (the first thing/principle/origin of; cf. Anaximander, where there is also mention of the heavens and 'the world' or cosmos: πρῶτος τοῦτο τοῦνομα κομίσας τῆς ἀρχῆς λέγει δ' αὐτὴν μήτε ὕδωρ μήτε ἄλλο τι τῶν καλουμένων εἶναι στοιχείων ἀλλ' ἑτέραν τινὰ φύσιν ἄπειρον ἐξ ἧς ἅπαντας γίνεσθαι τοὺς οὐρανοὺς καὶ τοὺς ἐν αὐτοῖς κόσμους. Simplicius, *Physics*, 24:13-21).

An alternative, suggested by the Greek text of Aquila of Genesis 1:1, would be "As foundation, Theos produced..." Furthermore, instead of the 'creavit' of the Latin Vulgate, the older Vetus Latina has 'In principio *fecit* deus caelum et terram.'

{8} Frederick Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum quæ Supersunt*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1875.

{9} Literally, "In foundation, Theos built/produced..."

The Latin of Jermone - who, according to certain sources, was acquainted with the text of Aquila - is *in principio creavit Deus caelum et terram*.

Translation

[1] The numen of all beings is theos: numinal, and of numinal physis.
The origin of what exists is theos, who is Perceivation and Physis and Substance:
The sapientia which is a revealing of all beings.
For the numinal is the origin: physis, vigour, incumbency, accomplishment, renewance.

In the Abyss, an unmeasurable darkness, and, by the influence of the numen,
Water and delicate apprehending Pnuema, there, in Kaos.
Then, a numinous phaos arose and, from beneath the sandy ground,
Parsements coagulated from fluidic essence.
And all of the deities <particularize> seedful physis.

[2] With all beings unformed and not yet presenced,
What was lightsome was separated out, upward
And what was burdensome set in fluidic ground
With all defined through Fire, then elevated - and conveyed - by Pnuema.
Thus the heavens became perceivable in seven spheres,
Deities represented in the arrangements of the stars,
With the outer revolving in the æther, and circulating by the Pnuema of theos.

[3] Through their distinguishing influence, each deity did what was assigned to them
So that there came-into-being beasts four-footed and slithering
And those dwelling in water and those that fly,
And harvestable seeds and pastures and all kinds of verdant flowers,
<Seeding within> the semination of rebirth.
Thus can the offspring of mortals apprehend the works of theos, a living witness of physis,
So that the multitude of mortals can husband all that is below the heavens,
Appreciate honour, and propagate by propagation and spawn by spawning.

Thus, every psyche - embodied in flesh - can
By the mirificence of the circumferent deities coursing the heavens
Apprehend the heavens, and honour, and physis presenced, and the works of theos;
Can understand divine influence as wyrdful change
And thus, regarding what is good and what is bad, discover all the arts of honour.

[4] For this is the commencement of their living, of such learning
As is - by circumferent deities coursing - wyrdful, and the discoagulation of it,
For the great earthly artialized memorials they have left
Will, with the passing of the seasons, fade
Just as, for the generations of psyche-bearing flesh and fruitful seeds and artiselements,
There will be renewance through incumbency, renewance through the divine
And by the circumferent coursing of Physis.

The divine is all of that mixel: renewance of the cosmic order through Physis
For Physis is presenced in the divine.

Commentary

1.

The numen of all beings is theos. Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεός. The sense of δόξα here, especially given the following mention of θεῖος and φύσις, is of immanence and of transcendent sublimity, encompassing both (i) the interpretation given to the word in LXX and the New Testament, of a divine glory (qv. Exodus 16:10, Matthew 25:31, and Luke 2:9) and thus of what is considered to be - that is, is outwardly manifest as - glorious, or splendid, as in Matthew 4:8, a sense well-expressed in the Latin of Jerome: iterum adsumit eum diabolus in montem excelsum valde et ostendit ei omnia regna mundi et gloriam eorum, and (ii) the classical, more personal sense, of honour, and reputation or repute, the latter as for example referenced by Boethius: Unde non iniuria tragicus exclamat: ὦ δόξα, δόξα, μυρίοισι δὴ βροτῶν οὐδὲν γεγῶσι βίοτον ὠγκώσας μέγαν (Book III, vi).

Hence I have opted for 'numen', rather than the usual 'splendour' or 'glory' which do not, in my view given their modern connotations and common usage, express the sense of the Greek; with the meaning of 'numen' here being expressed by what follows: "numinal and of numinal physis", where by numinal - in this ἱερός λόγος - is meant divine not in the specific sense of a monotheistic and Biblical (a masculous) God but in the more general sense of pertaining to a deity or deities, male or female, as in a paganus (and not necessarily patriarchal) polytheism.

In this paganus context, the numinous is therefore what is, or what manifests (presences) or can manifest or remind us of (what can reveal) what is regarded or understood as sacred, numinal, sublime, awe-inspiring, beautiful, noble, esoteric, beyond the mundane, and beyond our ability, as mortals, to control. Thus, in terms of ἱεροὶ λόγοι in general, the numen reminds us of 'the natural order of things' (the physis of theos, of theoi, of Nature and of the heavens), reminds us of our own physis, and thus of our duties and responsibilities as mortals (especially in relation to deities) and thence the need to avoid hubris.

In respect of hubris, Hesiod, in Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι [Works and Days], vv 213-218, wrote:

σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης, μὴδ' ὕβριν ὄφελλε:

ὔβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῶ βροτῶ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς
215 ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύνатаι, βαρύθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς
ἐγκύρσας ἄτησιν: ὁδὸς δ' ἐτέρηφι παρελθεῖν
κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει
ἐς τέλος ἐξελθοῦσα: παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω

You should listen to [the goddess] Fairness and not oblige Hubris
Since Hubris harms unfortunate mortals while even the more fortunate
Are not equal to carrying that heavy a burden, meeting as they do with Mischief.
The best path to take is the opposite one: that of honour
For, in the end, Fairness is above Hubris
Which is something the young come to learn from adversity.

Notes:

- a. δίκη. The goddess of Fairness/Justice/Judgement, and - importantly - of Tradition (Ancestral Custom). In Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι, as in Θεογονία (Theogony), Hesiod is recounting and explaining part of that tradition, one important aspect of which tradition is understanding the relation between the gods and mortals. Given both the antiquity of the text and the context, 'Fairness' - as the name of the goddess - is, in my view, more appropriate than the now common appellation 'Justice', considering the modern (oft times impersonal) connotations of the word 'justice'.
- b. Mischief. The sense of ἄτησιν here is not of 'delusion' nor of 'calamities', per se, but rather of encountering that which or those whom (such as the goddess of mischief, Ἄτη) can bring mischief or misfortune into the 'fortunate life' of a 'fortunate mortal', and which encounters are, according to classical tradition, considered as having been instigated by the gods. Hence, of course, why Sophocles [Antigone, 1337-8] wrote ὡς πεπρωμένης οὐκ ἔστι θνητοῖς συμφορᾶς ἀπαλλαγὴ (mortals cannot be delivered from the misfortunes of their fate).
- c. δίκαιος. Honour expresses the sense that is meant: of being fair; capable of doing the decent thing; of dutifully observing ancestral customs. A reasonable alternative for 'honour' would thus be 'decency', both preferable to words such as 'just' and 'justice' which are not only too impersonal but have too many inappropriate modern connotations.
- d. νήπιος. Literal - 'young', 'uncultured' (i.e. un-schooled, un-educated in the ways of ancestral custom) - rather than metaphorical ('foolish', ignorant).

Theos. θεὸς. As with the Pœmandres tractate, I have opted for a transliteration, for the Biblical 'God' is not what is meant here, given the title of the tractate and the content, while the word 'god' (singular, lower case) now has certain connotations (some of which are theological) not always relevant to ancient Greek deities. In terms of *theos*, what is most probably meant here - cf. Hesiod's Theogony - is the, or a, prime, first, or primordial deity (such as Οὐρανός) from whence came-into-being the other Greek deities, including Zeus (cf. the use of πρῶτον by Plato in *Timeas*, 69b).

Thus, in respect of this tractate, I translate θεοὶ not as 'gods' but as 'deities' in the hope of providing a more balanced view of this particular ancient pagan text.

Physis. As in my translation of Pœmandres tractate I have given a transliteration to suggest, as I wrote there, "something more than what 'nature' or 'character' - of a thing or person - denotes. That is, to know what is real and apprehend the physis of those real things - νοῆσαι τὴν τοῦ τῶν φύσιν; to discern the physis, the true nature, of beings. That is, to have an understanding of ontology; for physis is a revealing, a manifestation, of not only the true nature of beings but also of the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being".

Occasionally I have capitalized physis, when the context merits it, such as when the physis of what we term Nature is meant or implied; or when - as here at the beginning - it is an attribute of theos.

τῶν ὄντων. What is real/what exists (Reality/Existence) - qv. the beginning of the Pœmandres tractate, and my commentary thereon.

νοῦς. *Perceiviation*, not 'mind', qv. Pœmandres 2.

substance. ὕλη, the *materia* of 'things' and living beings - contrasted with οὐσία, essence. qv. Pœmandres 10.

sapientia. σοφία. qv. Pœmandres 29.

vigour. ἐνέργεια. In the sense of vitality and vigorous activity. See my note on ἡ εἰμαρμένη, Pœmandres 15.

incumbency. Often personified as Ἀνάγκης, the primordial goddess of incumbency; that is, of *wyrd*: of that which is beyond, and the origin of, what we often describe as our Fate as a mortal being. To render ἀνάγκη here somewhat blandly as 'necessity' is to miss both the subtle esotericism of an ἱερός λόγος and what Empedocles wrote:

ἔστιν Ἀνάγκης χρῆμα, θεῶν ψήφισμα παλαιόν,
αἶδιον, πλατέεσσι κατεσφρηγισμένον ὄρκοις·
εὗτέ τις ἀμπλακίησι φόνωι φίλα γυῖα μήνηι,
νείκεί θ' ὅς κε ἐπίορκον ἀμαρτήσας ἐπομόσσει,
δαίμονες οἷτε μακραίωνος λελάχασι βίοιο,
τρὶς μιν μυρίας ὥρας ἀπὸ μακάρων ἀλάλησθαι,
φυομένους παντοῖα διὰ χρόνου εἶδεα θνητῶν
ἀργαλέας βιότοιο μεταλλάσσοντα κελεύθους.
αἰθέριον μὲν γάρ σφε μένος πόντονδε διώκει,
πόντος δ' ἐς χθονὸς οὐδας ἀπέπτυσε, γαῖα δ' ἐς αὐγὰς
ἡελίου φαέθοντος, ὃ δ' αἰθέρος ἔμβαλε δίναις·
ἄλλος δ' ἐξ ἄλλου δέχεται, στυγέουσι δὲ πάντες.
τῶν καὶ ἐγὼ νῦν εἰμι, φυγὰς θεόθεν καὶ ἀλήτης,
Νείκεϊ μαινομένωι πίσυνος.

There exists an insight by Ananke, an ancient resolution
Of the gods, immutable and sealed by vows,
Regarding when one of the daimons - those whose allotted portion of life is long -
Has their own hands stained from murder
Or who, once having sworn an oath, because of some feud breaks that oath.
For they shall for ten thousand tripled seasons wander away from the beautified,
Begotten during that period in all manner of mortal form
And exchanging during that voyage one vexation for another:

The fierce Ætherials chase them to the Sea,
The Sea spits them out onto dusty ground,
Gaia hurls them to the burning light of the Sun
Who flings them back to those swirling Ætherials.
Moved from one to the other, all detest them.

I am one of those, a vagabond in exile from the gods
Who has to rely on strongful Disagreement.

Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker, Diels-Kranz, B115

Notes:

νεῖκος (disagreement) is - according to what we can adduce of the philosophy of Empedocles from the fragments of his writings that we possess - a fundamental principle, and one understood in relation to another fundamental principle, Φιλότης, expressive as they both are of the logos (λόγος) by which we can possibly apprehend the workings of the cosmic order (κόσμος). However, the common translations - of 'strife' and 'love' respectively - do not in my view express what Empedocles seems to be trying to convey, which is 'disagreement' and 'fellowship' (a communal or kindred working-together in pursuit of a common interest or goal). For while disagreement sometimes disrupts fellowship, it is often necessary as the genesis of productive change.

Thus, just as Odysseus had to rely on the support of Athena, who disagreed with how Poseidon treated Odysseus, so does the 'vagabond in exile from the deities/the gods' have to rely on disagreements among the immortals to end their own exile.

Abyss. ἄβυσσος.

A delicate apprehending pneuma. πνεῦμα λεπτὸν νοερόν. In respect of νοερός, the sense here is not 'intelligent'/'intelligence' - as in "quickness or superiority of understanding, sagacity", etcetera - but rather of self-awareness; that is, of possessing a faculty to perceive, comprehend, and to rationally understand the external world. Which is why I have opted for 'apprehending'.

influence. δύναμις. Not here 'force' or 'power' per se but rather the influence arising from, inherent in, the numen by virtue of the numinosity of theos. The kind of influence which can nurture a 'delicate apprehending pneuma'.

Kaos. χάος.

numinous phaos. φῶς ἅγιον. Regarding the transliteration of φῶς - using the Homeric φάος (phaos) - see my commentary on Pœmandres 4; and regarding ἅγιος as 'numinous', rather than the conventional 'holy' or 'sacred', refer to the commentary on Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεὸς above, and especially the note on the duality of the numinous in pagan weltanschauungen in my commentary on Pœmandres 5.

beneath (that) sandy ground. ὑφ' ἄμμῳ. Regarding ἄμμος, qv. Xenophon, *Apomnemoneumata* 3.3.6 - πότερον ἐπάγειν τοὺς πολεμίους ἐπὶ τὴν ἄμμον κελεύσεις - for the reference, in context, seems to be to sandy ground or to sea marshes or, and perhaps more metaphorically, to waterlogged (boggy, unsuitable) land in general, and not necessarily (as some have theorized) to the sandy places and sand dunes in North Africa (such as in Egypt and Libya) as mentioned in Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica* 3.50.2, τὴν δὲ χροάν ἄμμῳ παραπλησίαν ἔχουσι.

It is possible that ἄμμος, in regard to the ἱερός λόγος recounted in this tractate, had some esoteric or metaphysical meaning, now lost.

flowing (as in fluidic). The sense of ὑγρός here and in Pœmandres 4.

essence. οὐσίας. qv. Pœmandres 14.

parsements. For στοιχεῖον. qv. Pœmandres 8.

Coagulated. πήγνυμι.

<particularize>. As in 'distinguish between'. The MSS have καταδιερῶσι. Various emendations have been proposed, including καταδιωρῶσι, while Wildberg has suggested that "and all of the deities..." - καὶ θεοὶ πάντες καταδιωρῶσι - was originally marginalia.

2.

With all beings unformed and not yet presenced. ἀδιορίστων δὲ ὄντων ἀπάντων καὶ ἀκατασκευάστων. An interesting phrase, with the English term 'presenced' perhaps expressing at least something of its philosophical implications derived as that term is from the noun 'presencing' (dating from c.1637) and meaning as it does "the action or process of making some-thing manifest and/or present and/or established." For, as the tractate goes to explain, what becomes formed and manifest are 'the seven-fold heavens' and deities, manifest as stars, within them.

In respect of ἀκατασκευάστων, while some commentators have pointed to Genesis 1:2 - ἡ δὲ γῆ ἦν ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος, 'and the Earth was unperceived and formless' - as a parallel, σκευαστῶν occurs in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (5.1013b) in reference to the classification of differences in

causation, such as whether or not something is 'manufactured', as in produced by an artisan (such as a statue, ἀνδριάς) or by some other means, and, regardless, πάντα ὅθεν ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς μεταβολῆς ἢ στάσεως. Interestingly, in his commentary on the Metaphysics, Thomas Aquinas wrote: "Apposuit autem cum insit, ad differentiam privationis et contrarii: nam statua quidem fit ex aere, quod inest statuae iam factae; fit etiam ex infigurato, quod quidem non inest statuae iam factae. Unde aes est causa statuae, non autem infiguratum, cum sit principium per accidens tantum" (Commentaria, *In libros Physicorum*, 2, Lectio 5).

Thus, there is initially a 'privation of form', unformed being, which is then formed - as a statue from unshaped bronze - by theos as artisan-creator, and thus a possible metaphysical parallel in Pœmandres, such as in 31: πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων... οὗ ἡ βουλὴ τελεῖται ἀπὸ τῶν ἰδίων δυνάμεων...ὁ λόγῳ συστησάμενος τὰ ὄντα [father of all beings...whose purpose is accomplished by his own arts...you who by logos form all being]. It is also interesting to compare all this with Plato's description in the Timaeus, 69b-c, in which his expression καὶ τῶν μὲν θεῶν αὐτὸς γίγνεται δημιουργός is noteworthy.

lightsome/burdensome. Used in preference to the less descriptive, ubiquitous, 'light' and 'heavy'. The whole passage is somewhat obscure, but if ἀποδιωρίσθη τὰ ἐλαφρὰ εἰς ὕψος was a metaphorical 'separating out' of what is 'light' from what is not light - rather than what is 'light' being somehow sent upwards, 'to the heights', or 'separated off upwards' - and, in particular, if ἀνακρεμασθέντων πνεύματι ὀχεῖσθαι was understood as referring to what - having been defined by, wrought in form through Fire, as bronze and iron are formed and shaped through fire - becomes elevated and conveyed by Pneuma, then philosophically it makes sense, especially given the Greek concept of the psyche (the immortal essence, or 'spirit') of sentient beings being conveyed through life and beyond (and presenced) by (or as) Pnuema, or by our mortal body (as mentioned by Plato).

seven spheres. qv. Pœmandres 9, 17, etcetera.

the outer revolving in the æther. The text is rather obscure, and one assumes 'the outer' refers to the outermost, the peripheral, sphere. Furthermore, I have here translated ἀήρ not as 'air' but as æther since ordinary, terrestrial, air is most certainly not what is meant and the ambiguous term æther (understood classically or otherwise) is suggestive of what may be meant. For whether ἀήρ here - as æther - refers to the fifth element as mentioned by Plato in *Epinomis* (981c) - πέντε οὖν ὄντων τῶν σωμάτων, πῦρ χρὴ φάναι καὶ ὕδωρ εἶναι καὶ τρίτον ἀέρα, τέταρτον δὲ γῆν, πέμπτον δὲ αἰθέρα - or whether it refers to a more mystical or esoteric, or hypothesized, substance that formed part of ἱεροί λόγοι, is an interesting question.

So that there came-into-being beasts four-footed. cf. Poemandres 11.

<Seeding within them> the semination of rebirth. τὸ σπέρμα τῆς παλιγγενεσίας ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἐσπερμολόγουν. Although the text is obscure and has been variously emended by Reitzenstein, Nock, et al, the presumption is that this rebirth - or, alternatively, and more probably, this 'regeneration through offspring' - refers either to the deities themselves or (more probably) to the previously described living things which the deities brought-into-being.

My view is that what seems to be suggested by the text is that the deities seeded within living beings (human, animal, and otherwise) the ability to regenerate through offspring.

Thus can the offspring of mortals apprehend the works of theos. There is an interesting parallel here with some Quranic ayat, such as:

"The creations in Heaven and Earth, the very change of Night to Day, are Signs [from Allah] for those gifted with understanding, those who whether sitting, standing or reclining on their sides, give praise to Allah and who frequently recall those creations in Heaven and Earth." 3:189-191 Interpretation of Meaning

mortals should husband all that is below the heavens. I take the sense of δεσποτεία here - given what precedes and what follows - to suggest husbandry (of Earth) rather than to mean power in the sense of mastery (as in over a slave).

appreciate honour. Given the context - mortals, theos, deities, physis - I take the meaning of ἀγαθός here to refer to what is personal, not to some abstract concept of 'good'. Hence the personal virtue of honour; to behaving, to living, in a noble, a valourous, way, as opposed to being dishonourable or cowardly; a contrast mentioned in the Iliad, Book 17, 631-2: τῶν μὲν γὰρ πάντων βέλε' ἄπτεται ὅς τις ἀφήη ἢ κακὸς ἢ ἀγαθός [whether hurled by someone honourable or dishonourable, all of the missiles still strike their target].

The personal sense of ἀγαθός here also has the virtue of making what follows, at the end of section 3 - γινῶναι ἀγαθῶν καὶ φαύλων καὶ πᾶσαν ἀγαθῶν δαιδαλουργίαν εὐρεῖν - somewhat more understandable. Hence, a discovery or a learning of "all the arts of honour" in contrast to discovering "every artful workmanship of good things".

propagate by propagation and spawn by spawning. qv. Poemandres 18.

a living witness of physis. The sense of ἐνεργοῦσαν here is poetically metaphysical, not literal. Hence a "living witness of physis" rather than an 'active' or 'working' one. An alternative would be 'presenced', suggested by Aristotle's Metaphysics: ἐπεὶ δὲ περὶ τῆς κατὰ κίνησιν λεγομένης δυνάμεως

εἴρηται περὶ ἐνεργείας διορίσωμεν τί τέ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐνέργεια καὶ ποῖόν τι... ἔστι δὴ ἐνέργεια τὸ ὑπάρχειν τὸ πρᾶγμα μὴ οὕτως ὥσπερ λέγομεν δυνάμει. (1048a)

with every psyche, embodied in flesh. The text following this is (to the end of the tractate) is often so obscure (or corrupted) that any interpretation is tentative. Wildberg's suggestion that διὰ δρομήματος θεῶν ἐγκυκλίων τερασπορίας...καὶ φύσεως ἐνεργείας is marginalia, while interesting, does little to alleviate the obscurity of this part of the text.

mirificence. This rather neglected English word - from the post-classical Latin word mirificentia: the action or the fact of doing what is or appears to be wondrous, portentous - in my view expresses the meaning implicit in διὰ δρομήματος θεῶν ἐγκυκλίων τερασπορίας εἰς κατοπτεῖαν οὐρανοῦ somewhat better than such turns of phrase as "the wonder-working course of..," or "by portent-sowings of the course of..."

presenced. qv. the previous note on ἐνεργοῦσαν.

understand divine influence as wyrdful change. γνῶσιν θείας δυνάμεως μοίρης ὀχλουμένης. This exceptionally obscure Greek phrase has been interpreted in a variety of ways, with my interpretation just one among many. 'Wyrd' rather than 'fate', given how the term 'fate' has acquired contemporary meanings not relevant here.

all the arts of honour. Less poetically, more literally, "the skills of all the honourable arts".

4.

As is - by circumferent deities coursing - wyrdful. This is open to three different interpretations, as perhaps was intended. First, that it is the deities themselves who determine the wyrd of mortals. Second, that a person's wyrd can be discovered - learned, possibly predicted - by astrological means; that is, by understanding the movement of the planets and the stars associated with the deities since the "deities are represented in the arrangements of the stars". Third, given the septenary nature of the deities - for "the heavens are perceivable in seven spheres" - one's wyrd can be discovered by an esoteric and septenary anados as described in the Pœmandres tractate.

artialized. From verb artize - qv. 'artisements' below - and meaning here produced or constructed by an artisan or skilled craftsman.

which the passing of the seasons will fade. Not χρόνος as some abstract 'time' measured by some human manufactured mechanism such as a clock (a relatively recent concept, in terms of aeonic ἱεροὶ λόγοι), but rather measured by the passing of the seasons, as determined - for example - by the appearance and the disappearance in the night sky of certain constellations and stars:

θεοὺς μὲν αἰτῶ τῶνδ' ἀπαλλαγὴν πόνων
φρουρᾶς ἐτείας μῆκος, ἦν κοιμώμενος
στέγαις Ἀτρειδῶν ἄγκαθεν, κυνὸς δίκην,
ἄστρον κάτοιδα νυκτέρων ὁμήγυριν,
καὶ τοὺς φέροντας χειῖμα καὶ θέρος βροτοῖς
λαμπροὺς δυνάστας, ἐμπρέποντας αἰθέρι
ἀστέρας, ὅταν φθίνωσιν, ἀντολὰς τε τῶν.

Again I have asked the gods to deliver me from this toil,
This vigil a year in length, where I repose
On Atreidae's roof on my arms, as is the custom with dogs
Looking toward the nightly assembly of constellations
And they who bring to mortals the storm-season and the summer:
Those radiant sovereigns, distinguished in the heavens
As stars when they come forth or pass away.

(Agamemnon, 1-7)

artisements. The products of the skilled work of the artisan and the artist; their artisanship; cf. the 16th century English verb *artize*: to exercise a skill, to pursue a skilled occupation such as that of an artisan.

the circumferent coursing of Physis. Given the context, I have - as at the beginning of the text - capitalized *physis* here.

mixon. Alternate (old) spelling of *mixture*, meaning the condition or state of being mixed, melded, compounded, combined.

Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς

Chaldron Or Monas

Tractate IV

Introduction

The title given to the fourth tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς, requires some consideration if it is to be translated without using English words that have, in the centuries since the text was written, acquired meanings which are not or which may not be relevant to or representative of the metaphysics, and the cosmogony, of such an ancient text; with an injudicious choice of words more often than not resulting in the modern reader projecting certain interpretations upon the text, as might be the case in translating, without some comment, κρατῆρ as 'basin', cup, or 'mixing bowl', μονάς as 'monad', and Τάτ as Thoth.

In respect of κρατῆρ, a more appropriate - and certainly more subtle - translation, given the esoteric nature and antiquity of the text, would be chaldron (an alternative spelling of 'cauldron'), since basin, cup, and 'mixing bowl' are not only too prosaic but also do not conjure the appropriate archetypal imagery: of the primal artisan-creator coagulating and mixing primal substances - cf. tractate III, Ἰερός Λόγος - to produce, to bring-into-being by means of Logos, the cosmic order and thence mortal beings.

In respect of μονάς, the transliteration monas would be more appropriate - and certainly more subtle - than 'monad' given that the term monad is now so often associated with such weltanschauungen as those termed Pythagorean/neo-Pythagorean and Gnostic, an association which may or may not be relevant here. Furthermore, monas has a long and interesting esoteric usage, including (somewhat recently) by John Dee in his *Testamentum Johannis Dee Philosophi*

summi ad Johannem Gwynn, transmissum 1568 - a text included (on page 334) in Elias Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum, Containing Severall Poeticall Pieces of our Famous English philosophers, who have written the Hermetique Mysteries in their owne Ancient Language*, published in London in 1652 - who wrote "our Monas trewe thus use by natures Law, both binde and lewse", and who also entitled one of his works *Monas Hieroglyphica* (Antwerp, 1564), in which work he described (in Theorem XVIII) a septenary system somewhat similar to that of the Poemandres tractate:

In respect of Τάτ, while there is no disputing that Thoth is meant, what may or may not be implied by the name Thoth is whether or not there is a primarily Egyptian genesis for the metaphysics and the cosmogony of this particular tractate. For what does 'Egyptian' mean in the context of the Corpus Hermeticum, written when Egypt was a post-Ptolemaic Roman province where Hellenism still thrived? That is, is the text propounding a metaphysics and a cosmogony primarily redolent of indigenous, pre-Alexandrian, times, with Hermes Trismegistus simply a Hellenic name for the ancient Dynastic deity Thoth, and thus with the Greek Hermes possibly being a son of that ancient Egyptian deity? Or is the text redolent of a classical metaphysics and a cosmogony; or of a Hellenic metaphysics and cosmogony; or of some syncretism of Egyptian (pre-Alexandrian) weltanschauungen with Hellenic mysticism? Or has the author (or authors) of Ἐρμού πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς simply used the name of an ancient deity - Thoth - in order to appeal to an audience of Hellenized Egyptians, or Greeks/Romans dwelling in Egypt, or because it seemed to add some esoteric gravitas to the text? Or, as the title might be taken to imply - of Hermes to Thoth - is it a text intended to inform Egyptians (Hellenized or expatriate Greeks/Romans, or otherwise) about Greek/Hellenic metaphysics and cosmogony, with Thoth thus regarded, symbolically, esoterically, or otherwise, as the son of the Greek divinity Hermes?

In this matter, I incline toward the view - based on some forty years of study of the Corpus Hermeticum and similar mystical and esoteric texts, classical, Hellenic, medieval, Arabic and otherwise - that what is imparted in this tractate, as with the Poemandres and Ἰερός Λόγος, is primarily a mystical, and - for centuries - aural, Greek tradition, albeit one possibly influenced, over time and in some degree, by the metaphysical speculations of later philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle. That is, that in Ἐρμού πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς and Ἰερός Λόγος and Ποιμάνδρης, we have an intimation of the metaphysics and the cosmogony taught to initiates of that (or those) ancient and aural and paganus Greek mystical tradition(s) mentioned by writers such as Herodotus. And an intimation that is not - a few borrowed illustrative terms notwithstanding - in any significant and metaphysical manner deriving from or influenced by Biblical stories or by early Christian theology or by indigenous Egyptian culture. In the matter of a paganus Greek mystical tradition, the opening of the fourth tractate is, metaphysically, very interesting:

Ἐπειδὴ τὸν πάντα κόσμον ἐποίησεν ὁ δημιουργός οὐ χερσὶν ἀλλὰ
λόγῳ ὥστε οὕτως ὑπολάμβανε ὡς τοῦ παρόντος καὶ αἰεὶ ὄντος καὶ
πάντα ποιήσαντος καὶ ἑνὸς μόνου τῇ δὲ αὐτοῦ θελήσει
δημιουργήσαντος τὰ ὄντα

Because the artisan crafted the complete cosmic order not by hand but through
Logos, you should understand that Being as presential, as eternal, as having crafted
all being, as One only, who by thelesis formed all that is.

For it is incorrect and misleading to write about those three tractates - and
some other tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum - as being in any way
indigenously Egyptian. Rather, their genesis - the tradition they represented -
was the Greek culture of post-Alexandrian Egypt, a cultural influence so evident
in the numerous papyri found in places such as Oxyrhynchus, containing as
such papyri do verses from Homer, Sappho, Menander, Sophocles, and other
Greek authors.

Commentary, Translation, and Text

The references in the commentary here to the *Pœmandres* and Ἱερός Λόγος are
to my translations of and commentary on those texts for, as I mentioned in my
Ἱερός Λόγος,

I have retained the transliterations, and some of the English phrases,
used and explained there, such as physis, phaos, theos. I have also, as
there, occasionally used some particular, or some quite obscure
English words - or forms of them - in order to try and elucidate the
meaning of the text or to avoid using, in what is a metaphysical text,
some commonplace term with various connotations (contemporary or
otherwise) that may lead to a misunderstanding of the text. I have
endeavoured to explain such obscure words in the commentary. There
is thus in this translation, as in my translation of *Pœmandres*, a
certain technical - or rather, esoteric - vocabulary.

As with my Ἱερός Λόγος, I have here, purely for readability, arranged the
translation into (non-poetic) verses rather than long paragraphs. All translations
in the commentary are mine.

Translation

[1] Because the artisan crafted the complete cosmic order not by hand but through Logos
You should understand that Being as presential, as eternal, as having crafted all being,
As One only, who by thelesis formed all that is.

That Being has no body that can be touched or seen or measured or which is separable
Or which is similar to any other body: not of Fire or Water or of Pneuma
Even though all such things are from that Being.
Since that Being is honourable, the desire was to entrust solely to that Being
Such a cosmic order on Earth:

[2] A cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings,
For just as the ever-living cosmic order had an advantage over them
So did they have an advantage over other living beings in their cosmos
Because of Logos and Perceiverance.
Thus did mortals perceive the works of theos, admire them,
Gaining knowledge of their creator.

[3] Thus, Thoth, to all mortals logos was assigned, but not perceiverance
Even though there was no ill-will, for such ill-will arrives not from there
But below, associated with mortals whose Psyche does not convey Perceiverance.

On account of what, father, did theos not assign perceiverance to all?

Son, the desire was to position it half-way between those psyches, as a reward.

[4] Where, then, was it placed?

In that large repleteful chaldron which was dispatched down
With an envoy assigned to declaim to the hearts of mortals:
If you have strength enough, immerse yourself in the chaldron
Should you accept you can ascend -
Having discovered how you came-into-being -
To the one who dispatched down that chaldron.

The many who understood that declaration and were immersive with perceiveration
Gained a certain knowledge, becoming more complete mortals
Through having received the perceiveration
While the many who misunderstood that declaration,
Having logos without the addition of perceiveration,
Are unperceptive regarding how and why they came-into-being.

[5] For they have the alertness similar to that of unthinking animals
And, having an angry and restive disposition,
Have no respect for what is really valuable
But instead follow bodily pleasures and their own desires
Confident as they are that mortals were born for such things.

And yet, Thoth, those who partake to that gift from theos become,
When set against their deeds, immortal instead of mortal

For they with their perceivance apprehend the Earthly, the Heavenly,
And what is beyond the Heavens.
Having gone so far, they perceive what is honourable, and, having so perceived,
They regard what preceded this as a delay, as a problem
And, with little regard for whatever is embodied and disembodied,
They strive toward the Monas.

[6] This, Thoth, is the episteme of perceivance,
Of <considering the divine> and of understanding divinity,
For the chaldron is numinous.

Father, I also desire to be so immersed.

My son, primarily, unless you have a prejudice about the body
You cannot have affection for yourself, and when you have affection for yourself
You can acquire perceivance and, having perceivance,
You can participate in episteme.

Can you, father, explain that?

It is not possible, my son, to be of both the deathful and the divine.
For there are two kinds of existents, the bodily and the non-bodily,
Perceived as deathful and divine; a choice of one or of the other
Should there be a desire to do so. It cannot be both
With the decline of one uncovering the reality of the other.

[7] By choosing the higher not only is there a good ending - the apotheosis of the mortal -
For the one who chooses but also a numinous awareness of theos,
While, if the lower, although it has been the ruination of mortals
It is no termination against theos
But rather something garish that passes by amid us yet is unaffectionate
Even if an impediment to others
Just as those others are garishly worldly
Having been influenced by bodily pleasures.

[8] Because of this, then - Thoth - what is from theos can be and has been ours
So let what accompanies us be that now instead of later.
For it is we who select dishonour rather than honour
With theos blameless in this.
Do you, my son, apprehend how many celestial bodies we have to traverse -
How many groups of Daimons and sequential constellations -
So that we hasten to the Monas.

For the honourable is unpassable, without limit, and unending
Even though to us its origin appears to be the knowledge.

[9] But even though such knowledge is not the origin of it
It yields to us the origin of our knowing.
Thus should we apprehend such an origin and hasten upon our journey
For it is not easy to abandon what we have become accustomed to
And go back to what is elden and in the past.

What is apparent can please us while what is concealed can cause doubt
With what is bad often overt while the honourable is often concealed
Having as it has neither pattern nor guise.

Which is why it is akin to itself but different from everything else
For it is not possible for what is disembodied to be overtly embodied.

[10] This is the distinction between what is akin and what is different
With what is different having a privation of what is akin.

Since the Monas is the origin and foundation of everything
It is within everything as origin and foundation
For if there is no origin there is nothing
And the origin is not from anything but itself
Since it is the origin of everything else,
Just as the Monas, since it is the origin, enfolds every arithmos
Without itself being enfolded by any,
Begetting every arithmos but not begotten by any:

[11] Everything that is begotten is unfinished, partible,
Liable to decline, resurgence
Which do not befall what is complete
For what is resurgent is resurgence from Monas
But what is brought low is so by its own malady
Because unable to hold Monas.

This, then, Thoth, is the eikon of the theos
Insofar as it can be drawn:
If you - clearly, carefully - and with the eyes of your heart apprehend it
Then I assure you, my son, that you shall find the path to what is above:
In truth, the eikon will guide you
Since the seeing of it is uniquely your own,
For those who attain such a beholding are attentively held, pulled up,
Just as it is said lodestone does with iron.

Commentary

1.

artisan. δημιουργόν. See Poemandres 9. The theme of an artisan-creator, and their artisements, is common to the third tractate (Ἰερός Λόγος) as well. That the tractate begins by using the term artisan, rather than theos, is perhaps significant.

that Being. The conventional and grammatical interpretation is "you should understand *him* as..." although how such a human-type gender could be adduced from or manifest by how the 'body' of the artisan-creator is described in subsequent verses is an interesting and relevant metaphysical question.

Can, or should, a 'body' that cannot be touched, that cannot be seen, that

cannot be measured, that is not separable - οὐδὲ διαστατόν - and thus which is not conventionally 'human', be described as male? It is to suggest such metaphysical questions (and the limitations of ordinary language in describing and answering such metaphysical questions) that I have here departed from convention and used 'that Being' instead of 'him'. The term 'Being' also has the advantage that it avoids the gender bias implicit in translating θεός as 'god' given that 'god/God' implies a male entity.

There is also an interesting and perhaps relevant mention, in the second tractate of the Corpus, of the one, the being, who - like an artisan - constructs things: ὁ οὖν θεός <τὸ> ἀγαθόν, καὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ὁ θεός. ἡ δὲ ἑτέρα προσηγορία ἐστὶν ἡ τοῦ πατρός, πάλιν διὰ τὸ ποιητικὸν πάντων. πατὴρ γὰρ τὸ ποιεῖν. (Thus theos is the noble and the noble is theos, although another title is that of father because the artifex of all being. For it is of a father to construct.)

However, in terms of gender and Hellenic mythos and metaphysics, it is sometimes overlooked that Γαῖα, Earth Mother, in one of the Homeric hymns, Εἷς Γῆν Μητέρα Πάντων, is described as πρέσβιστος: the elder among beings, and the mother of the gods, θεῶν μήτηρ. Thus, while it might be of "a father to construct" it is "of a mother to bring forth life", to give birth to beings, including the gods themselves.

presential. πάρειμι. Presential - from the classical Latin praesentia - means "having or implying actual presence", as manifesting (as being presenced) in a locality or with an individual, and is thus more apposite here than the rather bland word 'present'. Cf. the use of 'presenced' in Ἱερός Λόγος 2, et sequentia.

One only. ἐνὸς μόνου. A formulaic mystic phrase, implying uniqueness. Cf. ordinary usage in Plato, *Crito* 47, ἢ ἐνὸς μόνου ἐκείνου [...] ἐνὸς μόνου.

thelesis. θέλησις. Given what follows - τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστὶ τὸ σῶμα ἐκείνου, οὐχ ἄπτόν, οὐδὲ ὀρατόν, οὐδὲ μετρητόν, οὐδὲ διαστατόν - a transliteration to suggest something other than a human type 'will' or 'desire'; such as 'disposition'. That is, Being (whatsoever of whomsoever Being is, in terms of gender and otherwise) is predisposed to craft - to presence - being as beings: as immortals (deities), as mortals (humans) and otherwise, qv. Ἱερός Λόγος, Poemandres 8 ff, and Poemandres 31: οὐ ἡ βουλὴ τελεῖται ἀπὸ τῶν ιδίων δυνάμεων (whose purpose is accomplished by his own arts).

formed. As an artisan forms their artisements, and thus manifests their skill, their artistry, in what they produce. That is, the artisan-creator has formed, crafted, being (all existence) as beings.

(not) *separable*. οὐδὲ διαστατόν. What is not meant is 'dimension', given what the term 'dimension' now imputes scientifically and otherwise.

Pneuma. πνεῦμα. A transliteration for reasons explained in my commentary on

the text of Poemandres 5:

given that the English alternatives - such as 'spirit' or 'breath' - not only do not always describe what the Greek implies but also suggest things not always or not necessarily in keeping with the Hellenic nature of the text. This particular transliteration has a long history in English, dating back to 1559 CE. In 1918, DeWitt Burton published a monograph - listing, with quotations, the various senses of πνεῦμα - entitled *Spirit, Soul, and Flesh: The Usage of Πνεῦμα, Ψυχή, and Σάρξ in Greek Writings and Translated Works from the Earliest Period to 225 AD* (University of Chicago Press, 1918).

I incline toward the view that πνεῦμα here - like λόγος - does not necessarily imply something theological (in the Christian sense or otherwise) but rather suggests an alternative, more personal, weltanschauung that, being a weltanschauung, is undoctinal and subtle, and which weltanschauung is redolent of Hellenic culture. Subtle and undoctinal in the way that early alchemical texts are subtle and undoctinal and try to express, or hint at (however obscurely to us, now), a weltanschauung, and one which is more paganus than Christian.

Even though all such things are from that Being. ἀλλὰ πάντα ἀπ' αὐτοῦ. Literally, 'even though all are from that'. One therefore might understand it to imply 'even though all beings/things are from that Being.'

honourable. ἀγαθός. qv. Poemandres 22, where I referenced a quotation from the Corpus Aristotelicum:

τῆς δὲ φρονήσεώς ἐστι τὸ βουλευσασθαι, τὸ κρῖναι τὰ ἀγαθὰ καὶ τὰ κακὰ καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν τῷ βίῳ αἰρετὰ καὶ φευκτά, τὸ χρῆσθαι πᾶσι καλῶς τοῖς ὑπάρχουσιν ἀγαθοῖς, τὸ ὁμιλῆσαι ὀρθῶς [De Virtutibus et Vitiis Libellus 1250a]

It is part of wisdom to accept advice, to distinguish the honourable, the dishonourable, and all that is, in life, acceptable or to be avoided; to fairly use all resources; to be genuine in company.

Honourable - noble - rather than some abstract or dogmatically defined 'good'. That is, the Hellenic distinction is between good (honourable) personal character and bad (dishonourable) personal character rather than - as for example in Christianity - referencing some abstract, or God-given or dogmatically (Church) defined 'good'.

entrust solely to. I follow the MSS, which have μόνῳ, with οὐ μόνῳ being a fairly recently emendation which completely changes the meaning.

orderly arrangement. κοσμέω. In esoteric terms, a presencing, on Earth, of the cosmic order itself, qv. Poemandres 8: "having comprehended the logos and having seen the beauty of the cosmic order, re-presented it..."

Regarding 'presencing', qv. my translation of and commentary on section two of the third tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, Ιερός Λόγος:

ἀδιορίστων δὲ ὄντων ἀπάντων καὶ ἀκατασκευάστων.

With all beings unformed and not yet presenced.

2.

a cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings. κόσμον δὲ θείου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον. That is, human beings re-present, presence, the 'divine body' and are, of themselves, a reflection of the cosmic order itself. This, and the preceding line, express a fundamental part of ancient and Renaissance hermeticism: human beings as a microcosm of the cosmic order and the divine.

Hence why the twenty-sixth chapter of the book *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda* by Marsilii Ficini (published in 1489 CE) has as its heading:

Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona.

How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned.

Also, in respect of ἄνθρωπος I have used here - as in my Poemandres - the gender neutral 'human being' instead of the more usual 'man', and also - as there - occasionally used the term 'mortal' when the context suggests it.

Regarding 'the cosmic order' (κόσμος) itself qv. Poemandres 7; 14, and Ιερός Λόγος 4:

The divine is all of that mision: renewance of the cosmic order through Physis
For Physis is presenced in the divine.

a deathful life and yet a deathless life. This (including the borrowing of the terms deathful and deathless, in juxtaposition, from Chapman) is explained in section 14 of the Poemandres tractate:

θυητὸς μὲν διὰ τὸ σῶμα, ἀθάνατος δὲ διὰ τὸν οὐσιώδη ἄνθρωπον.

deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal.

Logos and Perceiverance. In my commentary on the Poemandres tractate I have explained my reasons for transliterating (and sometimes capitalizing) λόγος as logos (qv. the commentary on section 5) - rather than as 'Word' or 'Speech' - and for translating νοῦς as perceiverance/perceiveration rather than as the conventional 'mind' (see for example the commentary on sections 2 and 10). Refer also to comments there regarding terms such as pneumatic logos (πνευματικὸν λόγον), phasmal logos (φωτεινὸς λόγος) and θεοῦ λόγος.

Here Logos suggests 'reasoning', with perceiverance having its usual sense of 'awareness', of comprehending what is perceived, as for example, in being able to rationally or intuitively assess a situation, a person, or persons. As with (and for example) Logos, Psyche, and Physis, perceiverance - capitalized as Perceiverance - can also be personified and thus regarded as a fundamental quality germane to the life of deathful mortals.

3.

whose Psyche does not convey Perceiverance. It is possible to see in this an esoteric allusion to psyche personified, especially given what follows: τοῦτον ἐν μέσῳ ταῖς ψυχαῖς ὥσπερ ἄθλον ἰδρυῖσθαι. In ancient mythology - such as the ancient myth of Psyche and Eros, retold by Apuleius in his *Metamorphoses*, which was written around the same time as this Hermetic tractate, and which story also involves Hermes - Psyche initially lacked perceiverance but through striving to succeed in the trials given to her by Aphrodite she acquires it.

Hence why here I have personified both psyche and perceiverance. I have also transliterated ψυχή so as, as I noted in my Poemandres, to not impose a particular meaning on the text. For whether what is meant is anima mundi, or the ancient pagan sense of the 'spark' - the source, or breath - of life, or what we now denote by the terms 'soul' and 'spirit', is open to debate, especially as the terms soul and spirit possess much later and modern connotations that may not be relevant to such an ancient text. Connotations such as suggesting the incorporeal, or immaterial being, as distinct from body or matter; or the Christian concept of the soul.

As an illustration of matters of interpretation, two subtly different senses of ψυχή are evident in the Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles:

τῶνδε γὰρ πλέον φέρω
τὸ πένθος ἢ καὶ τῆς ἐμῆς ψυχῆς πέρι.

For my concern for their suffering

Is more than even that for my own psyche.

vv.93-4

ἀλλά μοι δυσμόρῳ γὰρ φθινὰς
τρύχει ψυχάν, τάδ' εἰ κακοῖς κακὰ
προσάψει τοῖς πάλαι τὰ πρὸς σφῶν.

But ill-fated would be my breath of life - which the decay in this soil
Already wears down - if to those troubles of old
There was joined this trouble between you and him.

vv.665-667

In respect of ψυχή, the Hermetic text here implies that ill-will is associated with those whose nature is such that they lack the ability to rationally or intuitively assess and comprehend a situation or other people.

father. ὦ πάτερ is a traditional way of showing respect for an elder, in this case of Thoth for Hermes.

position it half-way between those psyches, as a reward. Thus, while Logos is a gift to all mortals from theos, Perceiverance is not and has to be earned, striven for, as an athlete has to strive to earn a prize. [The English word athlete is related to the Greek word used here - ἄθλον - via the Greek ἀθλητής and thence the classical Latin athleta.]

chaldron. κρατῆρ. See the Introduction.

envoy. While the conventional translation here of κῆρυξ is 'herald', I consider it unsatisfactory given what that English term now often denotes: either the type of herald familiar from the New Testament or the herald of medieval literature and stories (qv. Morte Arthure, and The Knights Tale by Chaucer). Given the Greco-Roman context (Hermes, Thoth) and classical antecedents (such as Hermes as the protector of mortal envoys and messengers) then 'envoy' is more accurate especially given that this is an envoy from the artisan-creator assigned to impart information to mortals.

Ascend to the one [...] how you came-into-being. There are similarities here to the Poemandres tractate in relation to the anados - the journey up through the spheres (Poemandres 24) toward theos - and the desire "to apprehend the physis of beings" (Poemandres 3).

and were immersive with perceiveration. καὶ ἐβαπτίσαντο τοῦ νοός. That is, were or became characterized by having become immersed with - suffused by -

perceivation.

Here, as elsewhere the understanding of νοῦς as perceivance/perceivation rather than as 'mind' makes the text understandable: for the mortals became suffused with a particular (and, for most, probably a new type of) perception, a new way of seeing the world, themselves, and other mortals, and thus acquire a particular type of knowing, whereas an expression such as "immersed themselves with mind" is obscure to the point of being either unintelligible or requiring a long discourse on the nature of "mind" based as such discourses invariably are on certain philosophical assumptions.

The sense of acquiring a new way of seeing the world, themselves, and other mortals is evident in the text that follows: οὗτοι μετέσχον τῆς γνώσεως (gained, acquired, partook of, a knowing).

more complete mortals. The sense of τέλειος here is not that of being 'perfect' but rather of being 'entire', more completed, 'more rounded', than others. Thus there is no sense of "perfect people" or "perfect humans" - with implied moral, and other, superiority - but rather of those who, having a different perception of things to most others, were akin to initiates of a mystical or an esoteric tradition: apart from others because of that particular knowledge that their new, initiated, perception, has brought, but still mortal. This sense is evident in the text that follows: τὸν νοῦν δεξάμενοι.

received the perceivation. It is possible that this is an allusion to 'the perceivance' - the gnosis - that initiates of a particular mystic or esoteric tradition acquire when certain esoteric, mystic, knowledge is imparted to them.

4.

declaim to the hearts of mortals. A figurative usage of 'heart', referring here as often elsewhere in Greek and Hellenic culture to the feelings, the emotions (qv. Iliad, Book IX, 646 and The Odyssey, Book XVII, 489) as well as to the ethos, the nature, and the understanding, of the individual.

See also "with the eyes of the heart" in section 11.

5.

alertness. αἴσθησις. For which see Poemandres 1. The sense is that they are always alert, and - like animals - react instinctively because they lack the objective awareness that perceivance (νοῦς) brings and which objective awareness (of themselves and others) makes mortals into complete human beings.

Confident. Given the context, πιστεύω here suggests 'confidence' rather than 'belief'; for this is the arrogant instinctive confidence of those who lack

perceiverance and who have no firm belief in anything other than their own bodily pleasure and fulfilling their desires and who thus reject - or who cannot intuit - the numinous perspective of the divine, a perspective which would reveal the possibility of immortality.

parten to that gift [...] when set against their deeds. The text suggests that the gift of immortality which theos gives is freely bestowed among those whose deeds reveal that they have understood what the chaldron is and does, with the fourteenth century English word parten [to have something in common with something or someone else] expressing the meaning here of the Greek μετέχω.

apprehend the Earthly, the Heavenly, and what is beyond the Heavens. An alternative - following the Latin version of the text - omnia complexi sua mente, et terrena et caelestia et si quid est supra caelum - would be "apprehend the terran, the celestial, and what is beyond the celestial."

(as a) problem. The context suggests that what is meant is that life before "having so perceived" was a problem, not that it was a 'misfortune' or a calamity. A problem - a challenge - to overcome, which challenge they accepted leading to them gaining the prize, for theos had positioned that prize "half-way between those psyches, as a reward."

The same sense in respect of συμφορά is apparent in Oedipus Tyrannus by Sophocles:

θεοῖσι μὲν νυν οὐκ ἰσούμενόν σ' ἐγὼ
οὐδ' οἶδε παῖδες ἐζόμεσθ' ἐφέστιοι,
ἀνδρῶν δὲ πρῶτον ἔν τε συμφοραῖς βίου
κρίνοντες ἔν τε δαιμόνων συναλλαγαῖς

Not as an equal of the gods do I,
And these children who sit by your altar, behold you -
But as the prime man in our problems of life
And in our dealings and agreements with daimons.

vv. 31-34

disembodied. ἀσώματος - etymologically, a privation of σωματικός - occurs in works by Aristotle and, perhaps more relevant here, in writers such as Iamblichus who in De Mysteriis, V, 16 writes in general terms about the body in relation to offering to the gods and daimons that which, or those things which, might free the body from ailments and bring health, and the necessity in such matters as offerings of not considering the body in either non-bodily or noetic terms:

τότε δὴ οὖν οὐ δῆπου νοερῶς καὶ ἀσωμάτως τὸ σῶμα

μεταχειριζόμεθα· οὐ γὰρ πέφυκε τῶν τοιούτων τρόπων τὸ σῶμα
μετέχειν· τῶν δὲ συγγενῶν ἑαυτῷ μεταλαγχάνον, σώμασι σῶμα
θεραπεύεται τε καὶ ἀποκαθαίρεται.

Thus the sense of καταφρονήσαντες πάντων τῶν σωματικῶν καὶ ἄσωμάτων ἐπὶ
τὸ ἓν seems to be that what is important is a striving for the monas not a noetic
concern for the difference between whatever is embodied and whatever is
considered disembodied.

Monas. μονάς. A transliteration since it here does not necessarily, as I noted in
the Introduction, signify "The One, The Only" (τὸ ἓν) of such weltanschauungen
as those termed Pythagorean, neo-Pythagorean, or Gnostic; or 'the one God' of
religious monotheisms such as Christianity.

6.

episteme. A transliteration of ἐπιστήμη, which could be - and has been -
accented thus: épistémé. The meaning is 'a way', or a means or a method, by
which something can be known, understood, and appreciated. In this case,
perceivation, which the artisan-creator has positioned "half-way between
psyches, as a reward."

Episteme, therefore, should be considered a technical, esoteric, term associated
with some of the weltanschauungen that are described in the Corpus
Hermeticum. Thus, in the Poemandres tractate, the anados through the seven
spheres is an episteme.

considering the divine. The MSS have ἐντοπία and various emendations, recent
and otherwise, have been proposed including ἐντοπία and ιστορία.
Interestingly, the Renaissance Latin text published in 1554 has, for the line,
'scientia mentis est diuinorum contemplatio & intelligentia dei, diuino existente
cratere' with Parthey's 1854 edition reading 'mentis scientia, diuinorum
inspectio et dei comprehensio, quia diuinus est crater.'

I am inclined toward ιστορία, which conveys the sense here of considering, of
obtaining information about - of contemplating - divinity, the numinous, and
thus the relation of mortals to divinity. A sense which fits well with the following
καὶ ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ κατανόησις.

For the chaldron is numinous. θείου ὄντος τοῦ κρατῆρος. For θεῖος here I have
opted for the English word numinous (dating from 1647 and from the classical
Latin term numen) to express the sense of inclusion - of/from the divinity and of
itself being divine - that the word 'divine' by itself does not, particularly given
the previous "considering the divine and of understanding divinity."

Primarily, unless you have a prejudice about the body. Ἐὰν μὴ πρῶτον τὸ σῶμά
σου μισήσης. To always - regardless of textual context and milieu - translate

μισέω/μῖσος as "hate" is or can be misleading, given how the English word hate implies (and is understood as meaning) an extreme personal emotion, an intense personal aversion to something, and also a certain malevolence. Consider, for example, the following from Thucydides:

ἀπὸ τούτου τε πρῶτον Περδίκκας Βρασίδαν τε πολέμιον ἐνόμισε καὶ ἐς τὸ λοιπὸν Πελοποννησίων τῇ μὲν γνώμῃ δι' Ἀθηναίους οὐ ζύνηθες μῖσος εἶχε, τῶν δὲ ἀναγκαίων ξυμφόρων διαναστὰς ἔπρασσε ὅτῳ τρόπῳ τάχιστα τοῖς μὲν ξυμβήσεται, τῶν δὲ ἀπαλλάξεται. (4.128)

His reaching an agreement with the Peloponnesians while at the same time still being determined to be rid of his foe does not imply an implacable, intense, personal hatred in the first place, but rather a generalized dislike (in this case just a certain prejudice) of the kind that can be dispensed with if it is personally - or strategically - advantageous to do so. Thus to translate the relevant part as "it was then that Perdiccas first considered Brasidas his foe and felt a prejudice toward the Peloponnesians" seems apt, especially given the qualification mentioned in the text: τῇ μὲν γνώμῃ δι' Ἀθηναίους.

The preference for the metaphysical, for striving for immortality and for understanding the numinous, that this tractate describes is not, as some have assumed, an ascetic "hatred" of the physical body. Instead, it is just a positive bias in favour of such metaphysical, spiritual matters, and a prejudice against a fixation on bodily and material things.

This preference is also evident in Poemandres 19:

"they of self-knowledge attained a particular benefit while they who, misled by Eros, love the body, roamed around in the dark, to thus, perceptively, be afflicted by death."

For, as noted in my commentary on τὸν αἴτιον τοῦ θανάτου ἔρωτα in Poemandres 19:

The consensus is, and has been, that ἔρωτα here signifies 'carnal desire' - or something similar - so that it is assumed that what is meant is some sort of ascetic (or Gnostic or puritanical) statement about how sexual desire should be avoided or at the very least controlled. However, this seems rather at variance with the foregoing - regarding propagating and spawning - which inclines me to suggest that what is meant here is 'eros', not necessarily personified as the classical deity (ἡδ' Ἔρος ὃς κάλλιστος ἐν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι πάντων δὲ θεῶν πάντων τ' ἀνθρώπων δάμναται ἐν στήθεσσι νόον καὶ ἐπίφρονα βουλήν), although the comparison is interesting, but rather as an elemental or archetypal principle, akin to νοῦς and λόγος. Consider, for example, the following from Daphnis and Chloe, written by Longus around the same time as the Corpus Hermeticum: πάντως

γὰρ οὐδεὶς ἔρωτα ἔφυγεν ἢ φεύζεται μέχρις ἂν κάλλος ἦ καὶ ὀφθαλμοὶ βλέπωσιν [Book 1, Proem, 4 - "no one can avoid or has ever been able to avoid Eros, while there is beauty and eyes which perceive"]. In modern terms, few - poetically, metaphorically, none - have avoided or could avoid, at some time in their life, the unconscious power of the anima/animus.

There are two kinds of existents, bodily and non-bodily. δύο γὰρ ὄντων τῶν ὄντων. This duality, in respect of mortals, is evident in the Poemandres tractate:

διὰ τοῦτο παρὰ πάντα τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς ζῶα διπλοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ ἄνθρωπος, θνητὸς μὲν διὰ τὸ σῶμα, ἀθάνατος δὲ διὰ τὸν οὐσιώδη ἄνθρωπον

distinct among all other beings on Earth, mortals are jumelle; deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal

(Poemandres 15)

This contrast between the deathful body and the immortality that is possible (the potential for immortality that lies within mortals) is essentially the same as the one described here: the bodily and the divine, the embodied and the disembodied.

7.

apotheosis of the mortal. Not here a literal making of "the mortal into a god" or even an actual "deification of the mortal" (by whomsoever) but rather a bringing about in the mortal an apotheosis - ἀποθέωσις - in the sense of an ascension toward immortality, a spiritual journey from earthly life, a figurative resurrection of, or actual elevation in, the life of the mortal.

This latter sense is evident in the use of ἀποθέωσις by Cicero in his Epistularum Ad Atticum - videsne consulatum illum nostrum, quem Curio antea ἀποθέωσιν vocabat, si hic factus erit, fabam mimum futurum (Liber Primus, XVI, 13) - for this early use of the Greek word concerns the elevated rank of Consul, and thus the honour and privileges that such a privileged rank brings.

a numinous awareness of theos. In respect of εὐσεβέω as an "awareness of the numinous" qv. my Poemandres, 22.

termeration. From the Latin *termere* and thus appropriate here, given the context, in respect of πλημμελέω, suggesting as it can both a violation and a profanation, while avoiding the interpretation that words such as "transgression" (toward god), "trespassed (against god) and "offence" (against god) impute, especially given the usual translations of Christian texts written in

Greek, such as translations of the following from the Septuagint: ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ περὶ ἐνὸς ἀπὸ πάντων ὧν ἐποίησεν καὶ ἐπλημμέλησεν αὐτῷ (Leviticus 5, 26).

something garish that passes by. The exact meaning of πομπή here is unclear, with suggestions ranging from parade, pageant, to procession (religious or otherwise), which all seem out of context since they all can have an affect, a purpose, and can achieve things other than just being a hindrance to passers-by.

The context suggests something metaphorical and similar to what Cicero wrote:

quem tu mihi addidisti sane ad illum σύλλογον personam idoneam.
Videbis igitur, si poteris, ceteros, ut possimus πομπεῦσαι καὶ τοῖς
προσώποις (Epistularum Ad Atticum, Liber Tertius Decimus, 32:3)

That is, similar to a showy or affected countenance or facade or personae, or an act, or some pompous attempt to impress which however is not effective as in Oedipus Tyrannus:

εἰπὼν ἄπειμ' ὧν οὔνεκ' ἦλθον οὐ τὸ σὸν
δείσας πρόσωπον οὐ γὰρ ἔσθ' ὅπου μ' ὀλεῖς

I shall go but speak that for which I was fetched, with no dread
Because of your countenance. For you cannot harm me. (448)

garishly worldly. I take the sense of κόσμος here to refer to 'that cosmos' - the world of mortals - previously described as "the cosmos of the divine body": the microcosm which the artisan-creator crafted and in which we mortals have our being. See the commentary in section 2 on the phrase *a cosmos of the divine body*.

Hence the poetic metaphor here: garishly worldly. Of living a garish - facile - life in our microcosm even though the artisan-creator has provided a means for us to attain immortality and thus, as described in the Poemandres tractate, become a part of a higher, a divine, cosmic order.

8.

select dishonour For κακός as 'bad' and 'dishonourable' rather than 'evil' refer to my commentary on Poemandres 22 from which this is an extract:

"The usual translation of κακός here, as often elsewhere, is 'evil'. However, I regard such a translation as unhelpful, given that the English word 'evil' is (1) now often interpreted and understood in a moralistic, preconceived, way according to some theological

dogma/criteria and/or according to some political/social doctrine, and (2) that it does not denote what the classical and the Hellenic term κακός does. Classically understood κακός is what is bad in the sense of some-thing rotten or unhealthy, or – the opposite of κάλος – what is displeasing to see. κακός is also what is unlucky, a misfortune, and/or injurious [...] When applied to a person, the sense is of a 'rotten' person; someone with bad, harmful, physis; a bad - dishonourable, weak, cowardly - personal character."

theos blameless in this. In respect of ἀναίτιος, compare Agamemnon 1505:

ὥς μὲν ἀναίτιος εἶ
τοῦδε φόνου τίς ὁ μαρτυρήσων

Is there anyone who will bear witness
That you are blameless in this killing?

celestial body. By σῶμα (body) here is meant the celestial body, the 'harmonious structure', which is described in terms of seven spheres in the Poemandres tractate and which mortals must ascend through in sequence in order to attain immortality and thus be in the company of theos. This ascension through the spheres is there described as an anados - ἔτι δέ μοι εἶπε περὶ τῆς ἀνόδου τῆς γυνομένης - with Poemandres (in section 25) describing the journey in detail, with each sphere represented by one of the seven classical planets:

καὶ τῇ πρώτῃ ζώνῃ δίδωσι τὴν αὐξητικὴν ἐνέργειαν καὶ τὴν
μειωτικὴν, καὶ τῇ δευτέρᾳ τὴν μηχανὴν τῶν κακῶν, δόλον
ἀνενέργητον [...]

Thus does the mortal hasten through the harmonious structure,
offering up, in the first realm, that vigour which grows and which
fades, and - in the second one - those dishonourable machinations, no
longer functioning [...]

Plato, in Timaeus 32c, uses σῶμα to refer to the substance - the body - of the cosmos as being formed from fire, water, air and earth:

ὄν ἀριθμὸν τεττάρων τὸ τοῦ κόσμου σῶμα ἐγεννήθη δι' ἀναλογίας
ὁμολογήσαν

sequential constellations. In context, συνέχειαν καὶ δρόμους ἀστέρω suggests a type of movement, a path, through certain stars or constellations. That is, a particular or ordered sequence: the anados through the septenary system, with it being possible that the use here of ἀστήρ (star) - rather than κύκλος (sphere,

orb) as in Poemandres - implied an aural esoteric tradition associating each sphere with a corresponding star or constellation, an ancient tradition found in Renaissance alchemical and magical texts.

the honourable is unpassable. Reading ἀδιάβατον, which implies that what is honourable is always there, always around, always noticeable when it is presenced by someone. In other words - given the following καὶ ἀπέραντον καὶ ἀτελές - there are always some mortals who will (qv. sections 5 and 8) select honour rather than dishonour: who will (as described in section 4) "receive the perceiviation," having won that prize gifted by theos.

9.

Even though to us its origin appears to be the knowledge. The expression ἡμῖν δὲ δοκοῦν ἀρχὴν ἔχειν τὴν γνῶσιν is interesting given that it refers to 'the knowledge', which some have construed to refer to the gnosis of certain pagan weltanschauungen. However, since what this particular knowledge is, is not specified, to translate as 'the Gnosis' would be to impose a particular and modern interpretation on the text given what the term gnosticism now denotes. All that can be adduced from the text is that this particular knowledge may refer to and be the knowledge imparted in the text itself: the knowledge that Hermes is here imparting to Thoth.

The word translated here as origin is ἀρχή and which Greek term has various philosophical connotations in Anaximander, Plato, et al. What it here denotes, as evident in the text that follows (sections 10 and 11), is origin, beginning, source.

not the origin of it. Referring to what is honourable and its origin/beginning.

hasten upon our journey. While the text - λαβώμεθα οὖν τῆς ἀρχῆς καὶ ὁδεύσωμεν τάχει ἅπαντα - is somewhat obscure it seems reasonable to assume that what is meant or implied is the necessity of beginning - of hastening upon - the complete, the entire, journey toward the Monas with all that implies in terms of everything encountered along the way.

not easy. The sense of σκολιόν here - in the context of leaving what one has become accustomed to and is comfortable with - suggests 'tangled', indirect, 'not straightforward', 'tortuous', and thus 'not easy'.

elden. A rather obscure English word meaning 'belonging to earlier times', and used to avoid the negative connotations that words such as 'ancient' can imply.

What is apparent can please [...] neither pattern nor guise. τὰ μὲν γὰρ φαινόμενα τέρπει, τὰ δὲ ἀφανῆ δυσπιστεῖν ποιεῖ. φανερώτερα δὲ ἐστὶ τὰ κακά, τὸ δὲ ἀγαθὸν ἀφανές τοῖς φανεροῖς

This is an interesting passage, often interpreted in terms of moral abstractions, of 'good' and 'evil'. However, as previously mentioned, I incline toward the somewhat iconoclastic view that there is a more Greek, a more Hellenic, and an essentially pagan, interpretation of ἀγαθός consistent with the Greek mystery traditions, with Homer, with the tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles, and with how theos was generally understood in ancient Greece and in Greco-Roman, Hellenistic, times. Which is of ἀγαθός - and of κακός - (i) when referring to mortals as referring to personal character, of character being most often revealed by deeds, by what has been observed because done visibly, or to outward appearance in terms of τὸ καλόν, of what is considered beautiful or not beautiful; and (ii) when used of things - living or dead - as referring to the difference between 'rotten', 'bad', and what is not rotten, as in a rotten tree or a piece of food.

What is expressed here is of how outward appearances can please, how we can be suspicious - doubtful - about what is concealed, what has not yet been revealed; with what is bad often outwardly obvious (as in the case of a rotten tree or a rotten person) but with what is good, honourable, often being concealed because it has no particular pattern or guise until it has been revealed, for example by noble, honourable deeds. Thus the suggestion seems to be that there is or can be a revealing of what is good when mortals seek the theos-gifted prize of perceiviation, which seeking of that prize, and winning it, is of itself a good, a necessary, an honourable, thing to do, leading at it does to a hastening toward the Monas.

The passage also invites comparison with one in Plato's Republic and one in Aristotle's Metaphysics.

In Book XII, 1074b, Aristotle wrote:

τὰ δὲ περὶ τὸν νοῦν ἔχει τινὰς ἀπορίας: δοκεῖ μὲν γὰρ εἶναι τῶν
φαινομένων θειότατον, πῶς δ' ἔχων τοιοῦτος ἂν εἴη, ἔχει τινὰς
δυσκολίας

The expression δοκεῖ μὲν γὰρ εἶναι τῶν φαινομένων θειότατον has led to disputations among some scholars with some considering the passage corrupt and in need of emendation, for their difficulty lies in Aristotle apparently stating that 'Mind' is, like other phenomena, perceptible to our senses. However, if one does not translate νοῦς as 'Mind' - with all the preconceptions, philosophical and otherwise, that have over centuries become attached to that term - and one also appreciates that φαίνω here as sometimes elsewhere is not a simple 'observing' - of seeing, of observing, phenomena - but rather a revealing, then there is little if any difficulty. For instance, does the following interpretation of part of that passage make sense with respect to phenomena? "Perceiviation, of all revealing, appears to be the most numinous."

Indeed so, because perceiviation is a perception involving a certain

awareness, a revealing to us, of what is observed; that is, an apprehension, and Aristotle's reasoning (insofar as I understand it) is that this awareness - νοῦς - is the most numinous, 'the most divine', revealing because we mortals can apprehended, be or become aware of, and thus have knowledge of, theos. Which is basically what Hermes has in this tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum imparted to Thoth.

In Book VII, 517β - 517ξ, of the Republic, Plato wrote:

τὰ δ' οὖν ἐμοὶ φαινόμενα οὕτω φαίνεται, ἐν τῷ γνωστῷ τελευταία ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα καὶ μόγις ὁρᾶσθαι

Which brings us, again, to ἀγαθός invariably translated as it hitherto has been - in respect of the Corpus Hermeticum, and many of the writings of Aristotle and Plato - as an abstraction termed 'good', as well it might be in respect of Plato given that he posits an abstract (a true, ideal) beauty and an abstract (true, ideal) being, as in Phaedo 78b where he writes about αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν and about αὐτὸ ἕκαστον ὃ ἔστιν, and why in Symposium 210e - 211a he states regarding his ideal, his form, his ἰδέα/εἶδος, which he sometimes and confusingly uses interchangeably, that:

πρῶτον μὲν αἰεὶ ὄν καὶ οὔτε γιγνόμενον οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον, οὔτε αὐξανόμενον οὔτε φθίνον

Firstly, it always exists, and has no genesis. It does not die, does not grow, does not decay.

What, therefore, seems to have occurred, in respect of this and other tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum, is the assumption that ἀγαθός always refers back to Plato's ἰδέα/εἶδος (and to those influenced by him or are assumed to be his precursors) leading to moralistic interpretations such as that of Mead where ἀγαθός is divorced from the physis (φύσις), the character, the individuality, of mortals: "evils are the more apparent things, whereas the Good can never show Itself unto the eyes, for It hath neither form nor figure." Thus, that in respect of mortals, ἀγαθός, rather than having its genesis, its origin, its very being, in some individual mortals - and attainable by others because of the prize of perceivance offered by theos - is considered as something external which could be attained by, which has its being in, is embodied by, such abstractions (the 'politics') as Plato delineates in his theorized Republic and in such abstractions as were posited by the early Christian Church.

For it is not possible for what is disembodied to be overtly embodied. ἀδύνατον γὰρ ἀσώματον σώματι φανῆναι. That is, it is not possible to discern who is honourable from their outward appearance, for what is honourable is manifest, revealed, through personal deeds.

enfolds every arithmos [...] begetting every arithmos but not begotten by any. This passage, with its mention of ἀριθμός, is often assumed to refer to the Pythagorean doctrine regarding numbers since ἀριθμός is invariably translated as 'number' - thus implying what the English word implies, especially in mathematical terms - even though Aristotle, in discussing ἀριθμός, wrote: ἄλλος δέ τις τὸν πρῶτον ἀριθμὸν τὸν τῶν εἰδῶν ἓνα εἶναι, ἔνιοι δὲ καὶ τὸν μαθηματικὸν τὸν αὐτὸν τοῦτον εἶνα (Metaphysics, Book XIII, 1080b.20).

Given such a necessary distinction - and the discussion regarding ἀριθμός and Pythagoras in Book XIII, 1083b.10 et seq - as well as the fact that what ἀριθμός means here, in this tractate, and what it implies - such as the mathematical numbers 2 and 3 developing from the One - is not mentioned, I have transliterated ἀριθμός thus leaving open what it may or may not mean in relation to the particular weltanschauung being described. However, the context seems to suggest a metaphysical rather than an abstract mathematical notion, especially given what follows at the beginning of section 11: πᾶν δὲ τὸ γεννώμενον ἀτελές καὶ διαιρετόν.

begetting/begotten. It is interesting to compare the use here of γεννάω (beget/engender) with the use of γέννημα in Poemandres 8 (the birth of Psyche) and 30 (of Logos breeding nobility).

11.

resurgence [...] decline. The sense here, in context, is not as abstract, as impersonal, as a translation such as "increase and decrease" implies. Rather it suggests "resurgence and decline", as happens with living things.

what is complete. The reference is to the Monas.

eikon of theos. I have transliterated εἰκὼν as eikon since - for reasons mentioned in my commentary on Poemandres 31 - it implies more, in some ancient mystical tractates, than what the word 'image' now denotes.

eyes of your heart. A similar expression occurs in Paul's Letter to the Ephesians - πεφωτισμένους τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς τῆς καρδίας <ὕμῶν> (1.18) - although, as some scholars have noted (qv. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, Baker Academic, 2002. p.260f) the Greek syntax there is problematic.

the path to what is above. That is, the anados (ἄνοδος) mentioned in the Poemandres tractate, composed as the word ἄνοδος is from ἀνά (above) and ὁδός (path), the two Greek words used here.

the seeing of it is uniquely your own. What is being conveyed is that the eikon is of itself mystical - not an ordinary image or painting - and can impart to the

person, who "with the eyes of their heart" views it, something unique, personal, numinous.

lodestone. μαγνητὶς λίθος. Lodestone, and not a 'magnet' in the modern sense.

Ὅτι ἐν μόνῳ θεῷ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐστὶν ἀλλαχόθι δὲ οὐδαμοῦ.

That In The Theos Alone Is Nobility And Not Anywhere Else

Tractate VI

ooo

Introduction

The sixth tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, concentrating as it does on τὸ ἀγαθὸν in relation to theos and mortals, is - in respect of the milieu of ancient Greco-Roman culture - metaphysically interesting even though existing translations, given that they invariably translate τὸ ἀγαθὸν as 'the good' and θεός as 'god', impart "the sense of reading somewhat declamatory sermons about god/God and 'the good' familiar from over a thousand years of persons preaching about Christianity." [1]

Since, for reasons explained elsewhere [1], I translate τὸ ἀγαθὸν as 'the noble' - implying nobility, honour, as expressed for example by Seneca, summum bonum est quod honestum est; et quod magis admireris: unum bonum est, quod honestum est, cetera falsa et adulterina bona sunt [2] - and also transliterate θεός as theos, then what emerges from this tractate is something redolent of Greco-Roman mysticism and thus of how τὸ ἀγαθὸν was understood by learned men such as Cicero: in terms of personal character [3] rather than as an impersonal moral abstraction leading as such an abstraction invariably does to dogmatic interpretations and thence to disputations and dissent and thence to the accusations of religious 'heresy' that bedevilled Christian churches for centuries, redolent as such moral abstractions, such dogmatism and accusations, are of an ethos that is rather un-Hellenic.

Such an understanding of τὸ ἀγαθὸν is evident in a passage in section nine of the fourth tractate:

τὰ μὲν γὰρ φαινόμενα τέρπει, τὰ δὲ ἀφανῆ δυσπιστεῖν ποιεῖ.
φανερώτερα δέ ἐστι τὰ κακά, τὸ δὲ ἀγαθὸν ἀφανὲς τοῖς φανεροῖς.

What is apparent can please us while what is concealed can cause doubt with what is bad often overt while the honourable is often concealed having as it has neither pattern nor guise.

For what is expressed in that fourth tractate is that while what is bad is often outwardly obvious (as in the case of a rotten tree or a bad person) what is good, honourable, is often being concealed because it has no guise, no particular, discernable, pattern - no outward sign or appearance - becoming revealed only though noble, honourable, personal, deeds.

In respect of tractate six, the choice of τὸ ἀγαθὸν as 'the noble' (instead of the conventional 'the good') and κακός as 'bad' (instead of the conventional 'evil') elevates the text from a type of pious sermon to a metaphysical weltanschauung, something especially evident at the beginning of section three:

In mortals, the noble are arrayed to compare with the bad, for in this place those not especially bad are the noble given that in this place nobility has the smallest portion of the bad.

ἐν δὲ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ κατὰ σύγκρισιν τὸ ἀγαθὸν τοῦ κακοῦ τέτακται τὸ γὰρ μὴ λίαν κακὸν ἐνθάδε τὸ ἀγαθόν ἐστι τὸ δὲ ἐνθάδε ἀγαθόν μόριον τοῦ κακοῦ τὸ ἐλάχιστον

Also, while the language of this sixth tractate is on occasions somewhat convoluted and apparently contradictory - as for example in the description in section two of Kosmos having nobility (τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον ἀγαθὸς ὁ κόσμος καθὰ καὶ αὐτὸς πάντα ποιεῖ) and yet being not noble in other ways (ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις πᾶσιν οὐκ ἀγαθός) what is expressed metaphysically differs somewhat from some other tractates, revealing just how diverse the pagan mystical traditions represented in the Corpus Hermeticum are.

Despite the differences, most obvious when this tractate - with its rather negative portrayal of mortals and the insistence that beauty and nobility cannot be found in this world - is compared to the Poemandres tractate and the third (Ἱερός Λόγος) tractate, what emerges is a hermetic weltanschauung and one that can best be summarized by the following lines from the last two sections:

"[an] apprehension of theos [is] an apprehension of the beautiful and of the noble... [and] a quest for theos is a quest for the beautiful, and there is only one path there: an awareness of the numinous combined with knowledge [...]"

Yet those who do not apprehend, who do not follow the path of awareness of the numinous, have the effrontery to declare that mortals are beautiful and noble even though they have not observed, and have no semblance of, what the noble is."

This goes some way toward resolving the apparently contradictory nature of the text, asserting as it does at the beginning that "the noble exists in no-thing: only in theos alone" and yet also asserting toward the end not only that "if you are able to apprehend theos you can apprehend the beautiful and the noble." This is the ethos of a contemplative pagan, and a cultured, mysticism that seems to have been much neglected.

Notes

[1] Myatt, David. *Concerning ἀγαθός and νοῦς in the Corpus Hermeticum*.

[2] Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales, LXXI, 4.

[3] In *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*, Marcus Tullius Cicero, in criticizing Epicurus and others, presents his view of Summum Bonum: that honestum (honourable conduct) is its foundation and that it can be discerned by careful consideration (ratio) in conjunction with that knowing (scientia) of what is divine and what is mortal that has been described as wisdom (sapientia).

aequam igitur pronuntiabit sententiam ratio adhibita primum divinarum humanarumque rerum scientia, quae potest appellari rite sapientia, deinde adiunctis virtutibus, quas ratio rerum omnium dominas, tu voluptatum satellites et ministras esse voluisti. (II, 37)

He then writes that honestum does not depend on any personal benefit (omni utilitate) that may result or be expected but instead can be discerned by means of consensus among the whole community in combination with the example afforded by the honourable actions and motives of the finest of individuals.

Honestum igitur id intellegimus, quod tale est, ut detracta omni utilitate sine ullis praemiis fructibusve per se ipsum possit iure laudari. quod quale sit, non tam definitione, qua sum usus, intellegi potest, quamquam aliquantum potest, quam communi omnium iudicio et optimi cuiusque studiis atque factis, qui permulta ob eam unam causam faciunt, quia decet, quia rectum, quia honestum est, etsi nullum consecuturum emolumentum vident. (II, 45f)

In effect, Summum Bonum - what the Greeks termed τὸ ἀγαθὸν - depends on certain personal qualities such as a careful consideration of a matter; on a personal knowing of what is divine and what is mortal; on the example of personal noble deeds and motives, and on a communal consensus.

There is therefore nothing morally abstract or dogmatic about Cicero's understanding of Summum Bonum which so well expresses, as does Seneca, the

Greco-Roman view, with a perhaps more apt translation of the term Summum Bonum thus being "the highest nobility."

Translation

[1] Asclepius, the noble exists in no-thing: only in theos alone; indeed, theos is, of himself and always, what is noble. If so, then it can only be the quidditas of all changement and of geniture since nothing is deserted by it but has about itself a stability of vigour, neither excessive nor lacking, a replenishable provider, there at the origin of all things. When saying the provider to all-things is noble, that nobility always exists, an attribute of theos alone and of no one else.

He is not in need of anything since for him to desire something would be bad. Nothing that has come into being is lost to him, for such loss would be vexing with vexation a division of badness. Nothing is superior to him so as to be an enemy, nor is there a partner who might harm him through him having a passionate desire. Nor any-thing so unheeding of him that he becomes enraged; nor anyone of better judgement to be jealous of.

[2] Because none of those have being in his quidditas then only nobility is left, and since nothing of what is bad is in that quidditas then nothing of what is noble will be found in those other things, since, in all others be they big or small, those things exist, in each of them and also in that living being which is bigger and mightier than them all. For what is begotten is replete with physicality with breeding itself being physical. Yet where physicality is, nobility is not, and where nobility is there is no physicality just as when there is night there is no day. It is impracticable regarding breeding for nobility to be there for that is only of what is not begotten.

But as substance has been assigned to partake of all being so it does of nobility which is how Kosmos has nobility because of the construction done regarding all things, even though not noble in other ways since there is physicality, and changement: the construction of the physical.

[3] In mortals, the noble are arrayed to compare with the bad, for in this place those not especially bad are the noble given that in this place nobility has the smallest portion of the bad. But it is impractical in this place to refine the noble from the bad, for in this place the noble deteriorate and, deteriorating, become

rotten and no longer noble. Thus the noble is of theos alone or rather it is theos who is the noble one.

Thus it is, Asclepius, that among mortals they are noble in name only and not in the matter itself for that would be impracticable since the physical body cannot hold on to it, restrained on all sides as it is by badness, by toil, by grief, by desire, by rage, by dishonesty, and by unreasonable opinions; and, Asclepius, most ignoble of all, in this place each such thing is believed to be most noble even though unsurpassably bad.

The mistake, the patron of all things rotten, is the absence in this place of nobility.

[4] For myself, I am beholden to theos who has directed my perceivation toward a knowing of nobility; that it is impracticable for it to be in this world replete as it is with badness just as it is with the nobility of theos or as theos is with nobility.

For the eminence of the beautiful is around that quidditas so perhaps revealing that quiddity as certainly unmixed and most refined, and I venture to say, Asclepius, that the quidditas of theos - if he has quidditas - is the beautiful and yet the beautiful and the noble cannot be discerned in the things of the world for everything exposed to the eye are as tenuous depictions, and what is not exposed to it, particularly the beautiful and the noble <...> and since the eye is unable to perceive theos so it is with the beautiful and the noble. For they are intrinsically part of theos, of him alone, belonging to him, unseverable, most fair; loved by theos or by those who love theos.

[5] If you are able to apprehend theos you can apprehend the beautiful and the noble, the exceptionally radiant, but a radiance surpassed by theos, and with that beauty unequalled with the noble defying imitation, as it is with theos. Such is the apprehension of theos, and thus is there an apprehension of the beautiful and of the noble, and since they are inseparable from theos they cannot be shared among other living beings. Thus a quest for theos is a quest for the beautiful, and there is only one path there: an awareness of the numinous combined with knowledge.

[6] Yet those who do not apprehend, who do not follow the path of awareness of the numinous, have the effrontery to declare that mortals are beautiful and noble even though they have not observed, and have no semblance of, what the noble is. Believing that what is bad is noble, they are subsumed by every badness and, thus glutted with it, are fearful of being robbed of it so that they in whatever way fight to not only keep it but to increase it.

Such are, Asclepius, for mortals the beautiful and the noble and from which we are unable to flee or despise. But what is most grievous to bear is that we are unable to live without them.

Commentary

Title.

Ὅτι ἐν μόνῳ θεῷ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐστὶν ἀλλαχόθι δὲ οὐδαμοῦ. That In The Theos Alone Is Nobility And Not Anywhere Else.

The consensus is that the title is not original and was added by some scribe.

1.

The noble. τὸ ἀγαθὸν. As mentioned in the Introduction, I translate ἀγαθός not as some abstract (impersonal) and disputable 'good' but as, and according to context, nobility, noble, honourable.

no-thing. In respect of ἐν οὐδενί ἐστιν I have here (and occasionally elsewhere) used 'no-thing' - "no entity of any kind" - instead of 'nothing' or 'naught' to emphasize the ontological nature of what is expressed. In addition, as often in the Corpus Hermeticum, what is transliterated here as 'theos' - and by others translated as 'god' - can be taken literally to refer to 'the theos', 'the deity'.

...theos is, of himself and always, what is noble. The suggestion of the first sentence seems to be that 'the theos' is the origin of what is noble, and thus the origin of nobility, and that only through and because of theos can what is noble be presenced and recognized for what it is, and often recognized by those who are, or that which is, an eikon of theos. Hence why in tractate IV it is said that "the eikon will guide you,"; why in tractate XI that "Kosmos is the eikon of theos, Kosmos [the eikon] of Aion, the Sun [the eikon] of Aion, and the Sun [the eikon] of mortals," and why in the same tractate it is said that "there is nothing that cannot be an eikon of theos," and why in Poemandres 31 theos is said to "engender all physis as eikon."

then it... Referring to "what is noble".

quidditas. οὐσία. Here, a more appropriate translation of οὐσία - instead of 'essence' or 'substance' - is quidditas, as in tractate XI:2: "it is as if the quidditas of theos is actuality, honour, the beautiful..."

As I noted in my commentary on XI:2,

Quidditas – post-classical Latin, from whence the English word quiddity – is more appropriate here, in respect of οὐσία, than essence, especially as 'essence' now has so many non-philosophical and modern connotations. Quidditas is thus a philosophical term which requires contextual interpretation. In respect of οὐσία, qv. Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015a:

ἐκ δὴ τῶν εἰρημένων ἡ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἡ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὕλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικῇ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐνυπάρχουσά πως ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ.

Given the foregoing, then principally – and to be exact – physis denotes the quidditas of beings having change inherent within them; for substantia has been denoted by physis because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changes predicated on it. For physis is inherent change either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.

One interpretation of quidditas here is 'the being of that being/entity', with such quidditas often presented in - and perceived via or as - physis.

change...geniture. κινήσεως καὶ γενέσεως. cf. tractate XI:2 and my note above regarding οὐσία. As mentioned in my commentary on XI:2, "the unusual English word geniture expresses the meaning of γένεσις here: that which or those whom have their genesis (and their subsequent development) from or because of something else or because of someone else."

nothing that has come into being. In respect of τῶν ὄντων οὐδέν, cf. Aristotle, Metaphysics, 191a27f: φασιν οὔτε γίνεσθαι τῶν ὄντων οὐδέν οὔτε φθείρεσθαι, διὰ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον μὲν εἶναι γίνεσθαι τὸ γιγνόμενον ἢ ἐξ ὄντος ἢ ἐκ μὴ ὄντος.

lost. ἀπόλλυμι. qv. the title of tractate VIII, and my note regarding it.

bad...badness. κακός, κακίας. As with ἀγαθός not some moral impersonal disputable abstraction - in this case 'evil' - but the personal sense of something or someone being bad, rotten, ignoble.

a partner who might harm him. Literally, "a partner to be harmed by." The exact nature of this partnership is not specified, although the following καὶ διὰ τοῦτο αὐτοῦ ἐρασθήσεται indicates a certain scenario. I have omitted the editorial emendation of οὔτε κάλλιον - "nothing is as beautiful."

nothing of what is bad. Reading κακῶν with the MSS and not the emendation ἄλλων.

physicality. Given the context - ἐν τοῖς καθ' ἐν καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ ζῶντι τῷ πάντων μείζονι καὶ δυνατωτάτῳ - here πάθος, παθῶν, παθητῆς suggest a physicality, a physical actuality/occurrence, which the English word 'passion', with its often implicit anthropomorphism, does not quite express.

The author, in these first two sections, is making a distinction between their hermetic concept of theos and other living beings, especially mortals; of theos as detached from all those things - such as physicality, jealousy, anger - which mortals are subject to and with theos as described here is thus not only very different from the vengeful, angry, Jehovah of the Old Testament but also quite similar to, if not in perhaps some manner based on, the Hellenic concept as mentioned by Aristotle:

ὥστε ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐνέργεια, μακαριότητι διαφέρουσα, θεωρητικὴ ἂν εἴη:
καὶ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων δὴ ἡ ταύτη συγγενεστάτη εὐδαιμονικωτάτη.
σημεῖον δὲ καὶ τὸ μὴ μετέχειν τὰ λοιπὰ ζῶα εὐδαιμονίας.
Nicomachean Ethics (Book X) 1178b.22

Therefore the activity of theos, excelling others in bliss, is wordless-awareness [θεωρέω] and the nearest thing to that among mortals arises from good-fortune [εὐδαιμονία].

construction. cf. tractate II, ὁ οὖν θεὸς <τὸ> ἀγαθόν, καὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ὁ θεός. ἡ δὲ ἑτέρα προσηγορία ἐστὶν ἡ τοῦ πατρός, πάλιν διὰ τὸ ποιητικὸν πάντων. πατρὸς γὰρ τὸ ποιεῖν. (Thus theos is the noble and the noble is theos, although another title is that of father because the artifex of all being. For it is of a father to construct.)

not noble in other ways. That is, while Kosmos - qv. tractate XI for what or who this Kosmos may be - has nobility by the act of construction, of forming substance into beings, because some of those beings possess physicality then Kosmos unlike theos is not completely noble.

3.

in this place. I incline toward the view that ἐνθάδε here does not refer, as some have conjectured, to "here below" (qv. Plato, Gorgias, 525b: ὅμως δὲ δι' ἀλγηδόνων καὶ ὀδυνῶν γίγνεται αὐτοῖς ἡ ὠφελία καὶ ἐνθάδε καὶ ἐν Ἄιδου) but rather just to "this place, here."

refine. καθαροῖς. cf. Poemandres 10, and 22. As I noted in my commentary on Poemandres 22:

Literally [καθαροῖς] means 'physically clean', often in the sense of being in a state of ritual purification: qv. the inscription on one of the ancient tablets (totenpasse) found in Thurii - ἔρχομαι ἐκ καθαρῶν καθαρὰ χθονίων βασίλεια ("in arrivance, purified from the purified, mistress of the chthonic"). Since the English word 'pure' is unsuitable given its connotations - religious, sanctimonious, political, and otherwise - I have opted for the not altogether satisfactory 'refined'.

Here however, the choice of refine seems apposite, given the text:

ἀδύνατον οὖν τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐνθάδε καθαρεύειν τῆς κακίας

It is impractical in this place to refine the noble from the bad

This makes perfect (and practical) sense, in contrast to the fairly recent, conventional, and somewhat moralistic translation of Copenhaver: "the good cannot be cleansed of vice here below."

Interestingly, the Greek word καθαροῖς formed the basis for the relatively modern (c.1803) English term 'catharsis'.

physical body. cf. Poemandres 24: ἐν τῇ ἀναλύσει τοῦ σώματος τοῦ ὑλικοῦ παραδίδως αὐτὸ τὸ σῶμα εἰς ἀλλοίωσιν (the dissolution of the physical body allows that body to be transformed).

restrained on all sides. παντόθεν ἐσφιγμένον.

each such thing. This might well be a reference to "restrained on all sides as it is by badness" - to bad things in general - and not to the immediately preceding "toil, grief, desire, rage, dishonesty, and unreasonable opinion."

the patron of all things rotten. I have omitted the very odd reference to "gluttony" - ἡ γαστριμαργία - which follows τὸ μᾶλλον ἀνυπερβλήτον κακόν, as in all probability it is a gloss. Nock, in his text, indicates a lacuna between the following χορηγὸς and ἡ πλάνη.

If the reference to gluttony is not omitted then a possible interpretation of the text would be: "Gluttony is the patron of all things rotten <...> the mistake in this place is the absence of nobility."

4.

or as theos is with nobility. In order to try and express in English something of the meaning of the Greek - and to avoid repeating "replete" (πλήρωμά), which repetition is not in the Greek text - I have slightly amended the word order. Nock indicates a lacuna between ἀγαθὸν τοῦ θεοῦ and αἱ γὰρ ἔξοχαί. The

transition between "replete with" and "the beautiful" is certainly abrupt.

For the eminence of the beautiful is around that quidditas. Although the Greek text here is rather obscure and various emendations have been proposed - none of which are entirely satisfactory - the general sense, of the beautiful surrounding or being near to the quidditas (οὐσία) of theos, seems clear.

tenuous depictions. The Greek words εἶδωλον and σκιαγραφία require careful consideration if one is not to read into the text philosophical meanings from other ancient authors which may not be relevant here, as might be the case in respect of εἶδωλον if one chose the word 'image'. In addition, if the English word chosen has other, perhaps more modern, associations then there may well be a 'retrospective re-interpretation' of the text, reading into it a meaning or meanings which also might not be relevant, as might be the case in respect of εἶδωλον if one chose 'phantom' given what that word now often imputes. Hence I have chosen 'tenuous' and 'depiction' respectively.

particularly the beautiful and the noble. Some text is missing in the MSS so that what follows οὐδὲ τὸ καλὸν καὶ τὸ ἀγαθόν unfortunately remains unknown.

5.

quest. The sense of ζητέω here is more than that of a simple 'inquiry' or an 'asking'. It is to 'seek after' something with an earnest purpose, as in Matthew 2:13 where there is a desire by Herod to seek out and kill the infant Jesus:

Ἀναχωρησάντων δὲ αὐτῶν ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος κυρίου φαίνεται κατ' ὄναρ τῷ Ἰωσήφ λέγων· ἐγερθεὶς παράλαβε τὸ παιδίον καὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ φεῦγε εἰς Αἴγυπτον καὶ ἴσθι ἐκεῖ ἕως ἄν εἴπω σοι· μέλλει γὰρ Ἡρώδης ζητεῖν τὸ παιδίον τοῦ ἀπολέσαι αὐτό.

awareness of the numinous. As I noted in my commentary on Poemandres 22:

As with ὁσίους, εὐσεβέω is a difficult word to translate, given that most of the English alternatives - such as reverent, pious - have acquired, over centuries, particular religious meanings, often associated with Christianity or types of asceticism. The correct sense is 'aware of the numinous', and thus imbued with that sense of duty, that sense of humility - or rather, an awareness of their human limitations - which makes them appreciate and respect the numinous in whatever form, way, or manner they appreciate, feel, intuit, apprehend, or understand, the numinous, be it in terms of the gods, the god, Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες, God, or whatever. It is this awareness which inclines a person toward 'respectful deeds'.

6.

semblance. Here, ὄναρ suggests 'semblance' rather than 'dream'.

ooo

Appendix

Concerning Personal Pronouns

Regarding the interpretation of ancient texts - of translating an ancient language into English - there is the matter of personal pronouns with the convention being to default to the masculine singular (Man, his, he) even when the gender is not specified but only assumed, as in the matter of θεός in the sixth tractate where unlike some other tractates (such as Poemandres and tractate VIII) the term πατήρ does not occur.

Thus, conventionally defaulting to the masculine singular in sections 12 and 13 of tractate XI of the Corpus Hermeticum - based on the assumption that the MS reading ἄρχων καὶ ἡγέμων [1] and the title πρόδρομος refer to a man - one translates as:

He creates all things [...] If it is demonstrated that no one really exists without producing something how much more so for theos? If there is anything he has not created then - although it is not the custom to say this - he is incomplete, while if theos is complete and not otiose then he creates all things. [2]

πάντα οὖν αὐτὸς ποιεῖ [...] εἰ γὰρ ἀποδέδεικται μηδὲν δυνάμενον εἶναι, πόσω μᾶλλον ὁ θεός; εἰ γὰρ τί ἐστὶν ὃ μὴ ποιεῖ, ὃ μὴ θέμις εἰπεῖν, ἀτελής ἐστίν· εἰ δὲ μήτε ἀργός ἐστι, τέλειος δέ, ἄρα πάντα ποιεῖ.

However, if one uses the plural - non-gender specific - "they" as a personal pronoun then one has:

"They create all things [...] If it is demonstrated that no one really exists without producing something how much more so for theos? If there is anything they have not created then - although it is not the custom to say this - they are incomplete, while if theos is complete and not otiose then they create all things."

Which somewhat changes the meaning and is perhaps confusing for some, although the non-literal alternatives of "the theos" or "the divinity" are rather cumbersome:

"The divinity creates all things [...] If it is demonstrated that no one really exists without producing something how much more so for the divinity? If there is anything the divinity has not created then - although it is not the custom to say this - the divinity is incomplete, while if the divinity is complete and not otiose then the divinity creates all things."

An alternative would be the neutral if even more cumbersome phrase "that Being":

"That Being creates all things [...] If it is demonstrated that no one really exists without producing something how much more so for that Being? If there is anything that Being has not created then - although it is not the custom to say this - that Being is incomplete, while if that Being is complete and not otiose then that Being creates all things."

As I noted in my commentary on the phrase ἀναγνωρίσας ἑαυτὸν in the Poemandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, given that in that tractate theos is not only referred to using the ancient honorific πατήρ [3] but also described as ἀρρενόθηλος, as both male and female:

"here, as often elsewhere, I have gone against convention (grammatical and otherwise) by, where possible, choosing neutral personal pronouns, thus avoiding sentences such as "And he who has self-knowledge..." This sometimes results in using third person plural pronouns - such as 'their' and 'they' - as if they were personal pronouns, or using constructs such as "the one of self-knowledge" or "whoever has self-knowledge". [2]

While I have in my translation here of tractate six used the conventional default of the masculine singular pronoun it might be an interesting exercise for those interested to provide a version using, where appropriate, gender-neutral personal pronouns, which undoubtedly would result in an interpretation of the text quite different from other translations available, my own included.

ooo

[1] Nock - *Corpus Hermeticum*, Third Edition, 1972 - has the emendation ἄρχοντος καὶ ἡγεμόνος.

[2] Myatt, *Corpus Hermeticum I, III, IV, VIII, XI*. 2017.

[3] cf. τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν φώτων (Epistle of James, I, 17), "the father of phaos". In respect of phaos, qv. Poemandres 4-6; tractate III, 1 (φῶς ἅγιον), and tractate XI, 7.

**Ὅτι οὐδὲν τῶν ὄντων ἀπόλλυται
ἀλλὰ τὰς μεταβολὰς ἀπωλείας καὶ θανάτους πλανώμενοι λέγουσιν**

That no beings are lost,
despite mortals mistakenly claiming that such transformations are death and a loss.

Tractate VIII

ooo

Introduction

The eighth tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, concise as it is, provides an interesting summary of some of the tenets of the Hermetic weltanschauung. As, for example, in the mention of a first being (the primary theos) and of a second being (a theos) who is an eikon (εἰκὼν) of the first, and which first being - theos - is the artisan of all beings; and as, for example, in the mention of mortals having a natural empathy (συμπάθεια) with this eikon, this second being, who is identified as κόσμος, with κόσμος understood here, as in tractate XI, either as a personification, as a divinity, the theos - a deathless living being, ζῶον ἄθνατον - who is the living cosmic order, or, as in the Poemandres tractate as simply referring in an impersonal manner to 'the cosmic order' itself.

While most other translators have opted here, as in other tractates, to translate κόσμος as cosmos (which English term suggests that the physical universe is meant) I incline toward the view that here - as in tractate XI - a divinity is meant, especially given how κόσμος is described: as "a second theos and a deathless living being," and as an eikon of the primary theos.

There are certain parallels with tractate XI and in which tractate it is stated that "Kosmos is the eikon of theos, Kosmos that of Aion, the Sun that of Aion, and mortals that of the Sun. It is said that changement is death since the body disintegrates with life departing to the unperceptible," (section 15) and, in section 14, that "Life is the enosis of perceiverance and psyche, while death is not the loss of what was joined but the end of enosis."

What therefore emerges from this, the eighth, tractate are two things: how we mortals are part of, and connected to, Kosmos and thence - since Kosmos is an eikon - to the first, the primary, theos, and how diverse the Hermetic weltanschauung is in respect of some details while nevertheless retaining an

underlying ethos.

ooo

Translation

[1] It is regarding psyche and the corporeal that, my son, we now must speak: of why psyche is deathless and how its vigour assembles and separates the corporeal. For there is no death of what-is, only an apprehension grounded in the denotatum 'deathless', either through unavailing toil or, by discarding the important part, that what is called deathless is deathful. That is, for the deathful there is a loss. But nothing of the Kosmos is ever lost, for if Kosmos is a second theos and a deathless living being then it is not possible for any portion of such a deathless living being to be lost since all beings of Kosmos are part of Kosmos, as most certainly are mortals, the noetic living being.

[2] In truth, the first is theos; the eternal, unborn. The second was engendered from, nurtured by, that being and rendered deathless and eikon of that being, as by an everlasting father, never-dying because deathless.

For never-dying is unlike everlasting. For that one was not a bringing-into-being by another although if there was a bringing-into-being it was his own bringing-into-being since he is always a bringing-into-being. For the everlasting - because it is everlasting - is all that is, with the father everlasting because of himself while Kosmos became everlasting and deathless because of the father.

[3] And the father endowed such substance as he gathered, extending it all to create something spherical, conferring upon it a particular quality, deathless and of substance everlasting. Having seeded such qualities and replete with semblances, the father enclosed them in the sphere as if in a cavern. His deliberation was to equip with each quality what would follow; to encompass with deathlessness everything corporeal so that substance would not by thesis be separated from that bringing-together to thereby dissolve into its own disorder.

For when, my son, substance was incorporeal it was disordered even though that was restricted to other smaller qualities, to the kind of increase and decrease that mortals name death.

[4] For such disorder occurs with earthly-living beings, with celestial beings having one order allotted to them by the father from the beginning and maintained from disintegration by the periodicity of each of them, while the periodicity of earthly living beings is of a separation of their bringing together

and of the indissoluble corporeal; that is, of the deathless. Thus there is the loss of those influencing impressions and not the destruction of what is embodied.

[5] Now, as to the third living being, mortals, brought-into-being as eikon of Kosmos and who, because of the deliberations of the father and beyond the other living beings on Earth, have perceivance and also empathy with the second theos and perception of the first.

For of the one there is apprehension as of the corporeal, while of the other there is an influencing impression as of the incorporeal and as of a noble perceivance.

Then this life is not lost?

Speak softly, my son, and apprehend who theos is, who Kosmos is, what a deathless living being is, what a dissoluble living being is, and apprehend also that Kosmos is of theos and within theos and that mortals are of Kosmos and within Kosmos and thus that theos is the origin of, encompasses, and constitutes, everything.

ooo

Commentary

Title.

lost. ἀπόλλυμι. Lost, rather than 'destroyed' or 'perished'. They are not 'lost' because beings - entities/things - once brought-into-being - are still emanations of Being, of theos, even if their presencing, their form, is changed, transformed, morphed, as happens for example with those mortals who, via the anados mentioned in the Poemandres tractate, go beyond the seven spheres to, and then beyond, the ogdoadic physis.

1.

corporeal. σῶμα. Here, the context - qv. for example the following τῶν γὰρ οὐρανίων τὰ σώματα μίαν τάξιν ἔχει in section 4 and τοῦ δὲ ἔννοιαν λαμβάνει ὡς ἄσωμάτου καὶ νοῦ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ in section 5 - suggests corporeal rather than a literal body. A subtle distinction, between "of the nature of matter" and a specific type of "physical body". Compare also the fourth tractate: ἀεὶ ὄντος καὶ

πάντα ποιήσαντος καὶ ἐνὸς μόνου, τῇ δὲ αὐτοῦ θελήσει δημιουργήσαντος τὰ ὄντα· τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστὶ τὸ σῶμα ἐκείνου, οὐχ ἄπτόν, οὐδὲ ὁρατόν, οὐδὲ μετρητόν, οὐδὲ διαστατόν, οὐδὲ ἄλλω τινὶ σώματι ὅμοιον.

vigour. ἐνέργεια. qv. Poemandres 14, tractate XI: 2, etcetera.

assembles. σύστασις. cf. Euripides, *Andromache*, 1088: τοῦθ' ὑποπτον ἦν ἄρ' ἐς δὲ συστάσεις κύκλους τ' ἐχώρει λαὸς οἰκίτηρ θεοῦ.

In Poemandres 10 it is mentioned how "the logos of theos bounded to the fine artisements of Physis and joined with the perceiviation of that artisan." Thus a theme shared by several tractates is how the various 'artisans' of theos - and theos - skillfully craft beings from Being, as in tractate IV, Chaldron or Monas:

Επειδὴ τὸν πάντα κόσμον ἐποίησεν ὁ δημιουργός οὐ χερσὶν ἀλλὰ λόγῳ ὥστε οὕτως ὑπολάμβανε ὡς τοῦ παρόντος καὶ αἰεὶ ὄντος καὶ πάντα ποιήσαντος καὶ ἐνὸς μόνου τῇ δὲ αὐτοῦ θελήσει δημιουργήσαντος τὰ ὄντα

Because the artisan crafted the complete cosmic order not by hand but through Logos, you should understand that Being as presential, as eternal, as having crafted all being, as One only, who by theosis formed all that is.

apprehension. νόημα. cf. Poemandres 3, "I seek to learn what is real, to apprehend the physis of beings."

denotatum. For προσηγορία. In this case, the denotatum - the naming - is the word 'deathless'.

or by discarding the important part [...] what is called deathless is deathful. ἢ κατὰ στέρησιν τοῦ πρώτου γράμματος λεγόμενος θάνατος ἀντὶ τοῦ ἀθάνατος. Literally, "by discarding the first letter it is called θάνατος [deathful] instead of ἀθάνατος [deathless].

Regarding τοῦ πρώτου γράμματος, what seems to be implied is that the mortal apprehension of 'deathless' does not include the most important - the correct - apprehension regarding death, which correct apprehension is explained by what follows.

Kosmos. κόσμος. As at Poemandres 7, κόσμος carries with it the suggestion that the cosmos is an ordered structure. However, here I construe κόσμος, as in tractate XI, as a divinity, the theos who is the living, deathless, cosmic order.

the noetic living being. τὸ λογικὸν ζῶον. The word λογικός imputes the sense of both the faculty of speech and the faculty of thought, something well-expressed by Sophocles: φθέγμα καὶ ἀνεμόεν φρόνημα καὶ ἀστυνόμους ὀργὰς ἐδιδάξατο

καὶ δυσαύλων πάγων ὑπαίθρεια καὶ δύσομβρα φεύγειν βέλη παντοπόρος,
(Antigone, 355f).

2.

artisan of all beings. In respect of artisan (δημιουργόν) cf. Poemandres 9, and tractate IV: 1. Regarding "of all beings", cf. Poemandres 31, ὁ πατήρ τῶν ὅλων.

eikon. εἰκὼν, qv. Poemandres 21 and 31, and tractate XI:15. Thus the suggestion is that is this eikon represents - presences, manifests - theos, the artisan.

never-dying...everlasting. In order to try and express the dissimilarity between ἀείζωος and αἰδῖος I have translated the former as never-dying (a sense suggested by ἀείζων ὡς ἀθάνατος) and the latter as everlasting, a dissimilarity that is not immediately apparent from translations such as "the everliving is different from the eternal."

That one. Referring to 'the first' who engendered Kosmos as eikon.

not a bringing-into-being by another ... always a bringing-into-being. The text - with its repetition of ἐγένετο - is somewhat obscure, and various emendations have been proposed, none of which are entirely satisfactory. The sense seems to be of "that one" - the first - always having been, and is, and always will be, "a coming-into-being".

3.

such substance ... particular quality. The text is quite obscure and several emendations have been suggested, with Nock indicating that some text may be missing after τῷ ἑαυτοῦ, although ὑπ' αὐτόν seems reasonable. Any translation - whatever emendation is accepted - is conjectural.

The sphere may refer to Kosmos, cf. Poemandres 9,

"Theos, the perceiviation, male-and-female, being Life and phaos, whose logos brought forth another perceiviation, an artisan, who - theos of Fire and pneuma - fashioned seven viziers to surround the perceptible cosmic order in spheres and whose administration is described as fate."

The suggestion might thus be that these seven spheres are themselves enclosed within a sphere, which might explain Poemandres 13-14, "Having fully learned their essence, and having partaken of their physis, he was determined to burst out past the limit of those spheres [and] with full authority over the ordered

cosmos of humans and of beings devoid of logos, he burst through the strength of the spheres to thus reveal to those of downward physis the beautiful image of theos."

substance. ὕλη, qv. Poemandres 19, tractate III:1, tractate XI:3.

create. ποιέω, qv. tractate XI:5

semblances. Does ἰδέα here equate with the concept of 'form' as described by Plato? The consensus is that it does, even though such an assumption imposes a specific philosophical meaning on the text and even though the cosmogonic context - of the living Kosmos as eikon, of Kosmos made deathless by the father, and of theos, the father, conferring upon the sphere a particular quality - does not seem to support such an abstract, definite, concept. Thus, to avoid imposing a very particular meaning on the text, and given that the hermeticism described in this and in the other tractates represent varied weltanschauungen (albeit having a similar underlying ethos) rather than one well-defined philosophy, I have translated not as 'forms' but as semblances.

as if in a cavern. Does this refer to Plato's allegory of the cave, as so many seem to have assumed? Probably not, since - to give just one example - in the Βιβλιοθήκη of Pseudo-Apollodorus - written around the same time as this tractate - ἐν ἄντρῳ refers to a cave, or cavern, in which Maia, one of the seven Pleiades, gave birth to Hermes: Μαῖα μὲν οὖν ἡ πρεσβυτάτη Διὶ συνελθοῦσα ἐν ἄντρῳ τῆς Κυλλήνης Ἑρμῆν τίκτει. οὗτος ἐν σπαργάνοις ἐπὶ τοῦ λίκνου κείμενος.

deliberation. qv. Poemandres 8. As with the preceding *such substance ... particular quality*, the text here is quite obscure, and any translation - whatever emendation is accepted - is conjectural.

thelesis. θέλησις, qv. tractate IV:1. As noted in the commentary there, a transliteration to suggest something more metaphysical than a human type wish or desire. Such as that the physis - the being - of substance (ὕλη) might be such that without the intervention of theos it might naturally dissolve into disorderliness (ἀταξία).

4.

one order allotted to them. That is, celestial beings - those resident in and of the heavens - have a particular order distinct from that of ordinary mortals, but which order mortals can, via an anados such as described in the Poemandres tractate, journey to, discover, and become a part of.

the periodicity of earthly living beings is of a separation of their bringing together and of the indissoluble corporeal. While the periodicity of celestial beings is unchanging and is maintained from disintegration, the periodicity of

mortals is varied and involves the cycle, the separation, of life and death and yet also involves the reality of death not being an end - since what is deathless, the indissoluble part of what is corporeal, cannot suffer from disintegration.

influencing impressions. αἰσθήσεις. qv. Poemandres 22, and my commentary thereon, for what is meant is not simply 'the [bodily] senses' nor what is perceptible to or perceived by the senses but rather those particular impressions, conveyed by the senses, which may influence a person in a particular way.

what is embodied. The indissoluble part of what is apprehended as corporeal.

5.

perceiverance. νοῦς. Not 'mind', qv. Poemandres 2, tractate III:1, etcetera. As noted in my commentary on Poemandres 2:

I incline toward the view that the sense of the word νοῦς here, as often in classical literature, is perceiverance; that is, a particular type of astute awareness, as of one's surroundings, of one's self, and as in understanding ('reading') a situation often in an instinctive way. Thus, what is not meant is some-thing termed 'mind' (or some faculty thereof), distinguished as this abstract 'thing' termed 'mind' has often been from another entity termed 'the body'.

Perceiverance thus describes the ability to sense, to perceive, when something may be amiss; and hence also of the Greek word implying resolve, purpose, because one had decided on a particular course of action, or because one's awareness of a situation impels or directs one to a particular course of action.

empathy. συμπάθεια.

perception. cf. Poemandres 18. An apprehension of the numinous, and thus of theos, of Kosmos as eikon, and so on.

there is an influencing impression as of the incorporeal and of a noble perceiverance. This refers to 'the first', to theos, the father; with the preceding "apprehension as of the corporeal" referring to 'the second', that is, to Kosmos.

Regarding ἀγαθός as 'noble/nobility', qv. my commentary on Poemandres 22. and especially the commentary on φανερώτερα δέ ἐστι τὰ κακά τὸ δὲ ἀγαθὸν ἄφανές τοῖς φανεροῖς in tractate IV:9.

Thus theos is apprehended - understood, felt - in the same, mystical, numinous, way not only as the incorporeal is, but also as inherently noble.

Speak softly. εὐφήμεσον. qv tractate XI:22.

(Kosmos is ...) within theos. ἐν τῷ θεῷ. Literally, 'within the theos'.

Νοῦς πρὸς Ἑρμῆν

From Perceivance To Hermes

Tractate XI

The eleventh tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum is particularly interesting for two reasons. First, the cosmogony in which Aion, Kronos, and Sophia feature. Second, possible links to the Poemandres tractate, given - for example - the mention of a septenary system and the supposition that Perceivance - νοῦς - who addresses Hermes Trismegistus may well be Poemandres himself.

As with my translations of tractates I, III, and IV of the Corpus Hermeticum, I here transliterate certain Greek words, such as theos, in order to avoid what I have described as 'retrospective re-interpretation'.

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Translation

[1] Take account of this discourse, Hermes Trismegistus, remembering what is said for I shall not refrain from mentioning what occurs to me.

Because there is much difference among the many who speak about theos and all other things, I have not uncovered the actuality. Therefore, my Lord, make it unambiguous for me, for you are the one I trust in this.

[2] Hear then, my son, of theos and of everything: theos, Aion, Kronos, Kosmos, geniture. Theos brought Aion into being; Aion: Kosmos; Kosmos, Kronos; Kronos, geniture. It is as if the quidditas of theos is actuality, honour, the beautiful, good fortune, Sophia. Of Aion, identity; of Kosmos, arrangement; of Kronos, variation; of geniture, Life and Death.

The vigour of theos is perceivration and Psyche; but of Aion: continuance and exemption from death; of Kosmos, a cyclic return and renewal; of Kronos, growth and abatement; of geniture, capability. Aion, thus, is of theos; Kosmos of Aion; Kronos of Kosmos; and geniture of Kronos.

[3] The foundation of all being is theos; of their quidditas, Aion; of their substance, Kosmos. The craft of theos: Aion; the work of Aion: Kosmos, which is not just a coming-into-being but always is, from Aion. Thus it cannot be destroyed since Aion is not destroyable nor will Kosmos cease to be since Aion surrounds it.

But the Sophia of theos is what?

The noble, the beautiful, good fortune, arête, and Aion. From Aion to Kosmos: exemption from death, and continuance of substance.

[4] For that geniture depends on Aion just as Aion does on theos. Geniture and Kronos - in the heavens and on Earth - are jumelle; in the heavens, unchanging and undecaying; yet on Earth, changeable and decayable.

Theos is the psyche of Aion; Aion that of Kosmos; the heavens that of the Earth. Theos is presenced in perceivration, with perceivration presenced in psyche, and psyche in substance, with all of this through Aion, with the whole body, in which are all the bodies, replete with psyche with psyche replete with perceivration and with theos. Above in the heavens the identity is unchanged while on Earth there is changement coming-into-being

[5] Aion maintains this, through necessitas or through foreseeing or through physis, or through whatever other assumption we assume, for all this is the activity of theos. For the activity of theos is an unsurpassable crafting that no one can liken to anything mortal or divine.

Therefore, Hermes, never presume that what is above or below is similar to theos since you will descend down from actuality. For nothing is similar to that which, as the one and only, has no similitude. Never presume that he would delegate his work to someone else, for who else is the cause of life, of exemption from death, of Changement? What else but create?

Theos is not inactive for otherwise everything would be inactive; instead they are replete with theos, and there is nowhere in the cosmos nor anywhere else where there is inaction. Inactive is thus a vacant nomen in regard to a creator and what is brought into being.

[6] For every being there is a coming-into-being, each one in balance with its place, with the creator in all that exists, not found in just some nor creating only some but everything. His craft is in what he creates so that their coming-into

being is not independent of him but rather comes-into-being because of him.

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Correctly consider and observe Kosmos as suggested by me and thus the beauty thereof, a body undecayable and nothing more eldern and yet always vigorous and fresh, even more now than before.

[7] Observe also the septenary cosmos ordered in arrangement by Aion with its separate aeonic orbits. Everything replete with phaos but with no Fire anywhere. For fellowship, and the melding of opposites and the dissimilar, produced phaos shining forth in the activity of theos, progenitor of all that is honourable, archon and hegemon of the septenary cosmos.

The Moon, prodomus of all of those, an instrument of Physis, of the changement of the substance below - with the Earth amid them all, a settled foundation of the beautiful Kosmos - and nourisher and nurturer of those on Earth.

Consider also the numerous deathless, and just how many, as well as deathful lives there are. And amid both the deathless and the deathful, the travelling Moon.

[8] All are replete with psyche, all in motion, some around the heavens with others around the Earth, with those on the right not toward to the left and those on the left not toward the right, not those above to below nor below to above. That all have come-into-being you do not, dear Hermes, have to learn from me, for they have bodies, psyche, motion, and to meld them into one is not possible without someone to bring them together. Such a one must exist and be, in every way, a unity.

[9] For, given dissimilar objects, motion is different and diverse with one hastiness appointed to them all, and thus it is not possible for there to be two or more creators for if there are many then such an arrangement cannot be kept. For the result of many is strifeful emulation of the stronger, and if one of two was the creator of changeable mortal living beings they would covet creating deathless ones even as the creator of the deathless would deathful ones.

If indeed there were two with one substance and the other psyche who would provide the creations? If both of them, which would have the larger part?

[10] Consider that every living being, deathful and deathless, and whether devoid of logos, is formed of substance and psyche, for all living beings presence life while the non-living are substance only. Similarly, psyche of itself from its creator is the cause of the living while the cause of all life is the creator of deathless beings.

What then of the living that die and the deathless ones? For why does the deathless one who creates deathless beings not create other living beings so?

[11] It is evident someone is so creating and that he is One; for Psyche is one, Life is one, Substance is one.

But who is it?

Who could it be if not One, the theos? To whom if not to theos alone would it belong to presence life in living beings?

Theos therefore is One, for having accepted the Kosmos is one, the Sun is one, the Moon is one, and divinity-presenced is one, could you maintain that theos is some other number?

[12] He creates all beings, and how supreme it is for the theos to create life and psyche and the deathless and changement, with you doing so many things, for you see, hear, speak, smell, touch, walk, perceive, and breathe. Yet it is not someone else who is seeing and another who is hearing and another who is speaking and another who is touching and another who is hearing and another who is smelling and another who is walking and another who is perceiving and another who is breathing, but one being doing all such things.

None of which are separate from theos. Just as you are not really living if you are otiose so would theos, if otiose - and it is not the custom to say this - no longer be theos.

[13] If it is demonstrated that no one really exists without producing something how much more so for theos? If there is anything he has not created then - although it is not the custom to say this - he is incomplete, while if theos is complete and not otiose then he creates all things.

For a little longer, Hermes, give way to me and you will more readily apprehend that the work of theos is one: of everything brought-into-being; what is coming-into-being, what has come-into-being, and what will come-into-being. This, my friend, is Life; this is the beautiful, this is the noble; this is the theos.

[14] If you maintain this should be apprehended in deeds, consider when you seek to procreate, for it not the same for him since there is no delight, no colleague. Instead, a working alone, and forever working for he is what he creates. If ever isolated from it, everything would - because of Necessitas - fall apart, with everything dying because there would be no Life. But if everything is alive, and Life is One, then theos is One. While if everything is alive, and Life is One, then theos is One. Also, if everything is alive both in the heavens and on Earth and Life is One for them all as brought-into-being by theos and theos is that, then all are brought-into-being by theos.

Life is the enosis of perceiverance and psyche, while death is not the loss of

what was joined but the end of enosis.

[15] Kosmos is the eikon of theos, Kosmos that of Aion, the Sun that of Aion, and mortals that of the Sun. It is said that changelement is death since the body disintegrates with life departing to the unperceptible. My dear Hermes, while I state there is changelement in Kosmos because every day portions of it come-into-being in the unperceptible, it never disintegrates. These are the occurrences of the Kosmos, cyclicity and occultations; the cyclic a turning and occultation renewal.

[16] The Kosmos is polymorphous and forms are not imposed on it but rather, within itself, it is such changelement. Since the Kosmos is polymorphous who created it and who would that be? Whomsoever cannot be without-form and yet if polymorphous would be akin to Kosmos and if only one form would be lower than Kosmos.

What therefore can be said without confusion given that there should be no confusion concerning apprehending theos? If there is a kind then it is a singular kind, incorporeal, and not subject to perception but revealed through the corporeal.

[17] And do not wonder about an incorporeal kind since it is akin to words, mountains which appear in depictions to be rugged but which when examined are flat and smooth. So heed these words of mine bold as they are but honest, for as mortals cannot be separate from Life, theos cannot be separate from creating nobility since for theos this creating is Life and motion, the movement of everything and the giving of life.

[18] Some of the matters spoken of require a certain apprehension, so consider what I say: everything is in the theos but not as if lying in a particular place - since the place is a body and also immovable and what is lain does not move - but an incorporeal representation apprehends what is lain otherwise.

Thus apprehend what embraces everything and apprehend that the incorporeal has no boundary, that nothing is swifter, nothing as mighty, since the incorporeal is boundless, the swiftest, the mightiest.

[19] And apprehend this about yourself and so urge your psyche to go to any land and, swifter than that urging, it will be there. Likewise, urge it to go to the Ocean and again it will be swiftly there without passing from place to place but as if already there.

Urge it to go up into the heavens and it will be there without the need of any wings. Indeed, nothing will impede it: not the fire of the Sun nor Aether, nor the vortex, nor the bodies of the other stars, but - carving through them all - it will go as far as the furthest body. Should you desire to burst through The Entirety and observe what is beyond - if indeed there be anything beyond that ordered

system - then it is possible for you.

[20] Thus see how much might and swiftness you have. If you can do all those things then cannot theos? In such a manner you should consider theos as having all - Kosmos, The Entirety - as purposes within himself. For until you compare yourself with theos you cannot apprehend theos because what is similar can understand the similar.

Extend yourself greatly, immeasurably; leap beyond every body, surpass Kronos, become Aion, and you can apprehend theos. Having supposed that for you there is nothing that is not possible, regard yourself as deathless, capable of apprehending everything: every craft, all learning, the nature of every living being. Become elevated above every elevation, deeper than every depth. Gather within yourself awareness of every creation; of Fire and Water; the Dry and the Moist; and jointly be at all places on land, at sea, in the heavens. Be not yet born; in the womb; young; old; having died; what is beyond death.

And if you apprehend all that together - durations, places, occurrences, quality, quantity - you will be capable of apprehending theos.

[21] But if you enclose your psyche in your body and lessen it, saying "I comprehend nothing; have no power; fear the sea; am unable to go up into the heavens; do not know who I was and cannot know what I will be," then what is there with you and also with the god?

For, indulging the body and rotten, you are unable to apprehend the beautiful, the noble. To be completely rotten is to be unaware of the numinous, while having the ability to discover, to have volition, to have expectations, is the direct, the better - its own - way to nobility, and which you will encounter everywhere and which will everywhere be perceived whether you anticipate it or not: awake, asleep, at sea; whether journeying by night, by day, when speaking or when silent. For there is nothing that cannot be an eikon of theos.

[22] Do you affirm that theos is unperceived?

Speak softly. Who is more clearly revealed? He created everything such that in them you might discern him, for such is the nobility, such is the arête, of the theos, that he is revealed in everything. For nothing is unperceivable, not even the incorporeal, with perceivability evident through apprehension, theos through creation.

So Trismegistus, let what has been revealed so far be apprehended by you, and if you consider other things in the same way you will not be deceived.

Commentary

Title.

perceivance. νοῦς. qv. my commentary on the term in Poemandres where I wrote:

"The conventional interpretation [of νοῦς] is 'mind', as if in contrast to 'the body' and/or as if some fixed philosophical and abstract principle is meant or implied.

This conventional interpretation is in my view incorrect, being another example of not only retrospective reinterpretation but of using a word which has acquired, over the past thousand years or more, certain meanings which detract from an understanding of the original text. Retrospective reinterpretation because the assumption is that what is being described is an axiomatic, reasoned, philosophy centred on ideations such as Thought, Mind, and Logos, rather than what it is: an attempt to describe, in fallible words, a personal intuition about our existence, our human nature, and which intuition is said to emanate from a supernatural being named Poemandres [...]

I incline toward the view that the sense of the word νοῦς here, as often in classical literature, is *perceivance*; that is, a particular type of astute awareness, as of one's surroundings, of one's self, and as in understanding ('reading') a situation often in an instinctive way. Thus, what is not meant is some-thing termed 'mind' (or some faculty thereof), distinguished as this abstract 'thing' termed 'mind' has often been from another entity termed 'the body'.

Perceivance thus describes the ability to sense, to perceive, when something may be amiss; and hence also of the Greek word implying resolve, purpose, because one had decided on a particular course of action, or because one's awareness of a situation impels or directs one to a particular course of action."

1.

The first paragraph of this section is spoken by Perceivance [Νοῦς], the second by Hermes Trismegistus.

theos. As with my translations of tractates I, III, and IV of the Corpus

Hermeticum, I here transliterate θεός rather than translate as God (as most others do) which translation in my opinion imposes a particular and Christian interpretation on the text given two thousand years of Christian exegesis regarding both God and the Old and New Testaments. A suitable alternative to 'theos' might be 'the god', which emphasizes that the theos described in this tractate is, like Zeus in classical times, the pre-eminent divinity. Occasionally, when the text warrants it - for example τῷ θεῷ and εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός - I have used 'the theos' instead of theos.

I have not uncovered the actuality. ἐγὼ τὸ ἀληθές οὐκ ἔμαθον. I incline toward the view that the sense of ἀληθής here is not some abstract (disputable) 'truth' but rather of the reality, the actuality, beyond the conflicting views, beyond appearance, and thus of uncovering - of learning - the reality of theos and other things.

2.

Aion. αἰών. A transliteration since the usual translation of 'eternity' imposes modern (cosmological and theological) meanings on the text, especially as αἰών can also imply a personification of a 'divine being', and 'an age or era' of long duration, or the lifespan of a mortal (as in Herodotus: πρὶν τελευτήσαντα καλῶς τὸν αἰῶνα πύθωμαι, Book 1, 32.5). In Aristotle, αἰών has specific meanings which the English term 'eternity' does not describe. For instance, in Περὶ Οὐρανοῦ where he writes: Ὅτι μὲν οὖν οὔτε γέγονεν ὁ πᾶς οὐρανὸς οὔτ' ἐνδέχεται φθαρῆναι, καθάπερ τινὲς φασιν αὐτόν, ἀλλ' ἔστιν εἷς καὶ αἰδῖος, ἀρχὴν μὲν καὶ τελευτὴν οὐκ ἔχων τοῦ παντὸς αἰῶνος, ἔχων δὲ καὶ περιέχων ἐν αὐτῷ τὸν ἄπειρον χρόνον (Book 2, 1).

Which is somewhat echoed in this tractate in respect of Kosmos which is not just a coming-into-being but always just *is*, from Aion (γενόμενος οὔποτε καὶ ἀεὶ γινόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος).

Interestingly, Jung used the term to describe a particular archetype, one which provides "intimations of a kind of enantiodromian reversal of dominants" as he writes in his *Aion: Researches Into The Phenomenology Of The Self*.

In addition, αἰών - as with the following χρόνος - might well be a personification, or an esoteric/philosophical term or principle which requires interpretation, as might κόσμος (Kosmos). Since κόσμος here does not necessarily imply what we now understand, via sciences such as astronomy, as the physical cosmos/universe it seems inappropriate to translate it as 'the cosmos', especially given expressions such as οὐδὲ ἀπολεῖται τι τῶν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τοῦ κόσμου ὑπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος ἐμπεριεχομένου.

Kronos. χρόνος. For reasons I have explained many times in my writings (for instance in Appendix I), I do not translate χρόνος as 'time', which translation seems to me to impose a particular modern meaning on the text given that for

centuries the term 'time' has denoted a certain regularity (hours, minutes) measured by a mechanism such as a clock and given that the term 'duration' is usually more appropriate in relation to ancient Greek texts where the duration between, for example, the season of Summer and the season of Autumn was determined by the observations (the appearance in the night sky) of certain constellations and stars.

geniture. γένεσις. The unusual English word geniture expresses the meaning of γένεσις here: that which or those whom have their genesis (and their subsequent development) from or because of something else or because of someone else. Alongside χρόνος, αἰών, and κόσμος, here γένεσις could well be a personification.

It is as if the quidditas of theos is [...] τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ ὡςπερ οὐσία ἐστὶ... Quidditas - post-classical Latin, from whence the English word quiddity - is more appropriate here, in respect of οὐσία, than essence, especially as 'essence' now has so many non-philosophical and modern connotations. Quidditas is thus a philosophical term which requires contextual interpretation. In respect of οὐσία, qv. Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015a: ἐκ δὲ τῶν εἰρημένων ἡ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἢ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὕλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικῇ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστὶν, ἐνυπάρχουσά πως ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ. [Given the foregoing, then principally - and to be exact - physis denotes the quidditas of beings having change inherent within them; for substantia has been denoted by physis because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changes predicated on it. For physis is inherent change either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.]

In addition, I follow the MSS, which have τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, ἢ εὐδαιμονία.

honour. ἀγαθός. That is, the substance of theos - in mortals - is manifest in the brave, in nobility of character, in what being noble means. Regarding ἀγαθός as honour rather than some abstract, disputable 'good', qv. my commentary (i) on Poemandres 22 and (ii) on τὰ μὲν γὰρ φαινόμενα τέρπει [...] φανεροῖς in section 9 of Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς (tractate IV), and (iii) Appendix II and III.

good fortune. εὐδαιμονία.

Sophia. σοφία. A transliteration, because - just like ἀληθής - it is not necessarily here something abstract, something disputable, such as 'wisdom' or 'good judgement'. Just as with Aion and Kronos, it might be a personification or used here as an esoteric term which thus requires contextual interpretation.

identity...arrangement. ταυτότης...τάξις. An alternative for 'identity' would be

'form' (but not necessarily in the sense used by Plato and Aristotle) for the meaning seems to be that Aion provides the form, the identity, of beings with Kosmos arranging these forms into a particular order.

of Kronos, variation. See the note on Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015α, above.

vigour. ἐνέργεια. As at Poemandres 14, not 'energy' given that the word energy has too many modern connotations and thus distracts from the meaning here. See also the note on 'activity' in section 5 where 'activity' is a more perspicacious translation.

cyclic return and renewal. ἀποκατάστασις καὶ ἀνταποκατάστασις. I take this expression as implying something metaphysical rather than astronomical; an astronomical meaning as described, for example, in the Greek fragments of a book on astrology by Dorotheus of Sidon (qv. *Dorothei Sidonii carmen astrologicum. Interpretationem Arabicam in linguam Anglicam versam una cum Dorothei fragmentis et Graecis et Latinis*, edited by Pingree, Teubner, Leipzig, 1976).

For there is a similar metaphysical theme in Poemandres 17 - μέχρι περιόδου τέλους (cyclic until its completion) - with apokatastasis becoming (possibly as an echo of Greek Stoicism) a part of early Christian exegesis as exemplified by Gregory of Nyssa who wrote ἀνάστασις ἐστὶν ἡ εἰς τὸ ἀρχαῖον τῆς φύσεως ἡμῶν ἀποκατάστασις (De Anima et Resurrectione, 156C) where apokatastasis implies a return to, a resurrection of, the former state of being (physis) of mortals lost through 'original sin' and in respect of which returning baptism is a beginning.

3.

substance. ὕλη. qv. Poemandres 10. Given that the ancient Greek term does not exactly mean 'matter' in the modern sense (as in the science of Physics) it is better to find an alternative. Hence substance, the materia of 'things' and living beings. Thus 'materia' would be another suitable translation here of ὕλη.

The craft of theos: Aion. δύναμις δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἰών. Aion as artisan who has, through theos, the power to not only craft Kosmos but also renew it, for Kosmos was/is not just a once occurring coming-into-being but is forever renewed: γενόμενος οὐποτε, καὶ ἀεὶ γινόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος.

On δύναμις as implying an 'artisan-creator' rather than just the 'power/strength' of a divinity, qv. the doxology in Poemandres 31.

From Aion to Kosmos. The suggestion is that 'the cosmic order' - Kosmos - is the work of Aion who/which is the source of, provides, 'the exemption from death' and the continuance of materia/substantia, the cyclic return and renewal.

4.

jumelle. διπλοῦς. As noted in my commentary on Poemandres 14, "The much underused and descriptive English word *jumelle* - from the Latin *gemellus* - describes some-thing made in, or composed of, two parts, and is therefore most suitable here, more so than common words such as 'double' or twofold."

psyche. ψυχή. Avoiding the usual translation of 'soul' which imposes various, disputable, religious and philosophical meanings (including modern ones) on the text. A useful summary of the use of ψυχή from classical to Greco-Roman times is given in DeWitt Burton: *Spirit, Soul, and Flesh: The Usage of Πνεῦμα, Ψυχή, and Σάρξ in Greek Writings and Translated Works from the Earliest Period to 225 AD* (University of Chicago Press, 1918).

Theos is presenced in perceivration... The term 'presenced' expresses the esoteric meaning of the text better than something such as "theos is in perceivration", especially given what follows: a description of the layers of being, of the whole, complete, cosmic, Body having within it other bodies, other layers or types of being, such as Kronos.

Within, it is filled; outside, it is enclosed ... a vast, fully-formed, life. The suggestion is that it - the cosmic Body - is enclosed, encircled, by psyche which fills the cosmos with Life.

It is possible to understand this mystically as an allusion to the difference between what is esoteric and what is exoteric, with 'within' referring to an inner/esoteric perception and understanding, and 'outer' as referring to the exoteric. That is, the exoteric understanding is of something vast, fully-formed, complete, and living (μέγα καὶ τέλειον ζῶον) while the inner understanding is of living beings who, "replete with psyche", are connected to theos through perceivration. The exoteric perception is also described in the preceding "unchanging and undecaying" aspect of the heavens, with the esoteric referring to the "changeable and decayable" nature of living things on Earth.

5.

Necessitas. Although the Latin 'Necessitas' is a suitable alternative for the Greek, a transliteration (Ananke) is perhaps preferable (although less readable), because even if what is meant is not 'wyrd' - qv. Ἀνάγκης, the primordial goddess of incumbency, of wyrd, of that which is beyond, and the origin of, what we often describe as our Fate as a mortal being [cf. Empedocles, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, Diels-Kranz, 31, B115] - English terms such as 'necessity' and 'constraint' are somewhat inadequate, vague, especially given what follows: εἴτε

πρόνοιαν εἴτε φύσιν καὶ εἴ τι ἄλλο οἶεται ἢ οἰήσεται τις.

Thus the term requires contextual interpretation.

physis. φύσις. An important theme/principle in the Poemandres tractate and in Aristotle, and a term which suggests more than what the English terms Nature - and the 'nature' or 'character' of a thing or person - denote. In respect of Aristotle, qv. Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015α, quoted above in respect of my use of the term quidditas.

What physis denotes is something ontological: a revealing, a manifestation, of not only the true nature of beings but also of the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being.

activity. For ἐνέργεια here since the term 'energy' is - given its modern and scientific connotations - inappropriate and misleading.

crafting. See the note on δύναμις δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἰὼν above.

descend down. In respect of ἐκπεσῆ, cf. Basil of Caesarea, Epistulae, Γλυκερίω: ἐκπεσῆ δὲ καὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ μετὰ τῶν μελῶν σου καὶ τῆς στολῆς.

change. μεταβολή. I have here chosen 'change' in preference to 'change' since change (coming into English use around 1584) is more specific than 'change', suggesting variation, alteration, development, unfolding, transmutation.

Inactive is thus a vacant nomen. ἀργία γὰρ ὄνομα κενόν ἐστὶ. The unusual English word nomen - a direct borrowing from the Latin - is more appropriate than 'word' since nomen can mean a name and also a designation, for what is suggested is that in respect of someone who crafts, creates, things - theos - and what is created, brought-into-being, the designation and the name 'inactive' are not there. A suitable simile might be that of the second personal name (nomen) of a Roman citizen which designated their *gens* and, later, their status. Thus theos has no gens because theos is unique, and the status of theos cannot be compared to that of any other being because the status of theos is also unique.

In respect of ποιέω, I prefer 'create' rather than the somewhat prosaic 'make'.

6.

I am inclined to agree with Scott - *Hermetica*, Volume I, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1924, p.210 - that after the end of the first paragraph of section 6 [For every being there is a coming-into-being ... not independent of him but rather comes-into-being because of him] the tractate should be divided. Indeed, there might even have been a melding of two different tractates (or two different authors) given the contrast between the first and the second part.

undecayable. ἀκήρατος. That is, a privation of κηραίνω: decay, spoiled, perish. Undecayable is more apt here than 'undefiled' or 'pure' especially as Thomas More, in 1534 in his A Treatise On The Passion, wrote of "the infinite perfection of their undecayable glory."

eldern. For παλαιός. The Middle English forms of eldern include elldern and eldrin, and the etymology is 'elder' plus the suffix 'en'. In comparison to this rather evocative English word, alternatives such as 'ancient' seem somewhat prosaic.

7.

Observe also the septenary cosmos ... separate aeonic orbits. Nock - who as Copenhaver et al - renders αἰών as 'eternity' translates this passage as: Vois aussi la hiérarchie des sept cieux, formés en bon ordre suivant une disposition éternelle, remplissant, chacun par une différente, l'éternité.

phaos. As in my Poemandres - and for reasons explained there - a transliteration of φῶς, using the Homeric φάος. To translate simply as 'light' obscures the elemental nature of phaos.

no fire anywhere. As in the Poemandres tractate (qv. sections 4, 5, et seq.) not 'fire' in the literal sense but fire as an elemental principle. In the Poemandres tractate - which describes the origins of beings - Fire plays an important role, as at section 17,

"those seven came into being in this way. Earth was muliebral, Water was lustful, and Fire maturing. From Æther, the pneuma, and with Physis bringing forth human-shaped bodies. Of Life and phaos, the human came to be of psyche and perceivation; from Life - psyche; from phaos - perceivation; and with everything in the observable cosmic order cyclic until its completion."

fellowship. The meaning of φιλία here is debatable, as usual renderings such as 'love' and 'friendship' seem somewhat inappropriate given the context. It is possible it refers to a principle such as the one suggested by Empedocles where it is the apparent opposite of νεῖκος, qv. the mention of Empedocles by Isocrates (Antidosis, 15.268) - Ἐμπεδοκλῆς δὲ τέτταρα, καὶ νεῖκος καὶ φιλίαν ἐν αὐτοῖς - and fragments such as 31, B35 and 31, B115 (Diels-Kranz: Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker) with νεῖκος implying 'disagreement' and φιλότης something akin to 'fellowship'.

The contrast between νεῖκος and φιλότης is also mentioned - interestingly in regard to the source of motion - by Aristotle in Metaphysics, Book 12, 1072a:

Ἐμπεδοκλῆς φιλίαν καὶ τὸ νεῖκος.

archon and hegemon. I follow the MSS which have ἄρχων καὶ ἡγέμων. Since both ἄρχων and ἡγέμων have been assimilated into the English language (ἄρχων c. 1755 and ἡγέμων c. 1829) and retain their original meaning it seemed unnecessary to translate them.

prodromus. πρόδρομος. Another Greek word assimilated into the English language (c. 1602 and appearing in a translation of Ovid's Salmacis and Hermaphroditus) and which retains the meaning of the Greek here: a forerunner, a precursor; a moving ahead and in front of.

the Earth amid them all. I incline toward the view that τήν τε γῆν μέσσην τοῦ παντός does not mean that 'the Earth is at the centre of the universe' (or something similar) - since κόσμος is not directly mentioned - but rather that the Earth is in the midst of - among - all, the whole, (παντός) that exists.

foundation. I take the sense of ὑποστάθμη here to be 'foundation' rather than implying some sort of 'sediment', gross or otherwise.

nurturer. τιθήνη.

deathless, deathful. γν. Poemandres 14: θνητὸς μὲν διὰ τὸ σῶμα, ἀθάνατος δὲ διὰ τὸν οὐσιώδη ἄνθρωπον. As there, I take the English words from Chapman's *Hymn to Venus* from the Homeric Hymns: "That with a deathless goddess lay a deathful man."

travelling. ὑποστάθμη. The context suggests 'travelling', and 'going around or about' in a general sense, rather than 'circling' in some defined astronomical sense.

8.

all in motion. In a passage critical of Plato and in respect of motion, psyche and the heavens, Aristotle in his *Metaphysics* wrote: τὸ αὐτὸ ἐαυτὸ κινεῖν: ὕστερον γὰρ καὶ ἅμα τῷ οὐρανῷ ἢ ψυχῇ, ὥς φησίν. (Book 12, 1072a)

in every way, a unity. cf. sections 10 and 11 of the Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς tractate (IV) with their mention of μονάς.

hastiness. ταχυτής. To translate as either 'speed' or 'velocity' is to leave the text open to misinterpretation, since the concept of speed/velocity as a measure (precise or otherwise) of the time taken to travel a certain distance was unknown in the ancient world.

10.

devoid of logos. γν. Poemander 10. As there, ἄλογος is simply 'without/devoid of or lacking in logos'. It does not necessarily here, or there, imply 'irrational' or 'unreasoning'. It might, for example, be referring to how logos is explained in texts such as Poemandres where distinctions are made between logoi, such as pneuma logos and phasma logos.

In addition, I follow the MSS which have only καὶ τοῦ ἀλόγου.

presence life. ἔμψυχος. That is, are living; have life; embody, are animated by, life; and thus are not lifelessly cold.

psyche of itself [...] the creator of deathless being. Although the Greek wording is somewhat convoluted the meaning is that while psyche is the "cause of the life" of beings which are animated with life, it is the creator of deathless life who is the cause of all life.

What then of the living that die and the deathless ones? I follow the emendation of Tiedemann who has ἀθάνατων in place of θνητῶν.

11.

if not One, the theos. The phrase εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός occurs in Mark 10.18 and Luke 18.19. I have translated literally in an attempt to preserve the meaning, lost if one translates as The One God.

Theos therefore is One. I have omitted the following γελοιότατον - "most absurd" - as a gloss. In respect of 'One' here - εἷς - what is implied is not the numeral one but rather "not composed of separate parts", complete of itself, the opposite of 'many', and so on. That is, an undivided unity.

divinity-presenced. θεϊότης. This word imputes the sense of 'the divine (made) manifest' or less literally 'divine-ness' whence the usual translation of 'divinity'. I have opted for divinity-presenced to express something of its original meaning and its uncommonality.

12.

He creates all things. I have omitted the following ἐν πολλῷ γελοιότατον as an untranslatable gloss.

otiose. καταργέω. Since otiose implies more than being 'idle' or 'unoccupied' it is apt, implying as it does "having no practical function; redundant; superfluous".

13.

no one really exists without producing... Following the emendations of Nock, who has σε μηδὲν ποιοῦντα μὴ δυνάμενον εἶναι.

apprehend. νοέω. To apprehend also in the sense of 'discover'.

this is Life; this is the beautiful, this is the noble; this is the theos. ἔστι δὲ τοῦτο [...] ζωή, τοῦτο δὲ ἐστὶ τὸ καλόν, τοῦτο δὲ ἐστὶ τὸ ἀγαθόν, τοῦτό ἐστιν ὁ θεός. A succinct expression of the main theme of the tractate and of one of the main themes of the hermetic weltanschauung.

14.

enosis. ἔνωσις. A transliteration given that it is a mystical term with a particular meaning and describes something more than is denoted by the ordinary English word 'union'. It was, for example used by Plotinus, by Maximus of Constantinople, and was part of the mystic philosophy attributed to Pseudo-Dionysius, The Areopagite - qv. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, Series Graeca. vol IV, 396A. 1857 - and denoted, for Plotinus, a desirable ascent (ἄνοδος) and a 'merging with The One', and for both the Areopagite and Maximus of Constantinople a self-less mystical experience of God.

15.

eikon. εἰκὼν. Another mystical term requiring contextual interpretation, cf. Poemandres 31, regarding which I wrote in my commentary: "I have transliterated εἰκὼν as here it does not only mean what the English words 'image' or 'likeness' suggest or imply, but rather it is similar to what Maximus of Constantinople in his Mystagogia [Patrologiae Graeca, 91, c.0658] explains. Which is of we humans, and the cosmos, and Nature, and psyche, as eikons, although according to Maximus it is the Christian church itself (as manifest and embodied in Jesus of Nazareth and the Apostles and their successors and in scripture) which, being the eikon of God, enables we humans to recognize this, recognize God, be in communion with God, return to God, and thus find and fulfil the meaning of our being, our existence."

My dear Hermes. Omitting the following δεισιδαίμων ὥς ἀκούεις as a gloss.

occurrences. πάθη. I interpret this not in some anthropomorphic way - as 'passions' - but metaphysically (as akin to πάθημα), and thus as occurrences, events, happenings, that here regularly occur to Kosmos and which change and renew it despite (or perhaps because of) the change it undergoes. cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book 1, 982b: οἷον περὶ τε τῶν τῆς σελήνης παθημάτων καὶ τῶν περὶ τὸν ἥλιον καὶ ἄστρα καὶ περὶ τῆς τοῦ παντὸς γενέσεως.

the cyclic a turning. The meaning here of στροφή is problematic. Given the context, my suggestion is 'turning' in the sense of a change that is positive and

possibility evolutionary, as πάθη can lead to positive change, in humans, in Nature, and in things.

16.

polymorphous. παντόμορφος. As for the rest of the sentence, vis-a-vis 'form', there is no adequate, unambiguous, word to re-present μορφή given how, for example, the English term 'morph' has acquired various meanings irrelevant here and given that the English term 'form' has associations with Plato when used to translate ἰδέα.

without-form. ἄμορφος.

kind. For ἰδέα. To avoid confusion with 'form' and because it is apposite here.

17.

incorporeal kind. In respect of ἀσώματος, cf. the comment about Socrates and Plato in Placita Philosophorum by Pseudo-Plutarch: τὸν θεὸν τὴν ὕλην τὴν ἰδέαν. ὁ δὲ θεὸς νοῦς ἐστὶ τοῦ κόσμου, ὕλη δὲ τὸ ὑποκείμενον πρῶτον γενέσκει καὶ φθορᾷ, ἰδέα δ' οὐσία ἀσώματος ἐν τοῖς νοήμασι καὶ ταῖς φαντασίαις τοῦ θεοῦ. (1.3)

mountains which appear in depictions. I have chosen 'depictions' because depiction could refer to paintings on vases or to wall-paintings or to some other medium or art-form where mountains might be depicted, and it is not clear from the context which is meant.

18.

φαντασία. Not here simply 'appearance' in the ordinary sense of the term but a 'making visible' such that it is apprehended by us in a particular way, as a re-presentation of what it actually is. Hence: "an incorporeal representation apprehends what is lain otherwise."

19.

urge your psyche to go to... The whole passage is interesting and evocative, with psyche here signifying 'spirit' as in "let your spirit wander to other places" and thus invoking something akin to what we now might describe as conscious imagination.

go to any land. Following the MSS rather than the emendation Nock accepts which is εἰς Ἰνδικὴν. There seems to me no justification for jarringly introducing India here.

Ocean. Ὠκεανός. That is, a sea beyond the Mediterranean, such as the Atlantic.

Aether. cf. Poemandres 17, ἐκ δὲ αἰθέρος τὸ πνεῦμα ἔλαβε, where I noted in my commentary: "It is best to transliterate αἰθήρ - as Æther - given that it, like Earth, Air, Fire, Water, and pneuma, is an elemental principle, or a type of (or a particular) being, or some-thing archetypal."

nor the vortex. οὐχ ἡ δίνη. Presumably δίνη here refers to the celestial movement of the planets and stars as observed from Earth.

burst through. cf. Poemandres 14: ἀναρρήξας τὸ κράτος τῶν κύκλων, "burst through the strength of the spheres."

The Entirety. Even though 'universe' is implied, I have refrained from using that English word given its modern astronomical and cosmological connotations, and have instead opted for a literal translation of ὅλος.

ordered system. κόσμος here as 'the ordered system' just described: the land, ocean, Sun, the heavens, the bodies of the stars.

20.

purposes. νοήματα.

21.

enclose your psyche in your body. cf. section I of tractate VII where enclosing the psyche in the body is also mentioned.

indulging the body and rotten. φιλοσώματος here implies 'indulging the body' rather than 'loving the body' just as κακός implies 'rotten', 'base', rather than some abstract, disputable 'evil' or (vide Nock) "le vice suprême."

the numinous. τὸ θεῖον. In other words, 'the divine'.

its own (way). Following the MSS which have ἰδία, omitted by Nock.

eikon. Tentatively reading οὐδὲν γάρ ἐστιν ὃ οὐκ εἰκὼν θείου, which is not altogether satisfactory. The MSS have εἰκόνι. Nock emends to οὐδὲν γάρ ἐστιν ὃ οὐκ ἔστιν (there is nothing that it is not) which seems somewhat at odds with the preceding "to be completely rotten is..." and with theos/the numinous being evident, presenced, in τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, ἡ εὐδαιμονία.

Regarding eikon, qv. the note in the commentary on section 15.

22.

Speak softly. εὐφήμησον is a formulaic phrase (cf. Tractate XIII:8, ὦ τέκνον, καὶ εὐφήμησον καὶ διὰ τοῦτο οὐ καταπαύσει τὸ ἔλεος εἰς ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ) suggesting "speak softly" and with reverence.

Περὶ νοῦ κοινοῦ πρὸς Τάτ

To Thoth, Concerning Mutual Perceivation

Tractate XII

ο ο ο

Introduction

While the first few sentences of the twelfth tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum have some similarity to what Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, wrote in a polemic a century or two later [1], the rest of the twelfth tractate - with its mention of the Ἀγαθὸς Δαίμων (the Noble Daimon), with its echo of Heraclitus, with its mention that "some mortals are deities with their mortal nature close to divinity," and with its themes of ψυχή (psyche) and ἀνάγκη (wyrð, 'necessity', 'fate') - is ineluctably part of Greco-Roman paganism, where by the term paganism I personally - following Cicero [3] - mean "an apprehension of the complete unity (a cosmic order, κόσμος, mundus) beyond the apparent parts of that unity, together with the perceivation that we mortals - albeit a mere and fallible part of the unity - have been gifted with our existence so that we may perceive and understand this unity, and, having so perceived, may ourselves seek to be whole, and thus become as balanced (perfectus), as harmonious, as the unity itself." [3] Furthermore, this unity derives from 'the theos', the primary divinity, who gifted we mortals with life, and is manifest in - presenced by - other divinities, by daimons [4], and by what we have come to describe as Nature, that is, as the natural world existing on Earth with its diversity of living beings.

Furthermore, although, as with several other tractates, the name of Τάτ (Thoth) appears in the title, there is nothing in the text, or in the other texts of the Corpus, which points to native Egyptian influence; a lack of influence supported

by the recent scholarly edition of the ancient *Book of Thoth* edited by Jasnow and Zauzich [5], and by the earlier work of A.-J. Festugiere [6].

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[1] *Epistula de Decretis Nycaenae Synodi*, II, 3f, and IV, 22ff.

[2] "Neque enim est quicquam aliud praeter mundum quod nihil absit quodque undique aptum atque perfectum expletumque sit omnibus suis numeris et partibus [...] ipse autem homo ortus est ad mundum contemplandum et imitandum - nullo modo perfectus, sed est quaedam particula perfecti." M. Tullius Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, Liber Secundus, xiii, xiv, 37

[3] The quotation is from my 2014 essay *Education And the Culture of Patheism*, and paraphrases what Cicero wrote in Book II (xiii and xiv) of his *De Natura Deorum*.

As I noted in the aforementioned essay,

"it is my considered opinion that the English term 'balanced' (a natural completeness, a natural equilibrium) is often a better translation of the classical Latin *perfectus* than the commonly accepted translation of 'perfect', given what the English word 'perfect' now imputes (as in, for example, 'cannot be improved upon'), and given the association of the word 'perfect' with Christian theology and exegesis (as, for example, in suggesting a moral perfection)."

[4] A δαίμων was considered to be a divinity who undertook to protect places 'sacred to the gods' or who - following the deliberations of a particular deity or of various deities - undertook to intercede in the lives of mortals by, for example, bringing them good fortune or misfortune. It was thus a tradition in ancient Greece and Rome to, at a meal, toast with wine the Ἀγαθὸς Δαίμων in the hope that he would bring them good fortune. Similarly, the Romans especially would offer a toast to the Ἄγνωστος Θεός (the Unknown Theos) and/or to the Ἄγνωστος Δαίμων (the Unknown Daemon) in the hope of not offending a deity or daimon whose name they did not know.

To translate δαίμων as 'demon' - as some do - is misleading, and can lead to a retrospective reinterpretation of the text given what the English term 'demon' now imputes as a result of over a thousand years of Christianity.

[5] Richard Jasnow & Karl-Theodore Zauzich, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of Thoth: A Demotic Discourse on Knowledge and Pendant to the Classical Hermetica*. Volume 1: Text. Harrassowitz, 2005.

[6] A.-J. Festugière, *La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*, 4 volumes. J. Gabalda, 1944-1954

Translation

[1] Perceiveration, Thoth, is of the quidditas of theos, if there is a quidditas of theos, and if so then only theos completely understands what that quidditas is. Perceiveration is thus not separated from the quiddity of theos but rather expands forth, as does the light of the Sun, with this perceiveration, in mortals, theos so that some mortals are deities with their mortal nature close to divinity.

For the noble daimon spoke of deities as deathless mortals and of mortals as deathful deities, while in living beings deprived of logos perceiverance is their physis.

[2] Where psyche is, there also is perceiveration just as where Life is there also is psyche. But in living beings deprived of logos, psyche is Life empty of perceiverance while perceiveration is the patron of the psyche of mortals labouring for their nobility. For those deprived of logos it co-operates with the physis of each, while for mortals it works against that.

Every psyche presented in a body is naturally rotted by pleasure and pain for in that mixtion of a body the pleasure and the pain boil as profluvia into which the psyche is immersed.

[3] Whatever psyches perceiveration governs it manifests its own resplendence, working as it does against their predispositions. Just as an honourable physician painfully uses cautery or a knife on a body seized by sickness so does perceiveration distress psyche, extracting from it that pleasure which is the genesis of all psyche's sickness.

A serious sickness of psyche is neglect of the divine from whence prognostications and thence all rottenness and nothing noble. Yet perceiveration can work against this to secure nobility for psyche as the physician does for soundness of body.

[4] But the psyche of mortals who do not have perceiveration as their guide suffer the same as living beings deprived of logos, for when there is co-operation with them and a letting-loose of yearnings they are dragged along

by their cravings to be voided of logos, and - akin to living beings deprived of logos - they cannot stop their anger nor their emotive yearnings nor become disgusted by rottenness.

For such yearnings and anger are overwhelmingly bad. And on those ones, the theos - avenger, confutant - will impose what custom demands.

[5] Father, if that is so, then your previous discourse regarding Meiros seems at risk of being altered. For if it is indeed Meiros-decreed for someone to be unfaithful or desecrate what is sacred or be otherwise bad, then why is that person punished when they have been constrained by Meiros to do the deed?

My son, all that is done is Meiros-decreed with nothing corporeal independent of that. For neither nobility nor rottenness are produced by accident. It is Meiros-decreed that they having done what is bad are afflicted which is why it was done: to be afflicted by what afflicts them.

[6] But for now let the discourse not be about badness or Meiros; they are spoken about elsewhere. Instead, let us discourse about perceiversion; what it is able to do and how it varies. For mortals, it is a particular thing while for living beings deprived of logos it is something else. Also, in those other living beings it does not produce benefits. But because it can control the irritable, the covetous, it is not the same for everyone with it being appreciated that some of those persons are reasonable while others are unreasonable.

All mortals are subjected to Meiros as well as to geniture and changement, which are the origin and the consummation of Meiros,

[7] with all mortals afflicted by what is Meiros-decreed, although those gifted with sentience who - as mentioned - are governed by perceiversion are not afflicted in the same way as others. Because they are distanced from rottenness, they are not afflicted by the rotten.

What, father, are you then saying? That the unfaithful one, that the killer, and all other such ones, are not bad?

My son, the one gifted with sentience will, though not unfaithful, be afflicted as if they had been unfaithful just as, though not a killer, they will as if they had killed. It is not possible to avoid geniture nor the disposition of changement although the one of perceiversion can avoid rottenness.

[8] I heard that from of old the noble daimon spoke of - and would that he had written it for that would have greatly benefited the race of mortals since he alone, my son, as first-born divinity beholding everything, certainly gave voice to divine logoi - but, whatever, I heard him to say that all that exists is one, particularly conceptible things.

We have our being in potentiality, in activity, in Aion, whose perceivance is noble as is his psyche, and with this as it is, there is nothing separable among what is conceptible. Thus perceivance, Archon of everything and also the psyche of theos, can do whatever it desires.

[9] Therefore you should understand, relating these words to your previous question when you asked about Meiros. For if, my son, you diligently eliminate disputatious argument you will discover that perceivance - psyche of theos - does in truth rule over Meiros and Custom and everything else. There is nothing he is unable to do: not placing a mortal psyche over Meiros, nor, if negligent of what comes to pass, placing it under Meiros. And of what the noble daimon said, these were the most excellent about all this.

How numinous, father; and how true, how beneficial.

[10] And now, can you explain this to me. You said that perceivance in living beings deprived of logos is in accordance with their physis and in consort with their cravings. Yet the cravings of living beings deprived of logos are, I assume, somatic, and if perceivance co-operates with the cravings and if the cravings of those deprived of logos are somatic then is not perceivance also somatic, in alliance with the somatic?

Excellent, my son. A good question which I have to answer.

[11] Everything incorporeal when corporified is somatical, although it is properly of the somatic. For all that changes is incorporeal with all that is changed corporeal. The incorporeal is changed by perceivance, with changeability somatic. Both the changing and the changed are affected, with one leading, the other following. If released from the corporeal, there is release from the somatic. In particular, my son, there is nothing that is asomatic with everything somatic with the somatic being different from the somatical. For one is vigorous, the other non-active. The corporeal, in itself, is vigorous, either when changed or when not changing, and whichever it is, it is somatic, However, the incorporeal is always acted upon which is why it is somatical.

But do not allow such denotata to vex you, for vigour and the somatic are the same, although there is nothing wrong in using the better-sounding denotatum.

[12] Father, that was a clear answer that you gave.

Take note, my son, of the two things that theos has favoured mortals with, over and above all other deathful living beings: perceivance and logos, equal in value to deathlessness, and if they use those as required then there is no difference between them and the deathless. And when they depart from the corporeal they will be escorted by both to the assembly of the gods and the fortunate ones.

[13] And yet, father, do other living beings not have language?

No, my son, they have sounds, and language is quite different from sounds. Language is shared among all mortals while each kind of living being has its own sounds.

And also, father, among mortals for each folk have a different language.

Yes, my son, different but since mortal nature is One then language is also One, for when interpreted they are found to be the same whether in Egypt or in Persia or in Hellas. Thus it seems, my child, that you are unaware of the significance and the merit of language.

That hallowed divinity, the noble daimon, spoke of psyche in corporeality, of perceivation in psyche, of logos in perceivation, of perceivation in the theos, and of the theos as the father of those.

[14] For logos is eikon of perceivation, perceivation that of theos, with corporeality that of outward form, and outward form that of psyche. The finest part of Substance is Air. Of Air, psyche. Of psyche, perceivation. Of perceivation, theos, with theos encompassing all things and within all things; with perceivation encompassing psyche, psyche encompassing Air, and Air encompassing Substance.

Necessitas, forseeing, and physis, are implements of Kosmos, and of the arrangement of Substance, and whatever is apprehended is essence with that essence of each their ipseity. Of the corpora that exist, each is a multiplicity, and since the ipseity of combined corpora is the changement of one corpus to another they always retain the imputrescence of ipseity.

[15] Yet in other combined corpora there is for each of them an arithmos, for without arithmos it is not possible for such a bringing together, such a melding, such a dissolution, to come-into-being. Henads beget and grow arithmos and, on its dissolution, receive it into themselves.

Substance is One, and the complete cosmic order - a mighty theos and eikon of and in unison with a mightier one - is, in maintaining the arrangements and the purpose of the father, replete with Life. And through the paternally given cyclic return of Aion there is nothing within it - in whole or in part - which is not alive.

For nothing of the cosmic order that has come-into-being is - or is now or will be - necrotic since the father has determined that Life shall be there while it exists. And thus, because of Necessitas, it is divine.

[16] Thus, how - my son - in that eikon of all things with its repletion of Life can there be necrosis? For necrosis is putritude and putritude is perishment. How then is it possible for any portion of what is not putrid be be putrid or for

anything of theos to perish?

Therefore, father, do not the living beings - who have their being there - not perish?

Speak wisely, my son, and do not be led away by the denotata of being-becoming. For, my son, they do not perish but as combined corpora are dissolved with such a dissolving not death but the dissolution of the melding, and dissolved not so as to perish but for a new coming-into-being. For what is the vigour of Life if not change?

What then, of Kosmos, does not change? Nothing, my child.

[17] Does the Earth seem to you, father, to not change?

No, my son. But she is alone in that there are many changes but also stasis. For would it not be illogical if the nourisher - she who brings-forth everything - never changed? It is not possible for she, the bringer-forth, to bring-forth without being changed. It is illogical for you to enquire if the fourth parsement is inactive, since an unchanging corpus is indicative of inactivity.

[18] You should therefore understand that what exists of Kosmos is everywhere changing, either growing or declining, and that what is changing is living with all that lives not, because of Necessitas, the same. For Kosmos, in the entirety of its being, is not changeable even though its parts can be changeable, with nothing putrefiable or perishable, although such denotata can confuse we mortals. For geniture is not Life but rather alertness, nor is changement death but rather a forgetting.

Since this is so, Substance, Life, Pneuma, Psyche, Perceivation, are all deathless, with every living being some combination of them.

[19] Because of perceivation all living beings are deathless, and most certain of all is that mortals are, for they - receptive to theos - can interact with theos. For only with this living being does theos commune in nightful dreams and daylight auguration, forewarning what is possible through birds, through entrails, through the movements of air, and through trees of Oak. And thus do mortals profess to know what was past, what is now, what will be.

[20] Observe, my son, that every other living being inhabits a certain part of the world; in water for those of the water, on dry land for those on land, and above the ground for those of the air. But mortals employ them all; land, water, air, fire. They observe the heavens, and touch it through their senses, and theos encompasses and is within all such things, for he is Change and Capability.

Thus, my son, it is not difficult to apprehend theos.

[21] If you are disposed to consider him, then perceive the arrangement of Kosmos and how that arrangement is well-ordered. Perceive Necessitas in what is apparent and the foreseeing in what has come-into-being and what is coming-into-being. Perceive Substance replete with Life, and the great, the influentive, theos together with all the noble and the beautiful divinities, daimons, and mortals.

But those, father, are actuosities.

Yet, my son, if they are only actuosities then by whom - other than theos - are they actuose? Or do you not know that just as aspects of the world are the heavens, the land, the Water, and the Air, then in the same way his aspects are deathlessness, blood, Necessitas, Foreseeing, Physis, Psyche, Perceivation, and that the continuance of all these is what is called nobility? And that there is not anything that has come-into-being or which is coming-into-being that is or will be without theos?

[22] He is within Substance, then, father?

If, my son, Substance was separate from theos then where, to what place, would you assign it? To some heap that is not actuose? But if it is actuose, then by whom is it actuose? And we spoke of actuosities as aspects of theos.

So who then brings life to living beings? Who deathlessness to the deathless? Who change to those changed? And if you say Substance or corpus or essence, then understand that they also are actuosities of theos, so that the substantiality is the actusity of Substance, corporeality the actusity of corpora, and essentiality the actusity of essence. And this is theos, All That Exists.

[23] For in all that exists there is no-thing that he is not. Therefore, neither size, nor location nor disposition, nor appearance, nor age, are about theos. For he is all that exists; encompassing everything and within everything.

This, my son, is the Logos, to be respected and followed. And if there is one way to follow theos, it is not to be bad.

ooo

Commentary

Title.

Περὶ νοῦ κοινοῦ πρὸς Τάτ. To Thoth, Concerning Mutual Perceivation.

1.

perceivation. As with my other translations of Corpus Hermeticum texts I translate νοῦς not as 'mind' but as perceivation/perceiverance, qv. my commentary on Poemandres, 2.

quidditas. οὐσία. Here, as with tractates VI and XI, 'essence' in respect of theos is not an entirely satisfactory translation given what the English term essence often now imputes. Quidditas is post-classical Latin, from whence the English word quiddity, and requires contextual interpretation. As in tractate VI, one interpretation of quidditas is ontological, as 'the being of that being/entity', with such quidditas often presenced in - and perceived by we mortals via or as - φύσις (physis). Which interpretation has the virtue of avoiding assumptions as to whether the author is here presenting something similar to the Stoic weltanschauung or to other ancient weltanschauungen.

understands. In respect of οἶδεν as 'understand' rather than 'know' qv. 1 Corinthians 14:16, ἐπειδὴ τί λέγεις οὐκ οἶδεν: "since he does not understand what you say." Furthermore, in Plato, Meno, 80e 'understanding' and 'understand' make more sense than the conventional 'knowing' and 'know':

ὁρᾷς τοῦτον ὡς ἐριστικὸν λόγον κατάγεις ὡς οὐκ ἄρα ἔστιν ζητεῖν ἄνθρωπῳ οὔτε ὃ οἶδε οὔτε ὃ μὴ οἶδε; οὔτε γὰρ ἂν ὃ γε οἶδεν ζητοῖ οἶδεν γὰρ καὶ οὐδὲν δεῖ τῷ γε τοιούτῳ ζητήσεως οὔτε ὃ μὴ οἶδεν οὐδὲ γὰρ οἶδεν ὅτι ζητήσει.

Do you realize what a contestable argument you introduce? That a mortal cannot inquire either about what he understands or about what he does not understand? That he cannot inquire about what he understands because he understands it with an inquiry thus not necessary; and that he cannot inquire about what he does not understand because he does not understand what he should inquire about.

quiddity of theos. οὐσιότητος τοῦ θεοῦ. Using the word quiddity here not as a

synonym of quidditas but as a synonym of 'quidditativity', where quidditative is "of or relating to the essential quidditas of some-thing", in this case theos.

mortal nature. ἀνθρωπότης. I incline toward the view that the neutral term 'mortal nature' is appropriate here, given what the English word 'humanity' now so often implies; a neutral term suggested not only by the scholia to the first verses of Orestes by Euripides:

κατασκευὴν ποιούμενος ὁ ποιητὴς τῆς ἰδίας προτάσεως τῆς ὅτι πάντα φέρει τὰ δεινὰ ἢ ἀνθρωπότης, ἐπιφέρει ὅτι καὶ αὐτοὶ οἱ μακάριοι καὶ ὀλβιοὶ δόξαντες ἄνθρωποι οὐκ ἄμοιροι συμφορῶν καὶ παθῶν γεγόνασιν· ἐξ ἐνὸς δὲ τοῦ Ταντάλου καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους παραδηλοῖ. τὸν Τάνταλον δὲ καὶ οὐκ ἄλλον τῇ ὑποθέσει προσείληφε διὰ τὸ ἐξ ἐκείνου τοῦ γένους καὶ τὸν Ὀρέστην κατὰγεσθαι

but also by *De Sancta Trinitate Dialogus* of Athanasius (Migne, *Patrologiæ Græcæ*, 28, 1115), with the first verse of the Orestes expressing what is meant and implied:

Οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν δεινὸν ὧδ' εἰπεῖν ἔπος οὐδὲ πάθος οὐδὲ ξυμφορὰ θεήλατος, ἧς οὐκ ἂν ἄραιτ' ἄχθος ἀνθρώπου φύσις.

There is nothing that can be described, no suffering, and nothing sent by the gods, which is so terrifyingly strange that mortal nature cannot endure it.

the noble daimon. Ἀγαθὸς Δαίμων. The daimon who can bring good fortune (health, wealth, happiness, honour) and other benefits to mortals and who thus is considered to be noble. As mentioned in the Introduction, a daimon is not a 'demon'.

deathless...deathful. For these in respect of ἀθάνατος and θνητὸς qv. my commentary on Poemandres 14, tractate VIII:1, and tractate XI:7ff.

The phrase spoken by the Ἀγαθὸς Δαίμων is similar to one attributed to Heraclitus:

ἀθάνατοι θνητοί, θνητοὶ ἀθάνατοι, ζῶντες τὸν ἐκείνων θάνατον, τὸν δὲ ἐκείνων βίον τεθνεῶτες. (Fragment 62, Diels-Krantz)

The deathless are deathful, the deathful deathless, with one living the other's dying with the other dying in that other's life.

deprived of logos. ἄλογος. As at Poemandres 10 and tractate XI:10, a literal translation suggested by the context which thus avoids rather awkward expressions such as "animals without reason" and "irrational animals", and

which might also suggest not only various other meanings of logos such as "lacking (the faculty of) speech, lacking in sentience," but also that such living beings have not been gifted by theos with logos:

τὸ ἐν σοὶ βλέπον καὶ ἀκοῶν, λόγος κυρίου, ὁ δὲ νοῦς πατὴρ θεός. οὐ γὰρ διίστανται ἀπ' ἀλλήλων· ἔνωσις γὰρ τούτων ἐστὶν ἡ ζωή

Then know that within you - who hears and sees - is logos kyrios, although perceivance is theos the father. They are not separated, one from the other, because their union is Life. (Poemandres 6)

perceivance is their physis. Reading ὁ νοῦς ἡ φύσις. Here φύσις implies their being - the type of being (the 'character') they have, and are - and thus means their quidditas, which quidditas is in contrast to that of theos, deities, and mortals.

2.

psyche. A transliteration, as in my translations of other tractates. It is possible to read the line as referring to personifications: "Where Psyche is, there also is Perceivance just as where Life is there also is Psyche." Classically understood, psyche is the anima mundi, the power that animates - gives life to and which orders - the world.

in living beings deprived of logos, psyche is Life. On first reading there seems to be a contradiction between what follows - ἡ ψυχὴ ζωὴ ἐστὶ κενὴ τοῦ νοῦ, [in living beings deprived of logos] psyche is Life empty of perceivance - and the preceding ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἀλόγοις ζώοις ὁ νοῦς ἡ φύσις ἐστὶν, which states that "in living beings deprived of logos perceivance is their physis." The sense of the Greek therefore seems to suggest that the perceivance of living beings deprived of logos is a vacuous, empty, one: they perceive but it does not benefit them in the same manner as perceivance benefits mortals because there is no understanding of, no rational apprehension of, what is perceived.

mixtion. σύνθετος. Mixtion is more appropriate here in such a metaphysical text than either 'composite' or 'compound', meaning as mixtion does compounded, combined; the condition or state of being mixed, melded, or composed of various parts.

profluvia. χυμός. That is, the bodily 'humours', anciently named as blood, phlegm, choler (χολέρα), and bile. Since the English word 'humour' now often suggests an entirely different meaning, I have chosen profluvia - from the Latin profluvium - in order to try and convey something of the meaning of the Greek, qv. Coleridge: "The same deadly sweats - the same frightful Profluvium of burning Dregs, like melted Lead - with quantities of bloody mucus from the Coats of the Intestines." *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1956. Volume II, 911: Letter dated 8th Jan.

immersed. βαπτίζω. Cf. tractate IV:3: καὶ ἐβαπτίσαντο τοῦ νοός, "and were immersive with perceivation."

3.

cautery or a knife. καίων ἢ τέμνων. Qv. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 848-850,

ὅτω δὲ καὶ δεῖ φαρμάκων παιωνίων,
ἥτοι κέαντες ἢ τεμόντες εὐφρόνως
πειρασόμεσθα πῆμ' ἀποστρέψαι νόσου

Whomsoever needs a healing potion
By a burning-out or a well-judged cutting-away
I shall seek to defeat the sickness of that injury.

neglect of the divine. ἀθεότης. The usual translation, atheism, seems to me to impose a particular and rigid meaning on the text given the association the word atheism now has with Christianity and in modern philosophy. The phrase 'neglect of the divine' expresses a more Hellenistic view, qv. the term ἀθεράπεντος and also Plutarch, who wrote:

Οὐκοῦν καὶ περὶ ὧν ὁ λόγος, ἡ μὲν ἀθεότης κρίσις οὔσα φαύλη τοῦ
μηδὲν εἶναι μακάριον καὶ ἄφθαρτον εἰς ἀπάθειάν τινα δοκεῖ τῇ
ἀπιστίᾳ τοῦ θείου περιφέρειν, καὶ τέλος ἐστὶν αὐτῇ τοῦ μὴ νομίζειν
θεοὺς τὸ μὴ φοβεῖσθαι, *De Superstitione*, 165b

Thus we return to our topic, neglect of the divine, which is the bad decision that nothing is hallowed or everlasting, which with its disbelief in the divine seems to lead to a type of apathy with the result that there is no fear of divinity since it does not exist.

4.

for when there is co-operation with them...voided of logos. The Greek here is somewhat obscure, although the meaning seems to be along the following lines: when perceivation co-operates with a serious sickness such as neglect of the divine then yearnings, desires, are given free reign so that those mortals, haplessly carried away by their cravings, become just like animals, voided of what makes them human.

what custom demands. In respect of νομός the term 'law' - with all its modern and Old Testament associations (as in 'the law of God') - is inappropriate since the Greek term implies what it is the customary thing to do. Hence, "what custom demands."

5.

Meiros. While μείρομαι here is conventionally understood as referring to 'fate', given the variety of meanings attributed to that term - a useful summary of classical usage is given in Book I, chapter XXVII of *Placita Philosophorum* attributed to the Pseudo-Plutarch - it seems apposite to suggest an alternative, especially as the text apparently does not provide a satisfactory answer to the question which Thoth goes on to ask: if 'fate' does compel someone to do something bad then why are they punished?

The mention of ἀνάγκης - 'Necessity', Ananke - in what follows (section 14: ἀνάγκη δὲ καὶ ἡ πρόνοια καὶ ἡ φύσις ὄργανά ἐστι τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τῆς τάξεως τῆς ὕλης) might indicate the Heraclitean sense of μείρομαι, as summarized by the Pseudo-Plutarch,

Ἡράκλειτος πάντα καθ' εἰμαρμένην, τὴν δ' αὐτὴν ὑπάρχειν καὶ ἀνάγκην.

Yet the immediate context - ἔλεγχον ὁ θεὸς ἐπέστησε τὸν νόμον - might seem to suggest θέσφατον (divine decree), as for example in Sophocles:

"εἴ τι θέσφατον πατρὶ χρησιμοῖσιν ἰκνεῖθ' ὥστε πρὸς παίδων θανεῖν."
Oedipus at Colonus, 969-970

However, given that what follows - Εἰμαρμένης γὰρ πάντα τὰ ἔργα [...] καὶ χωρὶς ἐκείνης οὐδὲν ἐστι τῶν σωματικῶν - I have chosen to use a transliteration, *Meiros*, based on the personification *Moros* in Hesiod's *Theogony*:

νύξ δ' ἔτεκεν στυγερόν τε Μόρον καὶ Κῆρα μέλαιναν καὶ Θάνατον,
τέκε δ' Ὕπνον, ἔτικτε δὲ φῶλον Ὀνειρώων (211-212)

And Night gave birth to odious *Moros*, to darksome *Kir* and to Death,
and also brought-into-being *Hypnos* and the folk of Dreams.

While the transliteration *Meiros* has the undoubted advantage - as with *logos*, *theos*, *physis*, καὶ τὰ λοιπά - of requiring contextual interpretation and thus avoiding whatever presumptions the reader might have in respect of the meaning of the English term 'fate', it has the disadvantage of not having, in English, an appropriate suffix such as, in respect of fate, -ed allowing as that does εἰμαρτός to be translated by 'fated'. The only solution - somewhat awkward as it is - is to translate such a word by a term such as 'Meiros-decreed' (or Meiros-appointed) so that the phrase εἰ δ' ἄρα τις οὗτος εἰμαρτός ἤκει χρόνος (Plutarch, Alexander, 30.6) would approximate to "if indeed a Meiros appointed moment has now arrived."

unfaithful. The sense of μοιχεύω is not stridently moralistic, as the English term adultery - with all its Old Testament associations - now often still denotes and

has for centuries denoted with its implication of 'sin'. Rather, the sense is more anciently pagan: of marital unfaithfulness, of a personal (and thus dishonourable) betrayal, as in Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1374a, συγγενέσθαι ἄλλ' οὐ μοιχεῦσαι (not unfaithful in the matter of [sexual] intercourse). Similarly in Aristophanes:

ὁ δ' ἄλους γε μοιχὸς διὰ σέ που παρατίλλεται. (*Plutus*, 170)

it will be because of you if the unfaithful one is caught, and their head shaved.

In addition, in origin the Anglo-Norman word *adulterie* - derived as it was from the Latin *adulterium* (adulteration, contaminating or debasing something) - simply meant marital unfaithfulness without the later religious associations such as voiced by Thomas More in his 1532 work *The Confutacyon of Tyndales Answer*: "wedlokke [...] whyche god hym selfe bothe blessed and commaunded in paradyse and whyche holy scripture commendeth where it sayth that wedlokke is honorable where the bedde is vndefyled wyth auowtry." (ccliiv)

what is bad. Reading τὸ κακὸν and not τὸ καλόν.

6.

geniture and changement. γενέσει καὶ μεταβολῇ. In respect of *geniture*, qv. my commentary on tractate XI:2, that "the unusual English word *geniture* expresses the meaning of γένεσις here: that which or those whom have their genesis (and their subsequent development) from or because of something else or because of someone else."

In respect of *changement*, as I noted in a comment on tractate XI:4, "I have here chosen 'changement' in preference to 'change' since *changement* (coming into English use around 1584) is more specific than 'change', suggesting variation, alteration, development, unfolding, transmutation."

7.

gifted with sentience. ἔλλογος. The Greek term occurs in the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle where he discusses the views of Eudoxus:

εὐδοξος μὲν οὖν τὴν ἡδονὴν τὰγαθὸν ᾧετ' εἶναι διὰ τὸ πάνθ' ὁρᾶν ἐφιέμενα αὐτῆς καὶ ἔλλογα καὶ ἄλογα (1172b.10)

Eudoxus considered that delight was the beneficent since his perception was that all, sentient or not sentient, sought it.

In a comment on this passage from Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas wrote:

quod Eudoxus existimabat delectationem esse de genere bonorum,

quia videbat quod omnia desiderant ipsam, tam rationalia scilicet homines, quam irrationalia, scilicet bruta animalia. (*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, Book X, l. 2 n. 2)

where the contrast, as in Aristotle, is between those gifted with sentience and those lacking sentience, but with Aquinas adding that the latter are 'dumb' animals (*brutis animalibus*), a difference between humans and animals that he considers in detail in his *Summa Theologiae* (*Prima Secundae, Quaestiones 6-17*).

killer. φονεὺς. To use the English word 'murderer' as a translation of the Greek carries with it relatively modern connotations that in my opinion are inappropriate, given that the word 'murder' can impute the sense of "the deliberate and unlawful killing of a human being" and "the action of killing or causing destruction of life, regarded as wicked and morally reprehensible irrespective of its legality."

The classical sense is evident, for example, in Sophocles:

φονέα σε φημι τάνδρὸς οὗ ζητεῖς κυρεῖν (*Oedipus Tyrannus*, 362)

I said you are the killer and thus the man you seek

κάνταῦθ' Ἀπόλλων οὔτ' ἐκεῖνον ἥνυσεν
φονέα γενέσθαι πατρὸς οὔτε Λαῖον
τὸ δεινὸν οὐφοβεῖτο πρὸς παιδὸς θανεῖν (*Oedipus Tyrannus*, 720-702)

So, in those days, Apollo did not bring about, for him,
That he slay the father who begot him - nor, for Laius,
That horror which he feared - being killed by his son.

Thus the choice is between two relatively neutral terms: killer, and slayer. Neither of which imputes the moralistic or legal sense of "unlawful killing" or of the act being "wicked and morally reprehensible." Instead, it is a statement of fact.

the one gifted with sentience will, though not unfaithful, be afflicted... just as, though not a killer, they will as if they had killed. An interesting passage which might be taken to mean that those gifted with sentience - who presumably are also, as the tractate states, "governed/guided by their perceivration" - have the ability because of such things to know, understand, to intuit, what killing and unfaithfulness mean and imply (especially in terms of affliction) as if they themselves had done such things. That is, they have empathy, and thus can avoid doing what is bad.

disposition. See the note regarding ποιότης in section 23 below.

the noble daimon spoke of...would that he had written it. This seems to allude to an aural tradition, perhaps (qv. my introduction to tractate III) an ἱερός Λόγος, which was never written down, with the suggestion that what is being recounted in this tractate is such a tradition.

first-born divinity. πρωτόγονος θεός. While some assume that this refers to something Egyptian - for example, to the deity Khnum - I incline toward the view that it may be (i) a reference to an Orphic tradition, given that there is an Orphic poem which beings Πρωτόγονον καλέω διφυῆ μέγαν αἰθερόπλαγκτον, or (ii) more probably a term still in general use in Hellenic culture given it that was, for example, an epithet of the goddess Persephone, and given that it occurs in the commentary on Plato's Timaeus by Proclus.

divine logoi. θείους λόγους. Cf. τοὺς λόγους διδάσκων and σοφίας λόγους in Poemandres 29. There, the logoi are the various forms (or emanations) of the logos, and include the pneumal logos, the phaomal logos, and the logos kyrios.

I [...] thus became a guide to those of my kind, informing them of the logoi - of the way and the means of rescue - and engendered in them the logoi of sapientia, with the celestial elixir to nurture them. (Poemandres 29)

conceptible things. νοητὰ σώματα. That is, objects - things, materia, 'bodies' - which can be conceived of, which are conceptible, rather than having been physically seen, qv. the 'atoms' of Democritus: ἔτερι δὲ ἄτομα καὶ κενόν. See also Sextus Empiricus: οἱ γὰρ ἀτόμους εἰπόντες ἢ ὁμοιομερείας ἢ ὄγκους ἢ κοινῶς νοητὰ σώματα πάντων τῶν ὄντων κατώρθωσαν πῇ δὲ διέπεσον (Adversus Mathematicos, X, 252).

We have our being in potentiality, in activity, in Aion. ζῶμεν δὲ δυνάμει καὶ ἐνεργείᾳ καὶ Αἰῶνι. In respect of Aion, qv. tractate XI:3,

πηγὴ μὲν οὖν πάντων ὁ θεός, οὐσία δὲ ὁ αἰών, ὕλη δὲ ὁ κόσμος,
δύναμις δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἰών, ἔργον δὲ τοῦ αἰῶνος ὁ κόσμος, γενόμενος
οὐποτε, καὶ ἀεὶ γινόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος·

The foundation of all being is theos; of their quidditas, Aion; of their substance, Kosmos. The craft of theos: Aion; the work of Aion: Kosmos, which is not just a coming-into-being but always is, from Aion.

nothing separable. οὐδὲν διαστατόν. As noted in respect of διαστατός in the commentary on tractate IV:1, "what is not meant is 'dimension', given what the term 'dimension' now imputes scientifically and otherwise."

Archon. Cf. the MS reading ἄρχων καὶ ἡγέμων (archon and hegemon) in tractate XI:7. Since ἄρχων has been assimilated into the English language and

retained (c. 1755) its original meaning (ruler, governor, regent) it seems unnecessary to translate the term.

perceivation...whatever it desires. Cf Poemandres 12: ὁ δὲ πάντων πατὴρ ὁ Νοῦς ὦν ζωὴ καὶ φῶς... Perceivation, as Life and phaos, father of all...

9.

Numinous. θεῖος. As at tractate IV:6 I have opted for the English word numinous - which dates from 1647, derived from the classical Latin *numen* - to express the meaning of θεῖος here.

10.

somatic. πάθος. The English word somatic - from the Greek σῶμα - means "of or relating to the body; physical, corporeal". As in tractate VI:2 the sense of πάθος here is one of physicality, as in being physically afflicted or affected such that a 'living being deprived of logos' cannot control or affect the affliction, in this instance their cravings. As such, the English word 'passion' is inappropriate here as a translation of πάθος because it implies strong or deep feelings or emotions generally in human beings and thus is somewhat anthropomorphic, especially as a distinction is being made, as in sections 2 and 5, between mortals and those living beings, such as animals, who lack logos, which logos together with perceivation, are - as mentioned in section 12 - the two most precious gifts theos has given to mortals: ὅτι δύο ταῦτα τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ὁ θεὸς παρὰ πάντα τὰ θνητὰ ζῶια ἔχαρίσατο τὸν τε νοῦν καὶ τὸν λόγον, σότιμα τῇ ἀθανασίᾳ.

in alliance with the somatic. Reading συγχρηματίζων with the MSS and not the emendation συγχρωτίζων.

11.

corporeal, incorporeal. σῶμα, ἀσώματος. To try and express at least something of the meaning of the Greek here - which is somewhat metaphysically obscure - I have occasionally resorted to obsolete forms of those two English terms, such as 'corporified' (from corporify) implying "having a material or a bodily form".

In respect of the corporeal and the incorporeal, see tractates VIII and XI. In VIII one of the main themes is the corporeal: "It is regarding psyche and the corporeal that we now must speak..." In XI:22 it is stated that

οὐδὲν γὰρ ἀόρατον, οὐδὲ τῶν ἀσωμάτων· νοῦς ὁρᾶται ἐν τῷ νοεῖν, ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῷ ποιεῖν

nothing is unperceivable, not even the incorporeal, with
perceivation evident through apprehension, theos through creation.

somatical. παθητά. The sense is of being affected by, or subject to, what is somatic. As what follows - καὶ κυρίως αὐτὰ ἐστὶ πάθη - attempts to explain, and as is made clear later on in this section (διαφέρει δὲ πάθος παθητοῦ) somatical should not be confused with somatic.

changes, changed. Given the context, the various senses of κίνησις here are change, not motion - moving, move - in the physical sense as at tractate XI:8, πάντα δὲ πλήρη ψυχῆς καὶ πάντα κινούμενα, τὰ μὲν περὶ τὸν οὐρανόν, τὰ δὲ περὶ τὴν γῆν, all are replete with psyche, all in motion, some around the heavens with others around the Earth.

vigour. ἐνέργεια. Qv. Poemandres 14 and 15. The English terms energy and energize have too many modern, irrelevant, connotations, in respect of the science of physics and otherwise.

12.

perceiviation and logos. Omitting - with Patrizi - the following τὸν δὲ προφορικὸν λόγον ἔχει as a gloss.

deathlessness. In respect of this unusual English word, qv. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *The Soul's Travelling* (IX),

"And as they touch your soul, they borrow
Both of its grandeur and its sorrow,
That deathly odour with which the clay
Leaves on its deathlessness away."

denotata, denotatum. προσηγορία here implies more than 'name'. That is, a terminology; a specialized vocabulary, in this case one related to metaphysics (qv. πλανώμενος τῇ προσηγορίᾳ τοῦ γινομένου in section 16). Hence the translations 'denotata' and denotatum (singular) to suggest this.

13.

And yet, do other livings not have language. τὰ γὰρ ἄλλα ζῶια λόγῳ οὐ χρᾶται. While λόγος here is generally taken to mean 'speech', given what follows with its mention of animals making 'sounds' and the exposition regarding the different languages spoken by mortals, the translation 'language' is more apt, as in being able to communicate, to say something specific the meaning of which can be explained and understood by diverse others. A usage of λόγος as for example in the following exchange between Oedipus and the Chorus:

Οἰδίπους:

οἷσθ' οὖν ἃ χρῆζεις.

Χορός:

οἶδα.

Οἰδίπους:

φράζε δὴ τί φής.

Χορός:

τὸν ἐναγῆ φίλον μήποτ' ἐν αἰτία σὺν ἀφανεῖ λόγῳ σ' ἄτιμον βαλεῖν.

Oedipus:

Do you know what it is that you so desire?

Chorus:

I do know.

Oedipus:

Then explain what you believe it to be.

Chorus:

When a comrade is under oath, you should never accuse him because of unproved rumours and brand him as being without honour.

(Oedipus Tyrannus, vv. 653-657)

folk. ἔθνος. Since the English term 'nation' now implies things which the Greek word does not - such as a modern political State - it is inappropriate here. A suitable alternative to folk would be 'people'.

mortal nature, Qv. section 1.

one. εἷς. It is probable that this refers to a metaphysical concept such as described in tractate XI:11,

καὶ ὅτι μὲν ἔστι τις ὁ ποιῶν ταῦτα δῆλον· ὅτι δὲ καὶ εἷς,
φανερῶτατον· καὶ γὰρ μία ψυχὴ καὶ μία ζωὴ καὶ μία ὕλη. τίς δὲ
οὗτος; τίς δὲ ἂν ἄλλος εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός; τίνι γὰρ ἄλλῳ ἂν καὶ πρέποι
ζῶια ἔμψυχα ποιεῖν, εἰ μὴ μόνῳ τῷ θεῷ; εἷς οὖν θεός καὶ τὸν μὲν
κόσμον ὠμολόγησας ἀεὶ εἶναι καὶ τὸν ἥλιον ἕνα καὶ τὴν σελήνην μίαν
καὶ θειότητα μίαν, αὐτὸν δὲ τὸν θεὸν πόστον εἶναι θέλεις

It is evident someone is so creating and that he is One; for Psyche is one, Life is one, Substance is one. But who is it? Who could it be if not One, the theos? To whom if

not to theos alone would it belong to presence life in living beings? Theos therefore is One, for having accepted the Kosmos is one, the Sun is one, the Moon is one, and divinity-presented is one, could you maintain that theos is some other number?

psyche in corporeality. The context is indicative of σώματι here referring to corporeality in general; that is, the quality or state of being corporeal; bodily form or nature; materiality.

14.

eikon. εἰκὼν, qv. my commentary on Poemandres 21 and 31, and also see tractate VIII:2 and tractate XI:15.

outward form. ἰδέα. To translate here simply as 'form' (or idea) may give the impression that the ἰδέα of Plato may be meant with the text thus interpreted in accord with his philosophy and especially with what has been termed his 'theory of forms'. However, since the reference here is to corporeality in the context of perceivization as εἰκὼν of theos, a more metaphysical sense is suggested. Hence, my interpretation as 'outward form', which thus leaves open the question as to whether or not there is any correlation with 'the theory of forms'.

substance. ὕλη. That is, the materia of 'things' and living beings. Qv. Poemandres 10 and tractate III:1.

Air. ἀήρ. Air as a fundamental element, hence the capitalization as with the preceding Substance.

necessitas. ἀνάγκη. In myth, Ananke was the ancient goddess of wyrd, thus having power over Meiros ('fate') and of what is considered necessary for mortals (such as death), hence the translation of 'necessity'. As mentioned in my commentary on tractate XII:5, although the Latin 'Necessitas' is a suitable alternative for the Greek, a transliteration (Ananke) is perhaps preferable although less readable.

Necessitas, foreseeing, and physis, are implements of Kosmos. Qv. tractate XII:5 where a similar expression occurs:

συνέχει δὲ τοῦτον ὁ αἰὼν, εἴτε δι' ἀνάγκην εἴτε πρόνοιαν εἴτε φύσιν
καὶ εἴ τι ἄλλο οἶται ἢ οἰήσεται τις

Aion maintains this through necessitas or through foreseeing or through physis, or through whatever other assumption we assume

foreseeing. πρόνοια. Foreseeing includes such arts as prophecy.

apprehended. Cf. Poemandres 3: νοῆσαι τὴν τοῦ των φύσιν, to apprehend the physis of beings; that is to discern, discover, their being, their relation to other beings, and to Being.

corpus, corpora. I have here used a Latin term for σῶμα (*corpus*, plural *corpora*) in order to try to give some intimation of the meaning of the text (the Greek is somewhat obscure), and to avoid using the rather prosaic terms 'body' and 'bodies', and to thus suggest technical terms which expound and befit a metaphysical *weltanschauung*, implying as they do here 'materia' in general; the stuff, the material, that exists in the Universe, and how such *corpora* including mortals relate to *theos*.

15.

arithmos. I have detailed the reasons for transliterating ἀριθμός in my commentary on tractate IV:10. In essence, the translation 'number' does not express the metaphysical meaning here, qv. Aristotle *Metaphysics*, Book XIII, 1080b.20 and 1083b.10 et seq.

In addition, Proclus (in his Στοιχείωσις θεολογική, propositions 113f) wrote of ἀριθμός and ἐνάδες (*henads*) as essential parts of a cosmogony involving the gods, with Proclus equating ἐνάδες with those gods (*op.cit.*, propositions 114ff),

εἰ γὰρ τῶν ἐνάδων διττὸς ὁ ἀριθμός, ὡς δέδεικται πρότερον, καὶ αἱ μὲν αὐτοτελεῖς εἰσιν αἱ δὲ ἐλλάμπεις ἀπ' ἐκείνων, τῷ δὲ ἐνὶ καὶ τάγαθῷ συγγενῆς καὶ ὁμοφυῆς ὁ θεῖος ἀριθμός, ἐνάδες εἰσὶν αὐτοτελεῖς οἱ θεοί. (114)

There is also an interesting passage in a fragment of the commentary on Aristotle by Andronicus of Rhodes where *psyche* is said to have been described as ἀριθμός:

ἀριθμόν γὰρ ἐκάλουν φησὶ 'τὴν ψυχὴν ὅτι μηδὲν ζῶον ἐξ ἀπλοῦ σώματος ἀλλὰ κατὰ τινὰς λόγους καὶ ἀριθμοὺς κραθέντων τῶν πρώτων στοιχείων. (Themistii in libros Aristotelis De anima paraphrasis, XXXII, 23)

Regarding ἀριθμός in tractate IV:10, the relevant part is:

μονὰς οὗσα οὖν ἀρχὴ πάντα ἀριθμόν ἐμπεριέχει, ὑπὸ μηδενὸς ἐμπεριεχομένη, καὶ πάντα ἀριθμόν γεννᾷ ὑπὸ μηδενὸς γεννωμένη ἐτέρου ἀριθμοῦ.

The *Monas*, since it is the origin, enfolds every *arithmos* without itself being enfolded by any, begetting every *arithmos* but not begotten by any.

henads. ἐνάδες. A transliteration in common use since the concept of the ἐνός - the Unity, often equated with μονάς - is metaphysical and has various interpretations in Plato, Iamblichus, Proclus, and others.

cosmic order. κόσμος. Cf. Poemandres 7.

a mighty theos. In respect of the term μέγας θεός it is interesting to note that frescoes in a Minoan settlement in Akrotiri on the island of Santorini depict η μεγάλη θεά (the mighty goddess) among women holding bunches of flowers and a woman holding a net which, given the presence of birds in the fresco, is possibly for catching birds as gifts for the goddess.

The term μέγας θεός also occurs in Acts 19:17 in reference to the Temple of Artemis - μεγάλης θεᾶς Ἀρτέμιδος ἱερὸν - with Artemis mentioned again in v.28, Μεγάλη ἡ Ἀρτεμις Ἐφεσίων (Powerful is Artemis of the Ephesians).

cyclic return. Qv. tractate XI:2, ἀποκατάστασις καὶ ἀνταποκατάστασις, cyclic return and renewal.

while it exists. Referring to the 'cosmic order' and thus to Kosmos, eikon of a more mighty divinity.

16.

the denotata of being-becoming. Qv. the comment in section 11 regarding denotata and denotatum.

17.

nurturer. τιθήνη. Cf. tractate XI:7, τροφὸν καὶ τιθήνην, nourisher and nurturer.

fourth parsement. τέταρτον μέρος. By a parsement - partiment, from the Latin partimentum - is meant the fundamental (the basic, elemental, primal) component or principle of 'things' as understood or as posited in Hellenic times. Here Earth is described as the fourth part, the other three being Air, Water, and Fire. Cf. Poemandres 8.

18.

alertness. αἴσθησις. Alertness as in being perceptively aware of one's surroundings. Cf. Poemandres 5.

pnuema. πνεῦμα. A transliteration for reasons explained in my commentary on the text of Poemandres 5. In sum, the usual translation of 'spirit' is too restrictive and has too many modern and Christian associations. The various senses of πνεῦμα in classical times are summarized in DeWitt Burton, *Spirit, Soul, and Flesh: The Usage of Πνεῦμα, Ψυχή, and Σάρξ in Greek Writings and Translated Works from the Earliest Period to 225 AD* (University of Chicago Press, 1918).

19.

Therefore all living beings [...] perceiv[er]ation. Reading διὰ τὸν νοῦν and not δι' αὐτόν.

20.

capability. δύναμις. Not 'strength' or 'power' per se, but rather having the capacity, the capability, to do - to change, to craft, to bring-into-being - anything. Cf. δύναμις δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἰὼν in tractate XI: 3,

πηγὴ μὲν οὖν πάντων ὁ θεός, οὐσία δὲ ὁ αἰὼν, ὕλη δὲ ὁ κόσμος,
δύναμις δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἰὼν, ἔργον δὲ τοῦ αἰῶνος ὁ κόσμος, γενόμενος
οὐποτε, καὶ ἀεὶ γινόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος· διὸ οὐδὲ φθαρῆσεται ποτε
αἰὼν γὰρ ἄφθαρτος οὐδὲ ἀπολεῖται τι τῶν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, τοῦ κόσμου
ὑπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος ἐμπεριεχομένου.

The foundation of all being is theos; of their quidditas, Aion; of their substance, Kosmos. The craft of theos: Aion; the work of Aion: Kosmos, which is not just a coming-into-being but always is, from Aion. Thus it cannot be destroyed since Aion is not destroyable nor will Kosmos cease to be since Aion surrounds it.

21.

influencive. κινέω. That is, to affect things, to set things in motion, to cause change.

actuosities. ἐνέργειαι. The sense of the Greek here is of (often vigorous) activity or occurrences either natural or which result from the actions of divinities or daimons. To try and convey something of this, I have chosen the English term 'actuosities' rather than 'energies' which - given what the English term 'energy' now often imputes - does not in my view express the metaphysical meaning here. The English word actusosity derives from the classical Latin actuosus, with the adjective actuose occurring in a 1677 book by Theophilus Gale: "Ἐνεργεῖν, as applied to God, notes his actuose, efficacious, and predeterminate concurrence in and with althings." (The Court of The Gentiles. Part III, London, 1677).

A more recent usage was by Ferrarin in chapter 8 - Aristotle's De anima and Hegel's philosophy of subjective spirit - of his book *Hegel and Aristotle* (Cambridge University Press, 2001) where he wrote: "Hegel appropriates and transforms the meaning of *energeia* to define spirit. Spirit is actusosity..."

aspects. Reading μέρη ἐστὶ not μέλη ἐστὶ.

blood. Reading καὶ αἷμα with the MSS. In the metaphysical context of the tractate, blood as an 'aspect of theos' makes sense.

22.

All That Exists. τὸ πᾶν. Literally, 'the all', but metaphysically implying 'all that exists', that is, the Universe.

23.

disposition. ποιότης. As in section 7, not signifying here 'quality' but rather 'disposition,' γν. ποιός, what kind, nature, type, character.

What is being enumerated - οὔτε μέγεθος οὔτε τόπος οὔτε ποιότης οὔτε σχῆμα οὔτε χρόνος - are not abstractions (such as 'time') but rather mortal-type attributes and appellations that are irrelevant in respect of theos.

respected and followed. Given the metaphysical - not religious - tone and content of the tractate, I incline toward the view that προσκύνει καὶ θρήσκει here does not imply a Christian-type reverence or worship or even being religious, but rather respect and following, as various Hellenic weltanschauungen or philosophies were respected and followed.

Ερμού του τρισεγίστου προς τον υιόν Τάτ
εν όρει λόγος απόκρυφος περί παλιγγενεσίας και σιγής επαγγελίας

On A Mountain:
Hermes Trismegistus To His Son Thoth,
An Esoteric Discourse Concerning Palingenesis
And The Requirement of Silence

Tractate XIII

ooo

Translation

[1] When, father, you in the Exoterica conversed about divinity your language was enigmatic and obscure. There was, from you, no disclosure; instead, you said no one can be rescued before the Palingenesis. Now, following our discussion as we were passing over the mountain I became your supplicant, inquiring into learning the discourse on Palingenesis since that, out of all of them, is the only one unknown to me, with you saying it would be imparted to me when I became separated from the world.

Thus I prepared myself, distancing my ethos from the treachery in the world. Therefore - by explaining it either aloud or in secret - rectify my insufficiencies since you said you would impart Palingenesis to me.

Trismegistus, I am unknowing of what source a mortal is begotten and from what sown.

[2] My son, noetic sapientia is in silence, with the sowing the genuinely noble.

Father, that is completely impenetrable. So, of whom dispersed?

Of, my son, the desire of theos.

Father, of what kind then the begotten? For I do not share in such a quidditas and such a perceivitation.

Those begotten of theos are other than theos: young but entirely whole, mision of all abilities.

Father, you speak enigmatically to me, not in the language of a teacher to a pupil.

My son, this emanation is not taught; rather, it is presented by and when the theos desires.

[3] Father, while you speak of what is impractical and forced, I on my part seek what is straightforward. Was I produced as a foreign son of the paternal emanation? Do not repine me, father: I am a rightful son. Relate - plainly - the way of palingenesis.

My son, what is there to say? All that can be told is this: I saw an unshaped vista, brought-into-being through the generosity of theos, of me setting forth to a deathless body, and now I am not that before because engendered by perceivization.

This matter is not taught: not through that shaped part through which is seeing. Thus and for me there is no concern for the initial mixturous form. It is not as if I am biochrome and have tactility and definity: I am a stranger to them. You, my son, now observe me with your eyes and directly see my physicality and perceptible form. And yet, my son, I am now not understandable with those eyes.

[4] Father, you have stung the heart, causing no minor distraction, for I cannot now perceive myself.

Would that you, my son, would - while not asleep - go beyond yourself as those who sleepfully dream.

Inform me also of this: who is the essentiator of the Palingenesis?

Through the desire of theos: The Mortal One, child of theos.

[5] Father, what you have now presented has silenced me, with a forsaking of what was previously in my heart <...> since I perceive that your stature and your likeness are still the same.

In that you have been deceived, for the form of the deathful alters every day: changed by the seasons, it grows then withers and so deceives.

[6] What then - Trismegistus - is the actuality?

My son: the imperturbable, the indistinguishable, the un-complexioned, the figureless, the steadfast, the unadorned, the revealed, the self-perceiving, the unwaveringly noble, the immaterial.

Father, I am completely confused. Just when I considered you were engendering learning in me, the perceptibility of my apprehension was obstructed.

Thus it is, my son. It ascends, as Fire does, and descends, as Earth does, and

flows, as Water does, and is neumæos as is Air. But how can you apprehend through perception what is insubstantial, what is not flowing, what is unmixturous, what is undissolved; that which is only apprehensible through influence and actusity, requiring someone able to apprehend that bringing-into-being within theos?

[7] Father, am I then deficient?

Not so, my son. Go within: and an arriving. Intend: and an engendering. Let physical perceptibility rest, and divinity will be brought-into-being. Refine yourself, away from the brutish Alastoras of Materies.

Alastoras are within me, then, father?

Not just a few, my son, but many and terrifying.

I do not apprehend them, father.

My son, one Vengeress is Unknowing; the second, Grief. The third, Unrestraint; the fourth, Lascivity. The fifth, Unfairness; the sixth, Coveter. The seventh, Deceit; the eighth, Envy. The ninth, Treachery; the tenth, Wroth. The eleventh, Temerity; the twelfth, Putridity.

In number, these are twelve but below them are numerous others who, my son, compel the inner mortal - bodily incarcerated - to suffer because of perceptibility. But they absent themselves - although not all at once - from those to whom theos is generous, which is what the Way and Logos of Palingenesis consists of.

[8] Henceforward, speak quietly, my son, and keep this secret. For thus may the generosity of theos toward us continue.

Henceforward, my son, be pleased, having refinement through the cræfts of theos to thus comprehend the Logos.

My son, to us: arrivance of Knowledge of Theos. On arrival: Unknowing is banished. My son, to us: arrivance of Knowledge of Delightfulness: on arriving, Grief runs away to those who have the room.

[9] The influence invoked following Delightfulness is Self-Restraint: a most pleasant influence. Let us, my son, readily welcome her: arriving, she immediately pushes Unrestraint aside.

The fourth invoked is Perseverance who is influxious against Lascivity. Which Grade, my son, is the foundation of Ancestral Custom: observe how without any deliberation Unfairness was cast out. My son, we are vindicated since Unfairness has departed.

The sixth influence invoked for us - against Coveter - is community. With that departed, the next invocation: Actualis, and thus - with Actualis presenced - does Deceit run away. Observe, my son, how with Actualis presenced and Envy absent, the noble has been returned. For, following Actualis, there is the noble, together with Life and Phaos.

No more does the retribution of Skotos supervene, for, vanquished, they whirlingly rush away.

[10] Thus, my son, you know the Way of Palingenesis. By the Dekad brought-into-being, geniture of apprehension was produced, banishing those twelve; and by this geniture we are of theos.

Thus whomsoever because of that generosity obtains divine geniture, having gone beyond physical perceptibility, discovers that they consist of such, and are pleased.

[11] With a quietude, father, engendered by theos, the seeing is not of the sight from the eyes but that through the noetic actus of the cræft. I am in the Heavens; on Earth; in Water; in Air. I am in living beings, in plants; in the womb, before the womb, after the womb. Everywhere.

But speak to me about how the retributions of Skotos - which are twelve in number - are pushed aside by ten influences. What is that Way, Trismegistus?

[12] My son, this body which we have passed beyond is constituted from the circular Zodiac which is composed of beings, twelve in number and of the same physis, yet polymorphous in appearance so as to lead mortals astray. The difference between them, my son, becomes one when they act <...> Temerity united with Wroth, and indistinguishable.

It is probably correct to say that all of them withdraw when pushed away by those ten influences: that is, by the Dekad. For, my son, the Dekad is an effector of psyche, with Life and Phaos a unity there where the arithmos of the Henad is brought forth from the pneuma. Thus it is reasonable that the Henad contains the Dekad and the Dekad the Henad.

[13] Father, I observe All That Exists, and myself, in the perceivance.

My son, this is the Palingenesis: to no more present the body in three separations, through this disclosure regarding Palingenesis, which I have written about for you alone so as not to be rouners of all these things to the many but instead to whomsoever theos himself desires.

[14] Inform me, father, if this body - constituted of such cræfts - is liable to dissipation.

Speak quietly and do not talk of deficiencies or you shall be in error with the eye of your perceivation disrespectful. The perceptible body of physis is far away from the quidditas of geniture, for one is dissipative, the other is not-dissipative; one is deathful, the other deathless.

Do you not know that you are engendered of theos, as a child of The One, as am I?

[15] Father, my inclination is for the laudation of the song you said you heard from those influences when you reached the Ogdoad.

Just as, my son, Poemandres divined about the Ogdoad. It is noble of you to hasten to leave that dwelling for you are now refined. Poemandres, the perceivation of authority, did not impart to me anything other than what is written, understanding that I would apprehended the entirety; hearing what I was inclined to, observing the entirety, and entrusting me to presence the beautiful. Thus do all those influences within me chant.

Father, I desire to hear them so that I might apprehend.

[16] Be quiet my son: now hear that most fitting laudation, the song of Palingenesis which I had chosen not to openly divulge except to you at your completion and which is not taught but concealed through silence.

Thus, my son, on your feet in a place open to the air look respectfully to the Southwind as Helios descends, as at the ascending and toward the Eastwind.

Be quiet my son.

Logos Δ. The Esoteric Song

[17] Let every Physis of Kosmos favourably listen to this song.
Gaia: be open, so that every defence against the Abyss is opened for me;
Trees: do not incurvate;
For I now will sing for the Master Artisan,
For All That Exists, and for The One.

Open: you Celestial Ones; and you, The Winds, be calm.
Let the deathless clan of theos accept this, my logos.
For I shall sing of the maker of everything;
Of who established the Earth,
Of who affixed the Heavens,

Of who decreed that Oceanus should bring forth sweet water
To where was inhabited and where was uninhabited
To so sustain all mortals;
Of who decreed that Fire should bring light
To divinities and mortals for their every use.

Let us all join in fond celebration of who is far beyond the Heavens:
That artisan of every Physis.

May the one who is the eye of perceivration accept this fond celebration
From my Arts.

[18] Let those Arts within me sing for The One and for All That Exists
As I desire all those Arts within me to blend, together.

Numinous knowledge, from you a numinal understanding:
Through you, a song of apprehended phaos,
Delighted with delightful perceivrance.
Join me, all you Arts, in song.

You, mastery, sing; and you, respectful of custom,
Through me sing of such respect.
Sing, my companions, for All That Exists:
Honesty, through me, sing of being honest,
The noble, sing of nobility.

Phaos and Life: fond celebration spreads from us to you.

My gratitude, father: actusosity of those my Arts.
My gratitude, theos: Artisan of my actuosities;
Through me, the Logos is sung for you.
Through me, may Kosmos accept
Such respectful wordful offerings as this.

[19] Such is what the Arts within me loudly call out. They sing of All That Exists;
they accomplish your desire. From you: deliberations; then to you, from All That
Exists.

Accept from Kosmos - the Kosmos within us - respectful wordful offerings. Life,
recure! Phaos, reveal! Theos, spiritus! For - Breath-Giver, Artisan - it is your
Logos that Perceivration guides.

[20] You are theos. Your mortal loudly calls out: through Fire, through Air,
through Earth, through Water, through Pneuma, through your created beings.

To me, from your Aion, a laudation. And, through your deliberations, I
discovered the repose that I seek. Because of your desire, I perceived.

[21] Father, I also have assigned the laudation you spoke of to my Kosmos.

My son, speak of "in the apprehended."

In the apprehended I am able to do, father. For me, through your song and your laudation, a more numinal perceivance. And yet, there is a desire for me to convey from my own heart a laudation to theos.

My son, do not be incautious.

Father, what I behold in the perceivance, I say. It is to theos, to you - essentiator of engenderment - that I, Thoth, convey wordful offerings. Theos, you the Father; you the Kyrios, you the Perceivance, accept the respectful wordful offerings you desire. For, by your deliberations, all is accomplished.

My son, you convey an agreeable offering to theos, father of all. But you should add "through the Logos."

[22] My thanks to you, father, for your advice regarding the invocation.

My son, I am glad that the actuality has borne good fruit, the unrottable produce. Having learned of this from me, profess silence my son about this wonder, revealing to no one the tradition of the Palingenesis, for otherwise we will be regarded as rouners. Each of us has had a sufficiency of interest: I in speaking, you in listening. Through noesis you have obtained knowledge about yourself and our father

ooo

Commentary

Title.

Ερμού του τρισεγίστου προς τον υιόν Τάτ εν όρει λόγος απόκρυφος περί παλιγγενεσίας και σιγής επαγγελίας. On A Mountain: Hermes Trismegistus To His Son Thoth, An Esoteric Discourse Concerning Palingenesis And The Requirement of Silence.

Thoth. As in other tractates I translate Τάτ by Thoth, avoiding the conventional *Tat* which, in English, has a colloquial meaning inappropriate here. As to which 'Thoth' is meant, the consensus is that in this and some other tractates it refers to the son (possibly biologically or more probably metaphorically) of Hermes

Trismegistus who himself was named by the Greeks as Thoth, with the Τάτ of some other tractates being a scribal corruption of the name Thoth.

Esoteric Discourse. λόγος απόκρυφος. While 'esoteric' is an apt translation in regard to απόκρυφος, 'discourse' is not entirely satisfactory in respect of λόγος since it could be here interpreted to mean 'disclosure' or 'explanation'. However, given what follows in section 1 - πυθομένου τὸν τῆς παλιγγενεσίας λόγον μαθεῖν...παραδιδόναι μοι - 'discourse' seems appropriate.

Palingenesis. Rather than ascribe a particular meaning to παλιγγενεσία - such as 'rebirth' or 'regeneration' - I have chosen the English word palingenesis (from the Latin palingenesia) with that term explained by what follows in this particular discourse, qv. vv. 12 and 13.

Requirement. The sense of ἐπαγγελία here, given what is discussed in this tractate, is 'requirement' rather than the strident 'command' or what is implied by the rather vague word 'promise'.

1.

Father. The Greek ὦ πάτερ - literally 'my father' - is a polite form of address, akin to the English 'sir'. Similarly, ὦ τέκνον - 'my son' - is a polite reply. Given the esoteric nature of the text, a possible interpretation here of ὦ πάτερ would be 'Master', and of ὦ τέκνον 'my pupil'.

in the Exoterica. Ἐν τοῖς γενικοῖς. Since the term γενικῶν λόγων occurs in tractate X it is reasonable to assume that γενικός here refers to the same thing although the meaning of the term is moot given that no details are provided in this tractate nor in tractate X, nor in Stobaeus (Excerpts, III, 1 and VI, 1) where the terms also occurs. While most translators have assumed that it refers to 'generic' things or 'generalities' and thus (by adding λόγοι) have opted for an expression such as 'General Discourses', and given that a transliteration - such as genikois or genikoi - is awkward, I have in respect of the γενικοὶ opted for exoterica (from the Latin via the Greek τὰ ἐξωτερικά) with the meaning of "exoteric treatises designed for or suitable to the generality of disciples or students," with the plausible suggestion thus being that there are exoteric Hermetic treatises and esoteric Hermetic treatises, with Reitzenstein describing these other treatises as διεξοδικοί λόγοι (R.A. Reitzenstein. *Poimandres*. Teubner, Leipzig. 1904. p.118) a distinction he also mentioned in his later work *Die Hellenistischen Mysterien Religionen*.

passing over the mountain. I follow the MSS and read μεταβάσεως rather than the emendation καταβάσεως, taking the sense of μεταβάσεως here as "passing over" - walking on and over - the mountain. There seems no need for the emendation - which implies a descent from the mountain - with its possible suggestion of something more symbolic, more religious or mystical, having

occurred, as for example might be implied in the Gospel of John with the juxtaposition of κατέβη and ἀνέβη in chapter one vv.12-13, with Thomas Aquinas writing:

"Sed non vacat a mysterio, quod in Capharnaum descendit, et postmodum Ierosolymam ascendit. Nisi enim descendisset primum, non competisset ei ascendere: quia, ut dicitur Eph. IV, 10, qui descendit, ipse est et qui ascendit." *Super Evangelium S. Ioannis lectura*, Caput II, Lectio 1

That he descended to Capernaum and then ascended to Jerusalem is not without its mystery since if he did not first descend he would not have been able to then ascend, for as has been related (Eph. IV, 10) "The one who descended is the same as the one who ascended."

the discourse on palingenesis. The Greek word translated here as 'discourse' is λόγος, as in the title.

imparted to me. παραδίδωμι carries the sense here of 'handing down' - of transmitting, disclosing - some ancestral teaching or wisdom; a disclosing from master to pupil.

separated from the world. In respect of ἀπαλλοτριόω what is implied is not 'alienated' from (which has too many modern connotations) the world (κόσμος), but rather 'separate' - distanced - from the world, from worldly things, as a mystic is often 'otherworldly' and may seem to be - to others, and to themselves - a stranger in the world.

distancing my ethos. Reading ἀπηλλοτριώσα (with Parthey, et al) not the emendation of Nock (ἀπηνδρείωσα) with φρόνημα here suggestive of one's character and especially of one's "way of thinking", one's weltanschauung: that is, the 'spirit' or ethos which guides one's way of life.

treachery. ἀπάτης. Personified in Hesiod's Theogony as a child of Night (Νύξ) along with "darksome Kir and Death" - Κῆρα μέλαιναν καὶ Θάνατον - and Nemesis, Νέμεσις.

rectify my insufficiencies. τὰ ὑστερήματα ἀναπλήρωσον. An alternative, literal, translation would be "supply what is needed."

since you said you would impart Palingenesis to me. Given the somewhat unusual phrasing here - οἷς ἔφη μοι παλιγγενεσίας παραδοῦναι, which led Nock to add γένεσιν after παλιγγενεσίας - it seems that παλιγγενεσίας is the title given to a particular doctrine or esoteric theory rather than just a term such as 'rebirth'. Hence my capitalization.

what source ... what sown. The metaphysical context - and the reply - suggests that both μήτρας and σποράς are meant metaphorically rather than literally

(womb, seed).

mortal. As in other tractates I translate ἄνθρωπος as 'mortal' rather than as 'man'. Which here - as in other tractates - suits both the Hellenic context, of mortals contrasted with the immortal theos and the immortal theoi, and the metaphysical context of immortality being possibly attainable by select mortals.

2.

noetic sapientia. For a variety of reasons, I have used the term *noetic sapientia* to denote σοφία νοερὰ.

i) The metaphysical terms νοῦς νοερός, νοῦς οὐσιώδης, and νοῦς ζωτικός occur in Proclus, qv. *Procli Diadochi In Platonis Timaeum Commentari*, Volume 5, Book 4, 245-247; *Procli in Platonis Parmenidem Commentaria*, II 733 and IV 887. Interestingly, Proclus associates νοερός with the three 'septenary planets' Mercury, Venus, and the Sun.

Here, σοφία νοερὰ may well suggest a particular hermetic principle which requires contextual interpretation.

ii) As noted in my commentary on Poemandres 29 - where I used the Latin *sapientia* in respect of σοφία - in some contexts the English word 'wisdom' does not fully reflect the meaning (and the various shades) of σοφία, especially in a metaphysical (or esoteric) context given what the English term 'wisdom' now, in common usage and otherwise, often denotes. As in the Poemandres tractate *sapientia* (for σοφία) requires contextual - a philosophical - interpretation, as Sophia (for σοφία) does in tractate XI where it is there suggestive, as with Aion, Kronos, and Kosmos, of a personified metaphysical principle.

iii) In respect of νοερός, the English word 'intellectual' has too many irrelevant modern connotations, with phrases such as 'intellectual wisdom' and 'the wisdom that understands' - for σοφία νοερὰ - unhelpful regarding suggesting a relevant philosophical meaning. Hence the use of the term 'noetic' which suggests a particular type of apprehension - a perceivation - whereby certain knowledge and a particular understanding can be ascertained.

Thus, *noetic sapientia* implies that the knowledge and understanding that is noetically acquired transcends - or at least is different from - that acquired both (a) through observation of and deductions concerning phenomena and (b) through the use of denotatum whereby beings are given 'names' and assigned to abstractive categories with such naming and such categories assumed to provide knowledge and understanding of the physis of those beings. [In respect of physis, qv. the comment on φύσεως μιᾶς in section 12.]

In addition, given what follows - ἐν σιγῇ, 'in silence' - such knowledge and understanding does not require nor depend upon words whether they be spoken

or written or thought. Hence, the 'source' of mortals is in, can be known and understood through, the silence of noetic sapientia.

genuine. In respect of ἀληθινός as 'genuine', cf. Poemandres 30, ἀληθινὴ ὅρασις.

noble. Regarding ἀγαθός as 'noble/nobility/honour', qv. my commentary on Poemandres 22 and my essays *Concerning ἀγαθός and νοῦς in the Corpus Hermeticum* and *Cicero On Summum Bonum*.

of whom dispersed. To express the meaning of the Greek, to avoid gender bias and because of the following παῖς, I have here used the plural rather than the singular, those avoiding expressions such as "I do not share/he does not share" and "he that is begotten of theos." This also has the advantage of avoiding a misapprehension such as "the begotten one will be different, a god, a son of god."

the desire of theos. In respect of θέλημα here, qv. v.18, συνάσατε τῷ θελήματί μου πᾶσαι αἱ ἐν ἐμοὶ δυνάμεις.

quidditas. οὐσία. As at tractates XI:2 and VI:1, quidditas is a more appropriate translation of οὐσία rather than either 'essence' or 'substance'. Quidditas is post-classical Latin, from whence the English word quiddity, and here as in those tractates should be understood as a philosophical term requiring contextual interpretation. One possible interpretation of quidditas here as at VI:1 is 'the being of that being/entity', with such quidditas often presented in - and perceived via or as - φύσις (physis).

such a perceiviation. I have followed the MSS and translated καὶ τῆς νοητῆς, omitted by Nock et al. In respect of νοητῆς, cf. Plutarch on the views of Krantor of Soli regarding psyche: μινύοντι τὴν ψυχὴν ἔκ τε τῆς νοητῆς καὶ τῆς περὶ τὰ αἰσθητὰ δοξαστῆς φύσεως (De Anima Procreatione in Timaeo, 1).

In respect of νοῦς as perceiviation/perceivance, qv. my commentary on the Poemandres tractate.

entirely whole. τὸ πᾶν ἐν παντί. A literal translation - "the all in all" - does not in its blandness (and the fact that "all in all" is a colloquialism) convey the meaning of the Greek, which considering what follows is suggestive of "entirely whole."

mixture of all abilities. ἐκ πασῶν δυνάμεων συνεστώς. Mixture - a variant spelling of mixtion, meaning melded, compounded, combined, composed of - is most suitable for συνεστώς given the metaphysical matters discussed.

a teacher to a pupil. ὃ τέκνον and ὃ πάτερ not here literally referring to how a father should converse with his son but rather to a teacher instructing a pupil,

with the pupil expecting the teacher to explain matters clearly rather than by means of riddles.

emanation. I incline toward the view that γένος (which is literally, 'kind', species, race, folk, breed) is used here as a technical term which - given what follows, ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀναμυμήσκεται, and the fact that it is not feasible for one mortal to impart knowledge about it to another mortal - here implies a particular 'emanation' of theos; a knowing of which one has to, as Hermes goes on to describe, experience for it to be properly understood. Such 'emanations of theos' are described in the Poemandres tractate where they are symbolized by a septenary system and the two "immortal" (acausal) realms which await for mortals beyond those seven spheres, with knowledge of these emanations being acquired by the ἀνοδος (anados, the upward journey) from the deathful realms to the realms of the deathless.

The term emanation also has the advantage of connotating the literal meaning of γένος since an 'emanation' is derived from a particular kind, breed, or lineage.

presenced. The term 'presenced' is from the noun 'presencing' (derived from the Latin praesentia) and means "the action or process of making some-thing manifest and/or present and/or established."

ἀναμυμήσκω is a very interesting word to use and one which has a variety of meanings depending on context, and thus does not always impute something to do with either 'mind' or with 'memory' as those English terms are now often understood with their implications of those 'things' having some sort of an existence 'somewhere' - in the case of 'memory' as a faculty of the 'mind' - and/or as quantifiable 'things'.

In the world of ancient heroes and warriors, as evoked by Homer, it is simply a 'mentioning' of something:

ὦ φίλ', ἐπεὶ δὴ ταῦτά μ' ἀνέμνησας καὶ ἔειπες,
φασὶ μνηστῆρας σῆς μητέρος εἶνεκα πολλοὺς
ἐν μεγάροις ἀέκητι σέθεν κακὰ μηχανάσθαι

My friend - since you have, in speaking to me, mentioned this,
There are indeed rumours of many suitors for your mother being in your home
Against your will who are plotting to do you harm.

(Homer, The Odyssey, Book III, 321-323)

In Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles it implies a 'seeing again' of things past:

ἀλλ' ἐγὼ σαφῶς
ἀγνώτ' ἀναμνήσω νιν. εὔ γὰρ οἶδ' ὅτι
κάτοιδεν, ἦμος τῷ Κιθαιρῶνος τόπῳ,

ὁ μὲν διπλοῖσι ποιμνίοις, ἐγὼ δ' ἐνί,
ἐπλησίαζον τῷδε τάνδρῃ τρεῖς ὅλους
ἔξ ἥρος εἰς ἀρκτοῦρον ἐκμήνους χρόνους

But I shall bring light
Upon those things which are now unknown. For well do I know
That he will see again that region of Cithaeron when he
With a double flock and I with one
Were neighbours and comrades for three entire six month
Durations from Spring to Arcturus.

(1131-1137)

In this tractate, the implication of ἀναμιμνήσκω is of theos - literally, given the definite article, τοῦ θεοῦ, *the theos* - presencing in the mortal (and thus gifting them with) the required understanding/knowledge of the emanation, just as theos has gifted mortals with sentience, cf. θεοῦ δωρεᾶς in IV:5, ἐλλόγιμος in tractate XI:7 and Asclepius 16, "Prouisum cautumque est, quantum rationabiliter potuisset a summo deo, tunc cum sensu, disciplina, intellegentia mentes hominum est munerare dignatus. Hisce enim rebus, quibus ceteris antestamus animalibus."

3.

unshaped. ἄπλαστον. A privation of πλάσσω, hence 'without invention, pretence, form; not manufactured, unadorned, unfashioned, without shape.' Cf. the irony of Lucian in *De Morte Peregrini* 10, πηλὸς γὰρ ἔτι ἄπλαστος ἦν καὶ οὐδέπω ἐντελὲς ἄγαλμα ἡμῖν δεδομιούργητο, for he was then formless clay with that glorious depiction not yet complete.

What is unshaped (form-less) is the vista - the view - seen, with there being no need, in my view, to impute that Hermes is here speaking of having had a 'vision', mystical, prophetic, or otherwise, given that a 'vision' is not by its nature of what is 'form-less' but of some-thing or some-things perceived and which therefore, being seen, have form or forms, qv. the mention of οὐδὲ τῷ πλαστῷ τούτῳ στοιχείῳ and of εἶδος which follow.

through the generosity of theos. ἐξ ἐλέου θεοῦ. Literally, "from the generosity of theos." Considering the metaphysical context, I incline toward the view that ἐλέος here is neither mercy - qv. Oedipus Tyrannus 672, ἐποικτίρω στόμα ἐλεινόν οὗτος δ' ἐνθ' ἂν ἡ στυγήσεται - nor 'pity' (cf. Oedipus Tyrannus 180, νηλέα δὲ γένεθλα πρὸς πέδῳ θαναταφόρα κεῖται ἀνοίκτως) but rather 'generosity' in the sense of Matthew 12:7, τί ἐστὶν Ἐλεος θέλω καὶ οὐ θυσίαν, "I seek generosity and not sacrifice" with such 'generosity' (of deed and spirit) not exactly the same as what the word 'compassion' now implies, given the post-Hellenic and especially the contemporary connotations of the word 'compassion'.

setting forth ... engendered by perceivation. καὶ ἐμαυτὸν ἐξελέλυθα εἰς ἀθάνατον σῶμα, καὶ εἰμι νῦν οὐχ ὁ πρίν, ἀλλ' ἐγεννήθην ἐν νῶ. This passage is usually interpreted in a way which suggests that Hermes is describing some kind of ancient 'astral travel' where he goes "out of himself" and thence "into" a deathless body, ἀθάνατον σῶμα (in respect of θάνατος and ἀθάνατος as deathful and deathless, qv. my commentary on Poemandres 14 and on vv. 1 and 2 of tractate XI).

However, I take the passage more literally, especially given the phrase εἰμι νῦν οὐχ ὁ πρίν, "now I am not the/that before," and the mention of having been produced/engendered/grown by perceivation. That is, Hermes has "seen" - intuitively perceived, had an insight into - what deathlessness means and implies and is not the person he was before, having acquired (or been given, by theos) the gift of understanding that perceivation engenders, for as mentioned in tractate IV:4

βάπτισον σεαυτὴν ἢ δυναμένη εἰς τοῦτον τὸν κρατῆρα, ἢ πιστεύουσα ὅτι ἀνελεύσῃ πρὸς τὸν καταπέμψαντα τὸν κρατῆρα, ἢ γνωρίζουσα ἐπὶ τί γέγονας. ὅσοι μὲν οὖν συνῆκαν τοῦ κηρύγματος καὶ ἐβάπτισαντο τοῦ νοός, οὗτοι μετέσχον τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τέλειοι ἐγένοντο ἄνθρωποι, τὸν νοῦν δεξάμενοι

If you have strength enough, immerse yourself in the chaldron
Should you accept you can ascend -
Having discovered how you came-into-being -
To the one who dispatched down that chaldron.
The many who understood that declaration and were immersive with perceivation
Gained a certain knowledge, becoming more complete mortals
Through having received the perceivation

shaped part. A direct contrast with the previous use of πλάσσω in respect of what was seen.

thus and for me there is no concern for the initial mixturous form. διὸ καὶ ἡμέληταί μοι τὸ πρῶτον σύνθετον εἶδος. What there is no concern for is the causal form (εἶδος) of the mortal body, mixturous and formful as it is (in respect of mixturous, qv. the note on *mixture* in v. 2) and given that such an initial form will, by palingenesis, be changed.

not as if. Reading οὐχ ὅτι with the MSS; literally, "not as though." Cf. John 6:46 οὐχ ὅτι τὸν πατέρα ἐώρακέν τις.

biochrome ... definity. I take κέχρωσμαι καὶ ἀφὴν ἔχω καὶ μέτρον, ἀλλότριος δὲ τούτων εἰμί metaphorically, not literally, with (i) κέχρωσμαι implying not colour per se but rather biochromy, the natural or the apparent (observed) colouration of living beings, and (ii) μέτρον suggestive not of "measure" but rather of 'definity' in reference to 'indefinity' (from the noun indefinitude) and thus implying, in this context, 'beyond being definable' by ordinary, causal, means

such as 'measure' and 'weight' and 'determinability' and 'definement'.

and directly see my physicality and perceptible form. While various emendations have been suggested for the readings of the MSS here, including δέ εἰμι between ὅ τι δέ and κατανοεῖς, the general meaning seems clear: to directly see or fix or to concentrate one's eyes, one's gaze on (ἀτενίζω) the outward form (εἶδος) which here is the body, the physical appearance, the physicality of the person.

But, as Hermes goes on to explain - οὐκ ὀφθαλμοῖς τούτοις θεωροῦμαι νῦν - what is so observed by the physical eyes does not provide an understanding - a perception, a seeing - of what he is now as a result of the "unshaped vista" that he, through the generosity of theos, saw of himself "setting forth to a deathless body." In respect of θεωρέω, cf. John 4:19, λέγει αὐτῷ ἡ γυνή, Κύριε, θεωρῶ ὅτι προφήτης εἶ σύ, "the woman said to him: Sir, I deem you are a prophet."

4.

Father, you have stung the heart, plunging me into no minor distraction, for I cannot now perceive myself. Εἰς μανίαν με οὐκ ὀλίγην καὶ οἷστροισιν φρενῶν ἐνέσεισας, ὦ πάτερ· ἐμαυτὸν γὰρ νῦν οὐχ ὁρῶ.

My translation is quite different from previous ones - such as Copenhaver's "you have driven me quite mad, father, and you have deranged my heart. Now I do not see myself" - for the following reasons.

i) Does μανία, in the context of this particular tractate, equate to what the English terms 'mania' and 'madness' now denote, as for example - in the case of mania - in 'obsessive need or enthusiasm', 'mood disorder', and - in the case of madness - 'mental illness', psychosis, lack of restraint, uncontrollable fury, uncontrollable mental turmoil, or even in the colloquial sense of 'cool' or quirkily interesting?

It is my considered opinion that it does not, but rather denotes what is suggested by Acts 26:24-25 especially given the use there of μαίνομαι,

Ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ ἀπολογουμένου ὁ Φῆστος μεγάλη τῇ φωνῇ φησὶν Μαίνῃ, Παῦλε· τὰ πολλὰ σε γράμματα εἰς μανίαν περιτρέπει. ὁ δὲ Παῦλος Οὐ μαίνομαι, φησὶν, κράτιστε Φῆστε, ἀλλὰ ἀληθείας καὶ σωφροσύνης ῥήματα ἀποφθέγγομαι.

Speaking up for himself, Festus, in a very loud voice, said: "Paul, you are distracted. Your extensive learning has brought you to distraction." But Paul replied: "Noble Festus, I am not beside myself for the words I have spoken are restrained and truthful."

ii) In respect of οἷστροισιν I am rather reminded of the usage of οἷστρομα in Oedipus Tyrannus, 1318,

οἷμοι μάλ' αὖθις: οἷον εἰσέδου μ' ἅμα κέντρων τε τῶνδ' οἷστρομα καὶ μνήμη κακῶν

as do the stings of those goads, and the recalling of those troubles, pierce me

where the transitive senses of *goad* include "to cause annoyance or discomfort; to spur someone on, or 'to sting' or to prod someone to provoke them into responding."

Thus, with φρήν taken as a metaphor for the heart, one has the contextually apposite *stung the heart*, rather than completely out of context phrases such as "mind frenzy" or "mad".

iii) ἔμαυτὸν γὰρ νῦν οὐχ ὁρῶ. Not a literal 'cannot see' but rather 'cannot comprehend who or what I - as a being - am,' as a consequence of what Hermes has just said about his own being. Hence, *I cannot now perceive myself*.

go beyond. In respect of διεξελέλυθας, not here implying to "pass through", or "come out" (of yourself) but "go - or pass - beyond" (yourself) as those sleepfully dreaming often in their dreams travel far beyond where they are sleeping.

essentiator. The entity, person, or divinity, who essentiate; that is, who is the genesis of, who is the essence of, and who gives being to - who 'authors' and who fashions - the Palingenesis. Which 16th century English word expresses the meaning here of the Greek term γενεσιουργός. Cf. δημιουργός - 'artisan' - in Poemandres 24.

The Mortal One, child of theos. Ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ παῖς, ἄνθρωπος εἷς, θελήματι θεοῦ. In respect of ἄνθρωπος εἷς, literally, *Essentialist Mortal*. That is, the primatial, or 'archetypal', human being. In respect of Ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ παῖς, cf. v. 2: τοῦ θελήματος τοῦ θεοῦ...ὁ γεννώμενος θεοῦ θεὸς παῖς, with παῖς not restricted to 'son' but implying the child - and hence the children, the youthful - of *the* theos, with the conventional translation here of 'son of god' imposing a particular meaning on the text and thus inviting as it may unwarranted comparisons with aspects of Christian theology.

5.

silenced. In regard to ἀφασίαν, qv. Euripides, Helen, 548-9,

ὥς δέμας δείξασα σὸν ἑκπληξιν ἡμῖν ἀφασίαν τε προστίθης

I am mortified, silenced, by you imposing such a bodily appearance upon me

in my heart <...> since I perceive. It is possible that Reitzenstein's assumption - in *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen*. Teubner, Leipzig, 1927 - of a lacuna here is correct, although it is perhaps more probable to interpret what Thoth has just said - that he perceives the stature and the features of Hermes are still the same - accounts for him "forsaking what was previously in his heart," because he now believes that Hermes was speaking metaphorically in regard to being a stranger to "tactility and definitivity." Which is why, after the reply from Hermes, Thoth goes on to ask τί οὖν ἀληθές ἐστιν (what, then, is the actuality) and then, after the reply from Hermes, says Μέμνηνα ὄντως.

the seasons. As elsewhere, χρόνος is not some abstract 'time' but rather the duration or durations between certain observable events or changes, often measured by such things as the phases of the moon or by the appearance or disappearance of constellations or certain stars in the night sky. Here, it refers to the seasons of Nature and how, over the seasons, mortals - and crops - grow then wither.

6.

What then - Trismegistus - is the actuality? Τί οὖν ἀληθές ἐστιν, ὦ Τρισμέγιστε. In respect of ἀλήθεια I have - as in translations of other Hermetic tractates, such as Poemandres 31 and XI:1 - eschewed the conventional translation of 'truth' (with its implication of some abstract, impersonal, and disputable, meaning) in favour of a contextual interpretation, mindful as I am of John 18:38 - τί ἐστιν ἀλήθεια, Quid est veritas? - which well expresses a Greco-Roman sentiment.

The English term is derived from the classical Latin *actualis* and, in this context, refers to what is real, what has actual being or is a demonstrable fact.

the un-complexioned...the unmaterial. There are two ways of construing what follows. As an impersonal list of philosophical attributes - such as formless, colourless - or metaphorically as personal qualities associated with or relevant to the quest for palingenesis, and while most translators have chosen the first option I incline toward the view that, given the personal context - of what Hermes has said, "directly see my physicality," and about how "the form of the deathful alters every day" - they signify personal qualities. These personal qualities, such as τὸ ἀσχημάτιστον and τὸ ἀσώματον are echoed in the *De Imaginibus Oratio* of Iohannes Damascenus (written c. 730 CE) when he enumerates the qualities of God.

Here, and for example,

i) *the un-complexioned.* τὸ ἀχρώματον, γν. ἄχρους, the opposite of εὐχρους, cf. Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, Book VIII, 1.41 ὡς εὐχρώωτεροι ὀρώντο ἢ πεφύκασιν. An alternative to 'un-complexioned' would be 'hueless'.

ii) *the figureless*. τὸ ἀσχημάτιστον. That is, of no particular physique. Qv. Iohannes Damascenus, *De Imaginibus Oratio* I: 4. (Migne, Patrologia Graeca, 94). Cf. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, Book VIII, 3.59, sunt inornata et haec: quod male dispositum est, id ἀνοικονόμητον, quod male figuratum, id ἀσχημάτιστον quod male collocatum.

iii) *the unadorned*. τὸ γυμνόν. Not literally 'naked' or unclothed, but a metaphor for 'unadorned'.

iv) *the revealed*. τὸ φαῖνον. While the literal sense here is problematic - cf. Herodotus, II, 71.1, χαυλιόδοντας φαῖνον, and Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus* 1229, τὰ δ' αὐτίκ' εἰς τὸ φῶς φανεῖ, "soon to be exposed to the light" - what seems to be suggested metaphorically is 'the visible', 'the (already) revealed', and thus someone who is conspicuously (luminously) open and honest and has nothing to hide that might, to their detriment, be exposed. Cf. τὸν ἐπιτάξαντα πῦρ φανῆναι in v. 17 and the quotation there from Plato, *Timaeus*, 39b.

v) *the self-perceiving*. τὸ αὐτῷ καταληπτόν. That is, the self-apprehended, the self-aware, person.

vi) *the unwaveringly noble*. τὸ ἀναλλοίωτον ἀγαθόν. Qv. τὸ ἀγαθόν, ἀγαθόν, ὕμναι in v. 18.

vii) *the unmaterial*. τὸ ἀσώματον. The personal sense is well-expressed in a 14th century translation of 'De Proprietatibus Rerum' in which the qualities of an angel are explained: "inasmuch as he is farre from the bondage of earthly matter, insomuch he is the more perfect in contemplation of spirituall and unmateriall thinges." (Book I, ii. ii. 60). In respect of the term as applied to God, qv. Iohannes Damascenus, *De Imaginibus Oratio* I: 4. Cf. Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, V, 15, 1-4,

Vetus atque perpetua quaestio inter nobilissimos philosophorum agitata est, corpusne sit vox an incorporeum. Hoc enim vocabulum quidam finxerunt proinde quod Graece dicitur ἀσώματον. Corpus autem est quod aut efficient est aut patiens; id Graece definitur τὸ ἦτοι ποιοῦν ἢ πάσχον. Quam definitionem significare volens, Lucretius poeta ita scripsit: Tangere enim aut tangi, nisi corpus, nulla potest res.

I am completely confused. Μέμνηνα ὄντως. Just as in v. 4, the context does not support Thoth saying - even rhetorically - something such as "I have gone mad" or "I am really deranged" considering what the English words "mad" and "deranged" now impute. The sense here - given what follows, ἐνεφράχθησαν αἱ αἰσθήσεις τούτου μου τοῦ νοήματος - is rather of being completely confused, befuddled, and thus lost because of what Hermes has just said. Cf. John 10:20, Δαιμόνιον ἔχει καὶ μαίνεται τί αὐτοῦ ἀκούετε - "why listen to him? He bears a

daemon and is not himself" - with its suggestion that not only is the person completely confused but also that it is not him who is speaking (or, more probably, not he who is ranting) but the daemon he carries around and thus is "possessed" by.

the perceptibility of my apprehension was obstructed. ἐνεφράχθησαν αἱ αἰσθήσεις τούτου μου τοῦ νοήματος. Although the Greek is somewhat obscure, the general sense is that his perception - his understanding - of what he thought Hermes was explaining is now gone, having been obstructed, lost, because of his confusion.

and flows, as Water does, and is neumæos as is Air. The meaning here of ὑγρός and σύμπνοος are uncertain, with the context, the mention of elemental Fire, Earth, Water, and Air, perhaps indicative of them being technical (esoteric) hermetic terms rather than having their normal (exoteric) meaning of 'moist/wet' and 'breathing together' respectively.

i) In regard to ὑγρός, qv. Poemandres 4, where the context - ἀφάτως τετραγμένην καὶ καπνὸν ἀποδι δοῦσαν - implies flowing, Cf. Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 314 - ταῦτ' ἄρ' ἐποίουν ὑγρᾶν Νεφελᾶν στρεπταιγλᾶν δάιον ὁρμάν - where clouds are described as flowing and in their flowing-moving obscure the brightness (of the day).

ii) In regard to σύμπνοος, qv. Περὶ Εἰμαρμένης attributed to Plutarch - τὸ φύσει διοικεῖσθαι τόνδε τὸν κόσμον σύμπνοον καὶ συμπαθῇ αὐτὸν αὐτῷ ὄντα (574e) - literally meaning that the Kosmos is συμπαθῇ with itself and mutually breathing (σύμπνοος), with the implication that it is a wholistic living being. Hence, here - given such a conjectured esoteric meaning as "breathfully connected" - a suitable interpretation of καὶ σύμπνοον ὡς ἀήρ would be *and is as breathfully connected as Air*, with 'breath' indicative of πνεῦμα as described in Poemandres 5 and XII:18.

However, a better alternative might be to provide a suitable technical term, open to interpretation, to express whatever esoteric meaning of σύμπνοος is conjectured, with my suggestion being neumæos, from the medieval Latin neumæ using the suffix -os derived from the Greek -ός, with one possible interpretation therefore being 'something' possibly pertaining to πνεῦμα', giving thus the translation *and is neumæos, as is Air*.

insubstantial. τὸ μὴ σκληρόν does not imply the literal what "is not hard" but rather the metaphorical what is 'insubstantial', whose form is thus not solid, not firm, but non-substantial and which therefore cannot be correctly known through touch and sight.

unmixturous. The meaning of ἀσφίγγωτος is unclear since it occurs only here, with suggestions ranging from 'not fastened', 'not bound', 'not tight', and 'loose'. However, I am inclined to accept Scott's emendation of ἀσύνητον - qv. τὸ

πρῶτον σύνθετον εἶδος (the initial mixturous/composed form) in v. 3 - giving thus unmixturous, not composite.

undissolved. Reading διαλυόμενον with Parthey et al.

actusosity. ἐνέργεια. Qv. tractate XII:21. The English term actusosity derives from the classical Latin actuosus and expresses the Greek here better than the word 'energy' given the modern connotations of that word. The meaning is of (often vigorous) activity or occurrences either natural or which result from the actions of divinities or daimons or mortals.

that bringing-into-being within theos. τὴν ἐν θεῷ γένεσιν. Cf. Poemandres 26, ἐν θεῷ γίνονται. Both imply a "uniting with theos" to thus 'become-of' what is no longer mortal but rather both deathless and 'of theos'.

7.

Refine yourself. As often in other hermetic tractates - qv. Poemandres 10, 22, and VI:3 - καθαρός signifies not just the literal 'physically clean' but being 'refined' in terms of appearance, behaviour, manners, cleanliness, speech, learning, and thought.

brutish. Given the metaphysical context, and the contrast with καθαρός, ἄλογος implies more than 'irrational' or 'unreasonable'. The sense is of the unrefined, the uncultured, the brutish.

alastoras. Since the Greek word τιμωρία is specific and personal, implying vengeance, retribution, and also a divine punishment, it seems apposite to try and keep, in English, the personal sense even though no specific deeds or deeds are mentioned in the text, but especially because of what follows: Τιμωροὺς γὰρ ἐν ἑμαυτῷ ἔχω, ὧ πάτερ. Hence my interpretation, "the brutish alastoras of Materies," using the English term alastoras - singular, *alastor*, from the Greek ἀλάστωρ, an avenging deity, and also a person who avenges certain deeds. Qv. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 1497-1508.

materies. ὕλη. A variant form of the Latin *materia*, thus avoiding the English word 'matter' which now has connotations, derived from sciences such as Physics, that are not or may not be relevant here. In addition, the term requires contextual, metaphysical, interpretation, for as used here it may or may not be equivalent to the ὕλη of Poemandres 10, of III:1, καὶ τὰ λοιπά. Hence why I have here chosen 'materies' rather than - as in those other tractates - 'substance'.

unknowing. In respect of ἀγνοέω here, 'unknowing' is a more suitable English word than 'ignorance', given its meaning, usage (past - as in the *Cloud of*

Unknowing - and present) and given the context. Cf. Poemandres 27, ἀγνωσίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ, and Poemandres 32, ἐν ἀγνοίᾳ τοῦ γένους.

Vengerisse. A personification here in respect of one of the alastoras, rather than impersonally assumptive words such as 'torment/punishment' which in my opinion do not fully express the ethos of the Greek. *Vengerisse* is an alternative spelling of *Vengeress*: a woman who exacts vengeance, who does deeds of retribution; from the Latin *vindicare* via the Anglo-Norman *venger* whence the word *vengeance*. The spelling *vengerisse* occurs in Chaucer's 1374 translation of *De Consolatione Philosophiae*.

The personifications which follow - ἄγνοια, ἀκρασία, κ.τ.λ. - designate (i) the particular deed or deeds that the alastor in question has arrived to avenge, and/or (ii) the character trait or traits which has or have drawn that particular alastor to a person in order to torment them and exact vengeance, retribution.

In the case of ἄγνοια, the suggestion therefore seems to be that this is wilful unknowing, born out of arrogance.

Unrestraint. ἀκρασία. In relation to a person, the Greek means 'lack of control' and thus implies someone who cannot restrain themselves and thus who is self-indulgent; and it is somewhat unfortunate that some translators have opted here to use the word 'incontinence' given what that English word imputes in medical terms.

Unfairness. In respect of δίκη as fairness, and personified as a goddess, cf. Hesiod, Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι, 213-218,

σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης, μὴδ' ὕβριν ὄφελλε:
ὕβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῶ βροτῶ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς
215 ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύναται, βαρύθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς
ἐγκύρσας ἄτησιν: ὁδὸς δ' ἐτέρηφι παρελθεῖν
κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει
ἐς τέλος ἐξελθοῦσα: παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω

You should listen to Fairness and not oblige Hubris
Since Hubris harms unfortunate mortals while even the more fortunate
Are not equal to carrying that heavy a burden, meeting as they do with Mischief.
The best path to take is the opposite one: that of honour
For, in the end, Fairness is above Hubris
Which is something the young come to learn from adversity.

Putridity. The Greco-Roman sense of κακία is personal, not abstract, imputing rottenness: a rotten, putrid, bad physis (character, nature, disposition). This bad physis is revealed by personal deeds, such as cowardice, malice, corruption, depravity, and hubris.

inner mortal. ἐνδιάθετον ἄνθρω. In respect of ἐνδιάθετος, an alternative to 'inner' would be 'enclosed', with the Greek word occurring in relation to Stoic philosophy where a distinction was sometimes made (qv. Theophilus of Antioch) between λόγος ἐνδιάθετος (the inner or 'esoteric' logos) and λόγος προφορικός (the outer or 'exoteric' logos).

incarcerated. The Greek word used, δεσμωτήριον, is interesting as it does not imply a 'prison' as the word prison is mostly conceived of today, a large building in which people are confined together. Composed as the Greek is from δεσμός (bonds, shackles) and τηρέω (watch, guard) it signifies a place where a person is guarded and shackled, as for example in medieval dungeons. Occurring as the word does in conjunction with σῶμα (body) and ἀναγκάζω (compel, using force including torture) the suggestion seems to be of the alastoras tormenting or torturing a person while that person is confined, incarcerated, within their mortal body. Cf. John 3:24, βεβλημένος εἰς τὴν φυλακὴν, which implies a forceful 'throwing' or a hurling into a guarded cage, not "cast into prison."

generous. Qv. the comment on ἐξ ἐλέου θεοῦ in v. 3.

which is what the way and logos of Palingenesis consists of. καὶ οὕτω συνίσταται ὁ τῆς παλιγγενεσίας τρόπος καὶ λόγος. Literally, "and thus consists the way and logos of the Palingenesis." Since the meaning of λόγος here is a matter of conjecture, I have transliterated it, although I incline toward the view that here it is used as a metaphysical term as in the Poemandres, as for example in v. 9, λόγῳ ἑτέρου Νοῦν δημιουργόν, "whose logos brought forth another perceiviation," and as in Cyrilli Epistula Tertia ad Nestorium:

μονογενὴς τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος ὁ ἐξ αὐτῆς γεννηθεὶς τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς ὁ ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ θεὸς ἀληθινός τὸ φῶς τὸ ἐκ τοῦ φωτός ὁ δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο τὰ τε ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ τὰ ἐν τῇ γῇ

only-offspring of the logos of theos, born from the essence [οὐσία] of the father, genuine theos from genuine theos, the phaos from the phaos, by whom all things in heaven and on Earth came into being

8.

Speak quietly...and keep this secret. σιώπησον...καὶ εὐφήμησον. Not a literal 'keep silent and do not say anything' since it is a formulaic phrase, with εὐφημέω suggestive of 'speak softly/quietly' due to either religions reverence (cf. VIII:5, XIII:8, κ.τ.λ.) or personal politeness/deference, and with σιωπάω suggestive of 'keep secret'.

Henceforward be pleased. The English word 'rejoice' - in respect of χαίρω - is

unsuitable here given the preceding εὐφημέω, and the association of the word with Christian worship past and present where it implies 'exult' and show/feel 'great joy'.

having refinement through the Cræfts of theos. ἀνακαθαίρο μενος ταῖς τοῦ θεοῦ δυνάμεσιν. Regarding καθαρός as implying 'refinement', qv. the comment on v. 7.

Cræft - the older spelling, meaning, and pronunciation of craft - is, when so spelled, appropriate in reference to the use of δύναμις in this tractate, implying as it does, in an exoteric context, what the terms strength/power/force denote, while implying in an esoteric context (as often in this tractate) a particular Arte, the application of particular abilities, skills, and knowledge, especially abilities, skills, and knowledge learned in the traditional manner from a master or from a mistress of the Arte or Arts in question. In this esoteric sense, theos is the Master Craftsman, with Palingenesis being a Cræft, an Arte, that can be taught and learned. A Cræft is thus - for an individual - an ability, a capability, while it can also be, in respect of others, influential.

Thus, in this and other tractates the context can suggest alternatives such as 'influence' - qv. v. 9 in respect of the Alastoras, and tractate III:3 - or 'capability', qv. XI:3 and XII:20.

The word cræft also has the advantage of implying the plural, such as in the expression "the Cræft of theos."

comprehend. Considering the preceding σιῶπησον the sense of ἀρθρόω here is not the literal 'articulate' the logos (by means of words spoken) but rather to be able to articulate it interiorly, clearly, and thus comprehend it for oneself.

arrivance. In respect of the unusual - but metaphysically appropriate - English word 'arrivance', cf. Luke 19:10, ἦλθεν γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ζητῆσαι καὶ σῶσαι τὸ ἀπολωλός, "the arrivance of the Son of Man was to seek and to save what was lost."

knowledge. γνῶσις. Cf. Poemandres 26, τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ ἀγαθὸν τέλος τοῖς γνῶσιν ἐσχηκόσι, and also γνῶσις ἀγία in v. 18 here, where the Greek might usefully be transliterated as gnosis.

knowledge of Delightfulness. Cf. v. 18: διὰ σοῦ τὸ νοητὸν φῶς ὑμῶν χαίρω ἐν χαρᾷ νοῦ, through you, a song of apprehended phaos, delighted with delightful perceivance.

9.

influxious. Derived from 'influxion' - one of which meanings is 'influence' - and denoting a powerful influence, as in the 17th century book *England's Teares For*

The Present Warres by James Howell, "the Moon hath an influxious power."

Grade. βαθμός. It is possible that this is a technical - esoteric - term which could also be translated as 'degree' indicative as the term seems to be of some mystical progression by a supplicant or initiate. However, the tractate does not provide any evidence as to what such a progression was from and to, or what the other grades might have been.

Ancestral Custom. δικαιοσύνη. The meaning is not 'righteousness', which imposes abstract theological meanings (mostly derived from the Old and New Testaments) on the text, but rather 'respectful of custom', of dutifully doing one's duty toward both the gods and other mortals. This Hellenic - this personal - meaning derives from understanding δίκη personified as the goddess of both Fairness *and of* Tradition (Ancestral Custom) with 'fairness' a more apt description of the word δίκη, given that terms such as justice and judgement have acquired, over millennia, abstract (and often legalistic) meanings which are not relevant to either the culture of ancient Hellas or to the Hellenic milieu of the Corpus Hermeticum. The Tradition, the ancestral custom, of ancient Hellas - with the attendant mythology and legends - was recounted by Hesiod in Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι (Works and Days) and in Θεογονία (Theogony).

Qv. δικαιοσύνη μου, τὸ δίκαιον ὕμνει δι' ἐμοῦ in v. 18.

vindicated. In respect of ἐδικαιώθημεν (qv. δικαίω) what is not implied is 'made righteous' or 'made pure' - which are meanings derived from Christian exegesis, cf. ὁ δίκαιος δικαιοσύνην ποιησάτω ἔτι, Revelation 22:11 - but rather 'vindicated', justified, and in this case because Unfairness was *in absentia*, having fled with there thus being no need for any further deliberations.

community. κοινωνέω imputes the sense of 'sharing in common or in partnership', that is, a community of shared interests, which is the opposite of individual covetousness.

With that departed. Referring to the departure of Coveter, the personification here of covetousness.

Actualis. A borrowing from the Latin root to personify 'actuality', qv. the comment in v. 6 on τί οὖν ἀληθές ἐστιν ὧ Τρισμέγιστε.

the noble has been returned. However τὸ ἀγαθὸν is interpreted - whether as the conventional 'the good', or as I interpret depending on context, 'the noble', 'the highest nobility', 'the honourable' - the literal meaning of πεπλήρωται here - denoting "τὸ ἀγαθὸν is completed", "τὸ ἀγαθὸν has been fulfilled", "τὸ ἀγαθὸν is full" - is somewhat obscure, especially if one compares it to an apposite context such as John 3:29,

ὁ ἔχων τὴν νύμφην νυμφίος ἐστίν· ὁ δὲ φίλος τοῦ νυμφίου, ὁ ἐστηκώς

καὶ ἀκούων αὐτοῦ, χαρᾷ χαίρει διὰ τὴν φωνὴν τοῦ νυμφίου. αὕτη οὖν
ἢ χαρὰ ἢ ἐμὴ πεπλήρωται

He who has an espousess is the spouse, and the friend of the spouse - who stands by him and listens - is joyous with joy because of his words. Hence, my own joy is complete.

In tractate IV:4, πληρώω is also apposite,

Καὶ ποῦ αὐτὸν ἰδρύσατο.
Κρατῆρα μέγαν πληρώσας τούτου κατέπεμψε δοῦς κήρυκα καὶ
ἐκέλευσεν αὐτῷ κηρύξαι ταῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων καρδίαις τάδε...

Where, then, was it placed?

In that large repleteful chaldron which was dispatched down with an envoy assigned to declaim to the hearts of mortals...

Thus, I am inclined to consider that here the usage is metaphorical, suggestive of τὸ ἀγαθὸν having been completed (i) as in restored, returned to the person before the intervention of "the brutish Alastoras of Materies", who undermined, replaced, or who sought to replace τὸ ἀγαθὸν with such things as Grief, Unrestraint, Lascivity, and Putridity; or (ii) as in, as a gift from theos, completing - refining - the mortal by removing what was detrimental to τὸ ἀγαθὸν and thus to Palingenesis, with this completing - refining - returning them to the necessary state of being, as does the ἄνοδος described in the Poemandres tractate.

phaos. φάος. As with φῶς - qv. Poemandres, κ.τ.λ. - a transliteration since I am inclined to avoid the vague English word 'light' which word now implies many things which the Greek does not or may not; as for instance in the matter of over a thousand years of New Testament exegesis, especially in reference to the gospel of John. A transliteration requires the reader to pause and consider what *phaos* may, or may not, mean, suggest or imply, especially as φάος metaphorically (qv. Iliad, Odyssey, Hesiod, etcetera) implies the being, the life, 'the spark', of mortals, and, generally, either (i) the illumination, the light, that arises because of the Sun and distinguishes the day from the night, or (ii) any brightness that provides illumination and thus enables things to be seen. In addition, as noted in Poemandres 21 and perhaps relevant here,

φῶς καὶ ζωὴ ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατήρ, ἐξ οὗ ἐγένετο ὁ Ἄνθρωπος

phaos and Life are the theos and the father from whence the human came into being

skotos. σκότος. Given the following τιμωρία and what has preceded, I have personified σκότος here (as Hesiod personified Darkness as Erebus) since it is implausible for 'darkness', understood as absence of light, to punish or seek vengeance.

they whirlingly rushed away. I incline toward the view that in respect of ἐκπέτομαι what is meant is not a literal 'flying away' but a metaphor for 'rushing away' or hastily fleeing. Similarly in respect of ροίζω which suggests a whirling about in confusion as they flee; cf. Poemandres 11, δινῶν ροίζω, spinning them around.

Thus concludes what is apparently the initiation into the secret mystery of Palingenesis which began in v. 6 with "thus it is, my son. It ascends, as Fire does, and descends, as Earth does..."

10.

the Dekad brought-into-being. τῆς δεκάδος παραγινομένης. Given that δεκάς is a metaphysical term of the Way of Palingenesis as that Way is explained in this tractate, I have used the transliteration Dekad rather than 'decad'.

geniture of apprehension. νοερά γενεσις. Literally, a birthing of apprehension, of the ability to apprehend beyond what the alastoras signify in respect of our mortal nature. As in tractates VI and XI, geniture expresses the contextual meaning of γενεσις here: that which or those whom have their genesis (and their subsequent development) from or because of something else or because of someone else. Here, this 'something else' is the Dekad which produces this particular birthing. In respect of geniture, XI:2 may provide some metaphysical context:

Ἄκουε, ὦ τέκνον, ὡς ἔχει ὁ θεὸς καὶ τὸ πᾶν. θεός, ὁ αἰὼν, ὁ κόσμος, ὁ χρόνος, ἡ γενεσις. ὁ θεὸς αἰῶνα ποιεῖ, ὁ αἰὼν δὲ τὸν κόσμον, ὁ κόσμος δὲ χρόνον, ὁ χρόνος δὲ γενεσιν. τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ ὡς περ οὐσία ἐστὶ [τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, ἡ εὐδαιμονία,] ἡ σοφία· τοῦ δὲ αἰῶνος ἡ ταυτότης· τοῦ δὲ κόσμου ἡ τάξις· τοῦ δὲ χρόνου ἡ μεταβολή· τῆς δὲ γενέσεως ἡ ζωὴ καὶ ὁ θάνατος

Hear then, my son, of theos and of everything: theos, Aion, Kronos, Kosmos, geniture. Theos brought Aion into being; Aion: Kosmos; Kosmos, Kronos; Kronos, geniture. It is as if the quidditas of theos is actuality, honour, the beautiful, good fortune, Sophia. Of Aion, identity; of Kosmos, arrangement; of Kronos, variation; of geniture, Life and Death.

banishing those twelve. The aforementioned alastoras, such as Grief and Lascivity.

by this geniture we are of theos. ἐθεώθημεν τῇ γενέσει. Cf. θεωθῆναι in Poemandres 26. As there, this does not mean or imply mortals become 'divinized' or 'deified' - "made into gods" - but rather it means θέωσις in the Hellenic, hermetic, sense of being mystically (re)united with theos but still being mortal, human, because there is and cannot be any partaking of, any participation in, the essence, the quidditas - οὐσία - of theos, a sense well

expressed centuries later by Maximus of Constantinople:

τῆς ἐπὶ τῷ θεωθῆναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον μυστικῆς ἐνεργείας λήψεται
πέρας κατὰ πάντα τρόπον χωρὶς μόνης δηλονότι τῆς πρὸς αὐτὸν κατ'
οὐσίαν ταυτότητος. Quæstiones ad Thalassium de Scriptura Sacra,
XXII [Migne, Patrologiae Graeca, 90, c.0318]

the end of the opus mysterium of human beings becoming of Theos can be in all
ways except one, namely that of having the identity of His Essence

That is, Palingenesis means that mortals become *of* theos, not that they become theos or theoi. This may well explain the reading of the MSS, ἐθεωρήθημεν, amended by Nock (after Reitzenstein) to ἐθεώθημεν. For it is possible that the hermetic θέωσις implied, in practice, a contemplative type of life; a style of life hinted at in v. 2 - "noetic sapientia is in silence" - and in v. 7 when Hermes says to Thoth, "Go within: and an arriving. Intend: and an engendering. Let physical perceptibility rest, and divinity will be brought-into-being." Cf. Ἀκλινῆς γενόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ in v. 11.

that generosity. The definite article - *the* generosity - points to the meaning: not ἔλεος per se but rather the generosity of theos who gifts this geniture.

they consist of such. The MSS have συνιστάμενος - Nock, συνιστάμενον - and although some emendations have been proposed, including the addition of νοητῶν (ἐκ νοητῶν) and Reitzenstein suggesting a lacuna between γνωρίζει and ἐκ τούτων, what is referred to seems obvious: they consist of, are composed from, such things that are of - are derived from - theos.

11.

quietude engendered by theos. Ἀκλινῆς γενόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ. With ἀκλινῆς understood metaphorically, cf. σοφία νοερά ἐν σιγῇ in v. 2.

the seeing is not of... In respect of φαντάζομαι, cf. XI:18, κεῖται γὰρ ἄλλως ἐν ἄσωμάτῳ φαντασίαι.

through the noetic actus of the cræft. τῇ διὰ δυνάμεων νοητικῇ ἐνεργείᾳ. In respect of 'cræft', cf. ἀνακαθαίρομενος ταῖς τοῦ θεοῦ δυνάμεσιν in v. 8. In regard to noetic, qv. the comment on σοφία νοερά in v. 2. In respect of actus, qv. the comment on ἐνέργεια in v. 6.

The metaphysical content of this statement, important both in respect of what immediately follows - which bears comparison with XI:18-19 (see below) - and in respect of understanding Palingenesis, has been somewhat lost in previous translations such as "with the mental energy that comes through the powers" and "with the energy the Mind gives me through the powers."

What is meant is that there is a specific type of apprehension which is vivifying, which does not depend on what is seen directly by the eyes, and which is a *cræft*, a capability, an ability, an influencing, arising from the generosity of theos and from that quietude engendered by theos. Thoth then goes on to describe what this apprehension involves: ἐν οὐρανῷ εἰμι, ἐν γῇ, ἐν ὕδατι, ἐν ἀέρι...

I am in the Heavens; on Earth; in Water... Everywhere. ἐν οὐρανῷ εἰμι, ἐν γῇ, ἐν ὕδατι, ἐν ἀέρι...πανταχοῦ. Regarding this, and the aforementioned type of apprehension, cf. tractate XI:18-19,

ἔνια δὲ τῶν λεγομένων ἰδίαν ἔννοιαν ἔχειν ὀφείλει· οἷον ὃ λέγω νόησον. πάντα ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ θεῷ. οὐχ ὥς ἐν τόπῳ κείμενα (ὁ μὲν γὰρ τόπος καὶ σῶμά ἐστι, καὶ σῶμα ἀκίνητον, καὶ τὰ κείμενα κίνησιν οὐκ ἔχει)· κεῖται γὰρ ἄλλως ἐν ἄσωμάτῳ φαντασίαι. νόησον τὸν περιέχοντα τὰ πάντα καὶ νόησον ὅτι τοῦ ἄσωμάτου οὐδὲν ἐστι περιοριστικόν, οὐδὲ ταχύτερον, οὐδὲ δυνατώτερον· αὐτὸ δὲ πάντων καὶ ἀπεριόριστον καὶ ταχύτατον καὶ δυνατώτατον.

καὶ οὕτω νόησον ἀπὸ σεαυτοῦ, καὶ κέλευσόν σου τῇ ψυχῇ εἰς Ἰνδικὴν πορευθῆναι, καὶ ταχύτερόν σου τῆς κελεύσεως ἐκεῖ ἔσται. μετελθεῖν δὲ αὐτῇ κέλευσον ἐπὶ τὸν ὠκεανόν, καὶ οὕτως ἐκεῖ πάλιν ταχέως ἔσται, οὐχ ὥς μεταβάσῃ ἀπὸ τόπου εἰς τόπον, ἀλλ' ὥς ἐκεῖ οὔσα. κέλευσον δὲ αὐτῇ καὶ εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀναπτῆναι, καὶ οὐδὲ πτερῶν δεηθήσεται. ἀλλ' οὐδὲ αὐτῇ οὐδὲν ἐμπόδιον, οὐ τοῦ ἡλίου πῦρ, οὐχ ὁ αἰθήρ, οὐχ ἡ δίνη, οὐχὶ τὰ τῶν ἄλλων ἀστέρων σώματα· πάντα δὲ διατεμοῦσα ἀναπτῆσεται μέχρι τοῦ ἐσχάτου σώματος. εἰ δὲ βουληθείης καὶ αὐτὸ ὅλον διαρρήξασθαι καὶ τὰ ἐκτός εἶ γέ τι ἐκτὸς τοῦ κόσμου θεάσασθαι, ἔξεστί σοι.

Some of the matters spoken of require a certain apprehension, so consider what I say: everything is in the theos but not as if lying in a particular place - since the place is a body and also immovable and what is lain does not move - but an incorporeal representation apprehends what is lain otherwise.

Thus apprehend what embraces everything and apprehend that the incorporeal has no boundary, that nothing is swifter, nothing as mighty, since the incorporeal is boundless, the swiftest, the mightiest.

And apprehend this about yourself and so urge your psyche to go to any land and, swifter than that urging, it will be there. Likewise, urge it to go to the Ocean and again it will be swiftly there without passing from place to place but as if already there.

Urge it to go up into the heavens and it will be there without the need of any wings. Indeed, nothing will impede it: not the fire of the Sun nor Aether, nor the vortex, nor the bodies of the other stars, but - carving through them all - it will go as far as the furthest body. Should you desire to burst through The Entirety and observe what is

beyond - if indeed there be anything beyond that ordered system - then it is possible for you.

What is that Way? As in vv. 7 and 10, an alternative here for τρόπος would be Art.

12.

dwelling. σκήνος. The Greek word has been variously interpreted, as 'shelter', 'tent', and, in the New Testament, has been understood metaphorically to mean 'tabernacle' in reference to the body (2 Corinthians 5.1, 5.4). Here, what seems to be suggested, as Hermes later explains, is the deathful body as a temporary dwelling place for what is deathless.

passed beyond. διεξέρχομαι. Passed beyond as in the previous "I am in the Heavens; on Earth; in Water..." and as in the "go beyond yourself as those who sleepfully dream" of v. 4.

zodiac. ζωοφόρος. Literally, τοῦ ζωοφόρου κύκλου implies "the life-bearing circle", referring to the personifications of the zodiacal constellations with the heavens understood as an abode of various divinities, qv. *Hymn to King Helios Dedicated to Sallust*, Πολὺν δὲ πρὸς οἷς ἔφην πλῆθος ἔστι περὶ τὸν οὐρανὸν θεῶν, οὓς κατενόησαν οἱ τὸν οὐρανὸν μὴ παρέργως μηδὲ ὥσπερ τὰ βοσκήματα θεωροῦντες. τοὺς τρεῖς γὰρ τετραχῆ τέμνων διὰ τῆς τοῦ ζωοφόρου κύκλου πρὸς ἕκαστον αὐτῶν κοινωνίας τοῦτον αὐθις τὸν ζωοφόρον εἰς δώδεκα θεῶν δυνάμεις διαιρεῖ καὶ μέντοι τούτων ἕκαστον εἰς τρεῖς, ὥστε ποιεῖν ἕξ ἐπὶ τοῖς τριάκοντα. (IV, 148c).

Cf. *De Mundo*, ὧν μέσος ὁ ζωιοφόρος καλούμενος κύκλος ἐγκάρσιος διὰ τῶν τροπικῶν διέζωσται. (Bekker, Aristoteles Opera Omnia, I, 392a)

composed of beings, twelve in number. Omitting the redundant ἀριθμῶν.

same physis. φύσεως μιᾶς. As in other tractates I have transliterated φύσις since in the Hermetica physis is a metaphysical principle or attribute whose meaning goes beyond, but can include, what the English terms 'nature' or 'character' - of a thing or person - denote, as the Poemandres tractate makes clear and where physis is, several times, personified, as for example in v. 14,

ἅμα δὲ τῇ βουλῇ ἐγένετο ἐνέργεια καὶ ὥικησε τὴν ἄλογον μορφήν ἣ δὲ φύσις λαβοῦσα τὸν ἐρώμενον περιεπλάκη ὅλη καὶ ἐμίγησαν ἐρώμενοι γὰρ ἦσαν

Then, his want and his vigour realized, and he within that image devoid of logos, Physis grasped he whom she loved to entwine herself around him so that, as lovers,

they were intimately joined together.

polymorphous. παντόμορφος. Cf. XI:16, ἐπεὶ οὖν ὁ κόσμος παντόμορφος γέγονεν.

difference. διαζυγή. Literally, division, separation, cf. Euripides, Troades, 669 - ἄλλ' οὐδὲ πῶλος ἦτις ἂν διαζυγῇ τῆς συντραφείσης - and διάζευξις (disunion).

effector of psyche. ψυχογόνος. The 16th century English word *effector* (from the Latin word used by Cicero) is someone or some-thing who or which engenders or produces some-thing. As in other tractates, I have transliterated ψυχή as 'psyche' so as not to impose a particular meaning on the text. Whether what is meant is *anima mundi* - or some-thing else, such as the 'soul' of a human being, or a personification - is a question of contextual interpretation. However interpreted, it is an important, a primal, principle in this and other hermetic tractates, and might imply here the original, ancient Greek, sense of 'spark' (or breath) of life; of that 'thing' (or being) which (or who) animates beings making them 'alive'.

with Life and Phaos a unity there where the arithmos of the henad is brought forth from the pneuma. ζωὴ δὲ καὶ φῶς ἡνωμέναι εἰσὶν ἔνθα ὁ τῆς ἐνάδος ἀριθμὸς πέφυκε τοῦ πνεύματος. Since this expression is important to understanding the metaphysics described in the tractate it deserves some attention.

i) In respect of Life and Phaos, qv. v. 9.

ii) I have transliterated ἀριθμός here since the context suggests it implies more than the English word 'number' understood as a particular abstraction representing the quantity of 'things'; qv. Aristotle, ἄλλος δέ τις τὸν πρῶτον ἀριθμὸν τὸν τῶν εἰδῶν ἓνα εἶναι, ἔνιοι δὲ καὶ τὸν μαθηματικὸν τὸν αὐτὸν τοῦτον εἶναι (Metaphysics, Book XIII, 1080b.20). Given such a distinction - and the discussion regarding ἀριθμός and Pythagoras in Book XIII, 1083b.10 et seq, and given the occurrence of ἀριθμός with μονάς in tractate IV,

μονὰς οὕσα οὖν ἀρχὴ πάντα ἀριθμὸν ἐμπεριέχει, ὑπὸ μηδενὸς ἐμπεριεχομένη, καὶ πάντα ἀριθμὸν γεννᾷ ὑπὸ μηδενὸς γεννωμένη ἐτέρου ἀριθμοῦ...

Just as the Monas, since it is the origin, enfolds every arithmos without itself being enfolded by any, begetting every arithmos but not begotten by any...

ἀριθμός is suggestive of a metaphysical (and/or of an esoteric, hermetic) principle or attribute - such as being an effluvium, or an emanation, of theos/monas/The One - whose outward (esoteric) appearance or representation is often assumed to be a particular 'numerical' quantity. As to whether or not what is suggested in the tractate regarding ἀριθμός is indicative of the metaphysics of Pythagoras, or represents a similar but different mystical

tradition, is an interesting question.

In terms of mystical tradition, there is a subtle difference between effluvia and emanations, with emanation often understood in the sense of some-thing proceeding from, or having, a source; as for example in theological use where the source is considered to be theos or some aspect of a divinity or God. Effluvium, however, has (so far as I am aware) no theological connotations and accurately describes a particular perceivization: a flowing of what-is, sans the assumption of a primal cause, and sans a division or a distinction between 'us' – we mortals – and some-thing else, be this some-thing else theos, God, a divinity, the numinous, or some assumed, ideated, cause, essence, origin, or form. Effluvia presence, manifest - or can presence and manifest in sentient beings such as ourselves, via for example a Way such as Palingenesis - the divine, the numinous.

iii) I have translated ἐνός as 'henad' - avoiding the prosaic translation 'unit' - given the metaphysical context, the aforementioned comparison with IV:10, the equivalence of ἐνός and μονός, and also the following, from tractate XII:15,

ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις συνθέτοις πᾶσι σώμασιν ἀριθμὸς ἐκάστου ἐστί.
χωρὶς γὰρ ἀριθμοῦ σύστασιν ἢ σύνθεσιν ἢ διάλυσιν ἀδύνατον
γενέσθαι· αἱ δὲ ἐνάδες τὸν ἀριθμὸν γεννῶσι καὶ αὖξουσιν καὶ πάλιν
διαλυόμενον εἰς ἑαυτὰς δέχονται, καὶ ἡ ὕλη μία.

Yet in other combined corpora there is for each of them an arithmos, for without arithmos it is not possible for such a bringing together, such a melding, such a dissolution, to come-into-being. Henads beget and grow arithmos and, on its dissolution, receive it into themselves.

iv) As in other tractates, I have transliterated πνεῦμα (as pneuma) since, as with ψυχή - κ.τ.λ. - it is suggestive here of a particular metaphysical (and/or of an esoteric, hermetic) attribute, requiring contextual interpretation consistent with what is currently understood of Greco-Roman mysticism and metaphysics. The usual translation of 'spirit' can impose Christian, modern philosophical and other contemporary, meanings on the text.

13.

All That Exists. τὸ πᾶν. Literally, 'the all', but metaphysically implying 'all that exists', that is, the Universe, the Kosmos. Qv. the Cantio Arcana (Esoteric Song) of vv. 17-18, and also XII:22-23 where the term is synonymous with theos.

τοῦτο ἐστὶν ὁ θεός, τὸ πᾶν. ἐν δὲ τῷ παντὶ οὐδὲν ἐστὶν ὃ μὴ ἔστιν ὁ θεός· ὅθεν οὔτε μέγεθος οὔτε τόπος οὔτε ποιότης οὔτε σχῆμα οὔτε χρόνος περὶ τὸν θεόν ἐστί· πᾶν γάρ ἐστι, τὸ δὲ πᾶν διὰ πάντων καὶ περὶ πάντα.

this is theos, All That Exists. For in all that exists there is no-thing that he is not.

Therefore, neither size, nor location nor disposition, nor appearance, nor age, are about theos. For he is all that exists; encompassing everything and within everything

When the context merits it, and to avoid awkward phraseology, I have sometimes translated τὸ πᾶν as Kosmos, as at vv. 18 and 19.

the perceivization. τῷ νοί. Which perceivization was mentioned in v. 11: "the seeing is not of the sight from the eyes but that through the noetic actus of the cræft. I am in the Heavens; on Earth; in Water; in Air..."

In effect, this perceivization is of theos, and thus (i) of perceiving that 'all that exists' - including ourselves - are emanations of theos, or (ii) of perceiving that 'all that exists', including ourselves, are effluvia and thus presence, manifest - or can presence and manifest, via for example the Way of Palingenesis - the divine, the numinous, with theos thus understood as the artisan who crafted ourselves and every-thing else:

Ἐπειδὴ τὸν πάντα κόσμον ἐποίησεν ὁ δημιουργός, οὐ χερσὶν ἀλλὰ λόγῳ, ὥστε οὕτως ὑπολάμβανε ὡς τοῦ παρόντος καὶ ἀεὶ ὄντος καὶ πάντα ποιήσαντος καὶ ἐνὸς μόνου, τῇ δὲ αὐτοῦ θελήσει δημιουργήσαντος τὰ ὄντα (Tractate IV:1)

Because the artisan crafted the complete cosmic order not by hand but through Logos you should understand that Being as presential, as eternal, as having crafted all being, as One only, who by theosis formed all that is.

Which metaphysical understanding is not only rather lost in conventional translations of ἐμαυτὸν ἐν τῷ νοί such as "I see myself in Mind," but which also introduce an abstraction, an ἰδέα, 'the mind', which detracts from an appreciation of emanations of theos and effluvia of the numinous.

No more to present the body in three separations. τὸ μηκέτι φαντάζεσθαι εἰς τὸ σῶμα τὸ τριχῇ διαστατόν. Or, less literally, "no more to present the body in three separate ways." And 'no more' because the perceivization is of 'all that exists' as either emanations of theos (the One) or presencings of the divine, the monadic numinous.

i) *to present.* That is, to present - to show - in a particular manner. In respect of φαντάζεσθαι, cf. Aeschylus, Agamemnon,

μηδ' ἐπιλεχθῆς
Ἀγαμεμνονίαν εἶναί μ' ἄλοχον.
φανταζόμενος δὲ γυναικὶ νεκροῦ 1500
τοῦδ' ὁ παλαιὸς δριμύς ἀλάστωρ
Ἀτρέως χαλεποῦ θοινατῆρος
τόνδ' ἀπέτεισεν

τέλεον νεαροῖς ἐπιθύσας.

But do not add to those words that it was me who was the mistress of Agamemnon
Since the wife of this corpse presents herself here
As that most ancient fierce Avenger.
It is Atreus, he of that cruel feast,
Who, in payment for that, has added to his young victims
This adult one.

ii) *separations*. As noted in my commentary on tractate IV:1, what is not meant by διαστατός is 'dimension', given what the term 'dimension' now imputes scientifically and otherwise. What is expressed in IV:1 may also be relevant here:

τοῦτο γάρ ἐστι τὸ σῶμα ἐκείνου, οὐχ ἄπτόν, οὐδὲ ὁρατόν, οὐδὲ
μετρητόν, οὐδὲ διαστατόν, οὐδὲ ἄλλωι τινὶ σώματι ὅμοιον· οὔτε γὰρ
πῦρ ἐστὶν οὔτε ὕδωρ οὔτε ἀήρ οὔτε πνεῦμα, ἀλλὰ πάντα ἀπ' αὐτοῦ.

That Being has no body that can be touched or seen or measured or which is separable or which is similar to any other body: not of Fire or Water or of Pneuma even though all such things are from that Being.

Thus, to translate τὸ μηκέτι φαντά ζεσθαι εἰς τὸ σῶμα τὸ τριχῇ διαστατόν as something like "no longer to picture the three-dimensional body" is to introduce two fairly recent, and unnecessary, abstractions: that of to picture/visualize - as if in some-thing denoted by the term 'mind' - and that of 'three-dimensions'. Whereas what the Greek expresses is relatively simple and suitable to the milieu of Greco-Roman mysticism: of not seeing, of not representing, the body in three particular ways. What these three separate ways are is open to interpretation, but the context suggests in terms of physicality, of psyche, and of pneuma.

through this disclosure. Although 'disclosure' seems apposite, λόγος could be translated here - as in the title - as 'discourse'.

Between τὸ τριχῇ διαστατόν and διὰ τὸν λόγον, Nock et al indicate a lacuna, although it is possible to make some sense of what is here rather obscure Greek. [An overview of some of the problems here - in the context of the meaning of the following διάβολος - is given by Anna Van den Kerchove, *La voie d'Hermès: Pratiques rituelles et traités hermétiques*, Brill (Leiden), 2012, pp.100-4]

written about for you alone. Reading ὃν εἰς σὲ μόνον ὑπεμνηματισάμην with Reitzenstein et al, and taking ὑπεμνηματισάμην to refer to 'writing about' Palingenesis.

rouner. διάβολος. In regard to the Old English word *rouner* - denoting a person who whispers secrets or who spreads rumours in a secretive, disruptive,

manner - qv. the Prologue of the 14th century *Cloud Of Unknowing*,

Fleschely janglers, opyn preisers and blamers of hemself or of any other, tithing tellers, rouners and tutilers of tales

Also, cf. 2 Timothy 3:3, ἄστοργοι, ἄσπονδοι, διάβολοι, ἀκρατεῖς (unloving, unforgiving, rouners, unrestrained) where mention is made of ἀκρατής, which in this tractate is personified as one of the Alastoras.

I take the following τοῦ παντὸς as referring to keeping the silence - the secrets - as mentioned in v. 22, rather than as referring to the preceding τὸ πᾶν.

the many. τοὺς πολλούς. It is possible to take this pejoratively and thus as referring to 'plebal outsiders', to 'the masses', the plebeians.

but instead to whomsoever theos himself desires. Reading ἀλλ' εἰς οὓς ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸς θέλει with Reitzenstein. The text is obscure to the point of being corrupt, with various emendations having been proposed, and thus my translation is somewhat conjectural.

14.

Speak quietly. Qv. v. 8

constituted of such cræfts. Such cræfts as Palingenesis, and thus such abilities as a cræft confers.

disrespected. ἀσεβεῖσθαι. Qv. Lysias, Funeral Oration, 2.7,

Ἀθηναῖοι ἡγησάμενοι ἐκείνους μέν εἴ τι ἡδίκουν, ἀποθανόντας δίκην ἔχειν τὴν μεγίστην τοὺς δὲ κάτω τὰ αὐτῶν οὐ κομίζεσθαι ἱερῶν δὲ μαινομένων τοὺς ἄνω θεοὺς ἀσεβεῖσθαι

the Athenians considered that if those ones had done harm then their death was the greater punishment, with those in the realms below not being attended to, and - with their consecrated places defiled - the gods above were being disrespected

Also, cf. Poemandres 23,

τοῖς δὲ ἀνοήτοις καὶ κακοῖς καὶ πονηροῖς καὶ φθονεροῖς καὶ πλεονέκταις καὶ φονεῦσι καὶ ἀσεβέσι πόρρωθέν εἶμι

I keep myself distant from the unreasonable, the rotten, the malicious, the jealous, the greedy, the bloodthirsty, the hubriatic

the quiddity of geniture. τῆς οὐσιωδοῦς γενέσεως. A metaphysical expression

which, in context, signifies that the essentiality, the realness, of the particular bringing-into-being that is Palingenesis - with its perception of effluvia (or of emanations of theos) and of the mortal being 'all that exists' - is far removed from the physis that ordinary perception associates with the physical body.

engendered of theos. θεὸς πέφυκας. That is, reborn through Palingenesis because of theos. The following καὶ τοῦ ἐνὸς παῖς provides the necessary context. In respect of Palingenesis signifying becoming *of* theos (as a child is *of* the parent) and not becoming theos or theoi, qv. the comment on v. 6, "by this geniture we are of theos." Cf. φύσει μὲν πέφυκας θεός (Josephus Hymnographicus, *Feast of Saint Basilissa*, Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, 105, 1120) and δόξης γέμων θεός πέφυκας (Joannes Geometra, *Carmina Varia*, Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, 106, 997)

15.

song. ὕμνος. Not a 'hymn' in the Christian sense (which the word hymn now so often imputes) but rather celebrating the numinous, and theos, in song, verse (ode), and chant.

you said you heard from those influences when you reached the Ogdoad. The Ogdoad - ὀγδοος, the eighth - relates to Poemandres 26, τὴν ὀγδοατικὴν φύσιν, the ogdoadic physis which is beyond the seven spheres, the reaching of which is celebrated in song, ὕμνεῖ σὺν τοῖς οὖσι τὸν πατέρα, which signifies the end of the mortal anados (ἄνοδος) and where the mortal hears 'the influences' - those of The Cræft - who or which are beyond the ogdoad celebrating theos in melodious song, τινων δυνάμεων ὑπὲρ τὴν ὀγδοατικὴν φύσιν φωνῇ τινι ἡδεῖαι ὕμνουσῶν τὸν θεόν.

There are several ways of interpreting the text here and what follows. If one accepts the emendation σου (Nock, after Reitzenstein) then Thoth is asking to hear the song Hermes heard when he reached the Ogdoad, while if one reads, with the MSS, μου, then Thoth is asking for the song Hermes said Thoth would hear when Thoth himself reaches the Ogdoad. In addition, τῶν δυνάμεων in association with either σου ἀκοῦσαι or μου ἀκοῦσαι is awkward, implying "heard from The Cræft" - or, in exoteric terms, "from the (those) Powers/Forces /Influences/" - when whomsoever reaches the Ogdoad, and which inclines one to ask, whose or what influences/powers? Those mentioned, for example, in vv. 8-9, such as Delightfulness, Self-Restraint, and Perseverance? If so, are these influences, collectively, The Cræft itself personified and who thus, through the generosity of theos, enable Palingenesis?

On balance, given the reference to Poemandres 26, I am inclined to accept the emendation σου and take 'the influences' as referring to those of The Cræft, some of whom are personified in vv. 8-9, and which 'influences' are those who in Poemandres 26 are "celebrating theos in melodious song."

divined about the Ogdoad. Taking καθὼς Ὀγδοάδα ὁ Ποιμάνδρης ἐθέσπισε with τέκνον, not with the preceding ἀκοῦσαι τῶν δυνάμεων.

Poemandres, the perceivization of authority. Qv. Poemandres 2, εἰμὶ ὁ Ποιμάνδρης, ὁ τῆς αὐθεντίας νοῦς. As there, the title implies "What (knowledge) I reveal (or am about to reveal) is authentic," so that an alternative translation, in keeping with the hermeticism of the text, would be "I am Poemandres, the authentic perceivization."

and entrusting me to presence the beautiful. καὶ ἐπέτρεψέ μοι ἐκεῖνος ποιεῖν τὰ καλά. While an alternative translation is "and entrusting me to presence the noble," it does not immediately connect to what follows: of beautifully presencing such beautiful things as the esoteric song (ὕμνωδία κρύπτη, cantio arcana) which Hermes proceeds to teach to Thoth.

16.

except to you at your completion. εἰ μὴ σοὶ ἐπὶ τέλει τοῦ παντός. More literally, "except to you at the ending of the whole." That is, at the ending of the initiation into the secret of Palingenesis.

respectfully. That is, reverentially. The sense of προσκυνέω here does not necessarily imply a 'kneeling down' or some sort of what the Greeks (and the Romans) would undoubtedly have described as a 'barbarian adoration' or prostration as if in worship of Helios or of some-thing. It also does not necessarily imply a type of body-bent bowing, a stooping, toward a particular person (cf. Herodotus, I:119.1, ἄρπαγος μὲν ὡς ἤκουσε ταῦτα, προσκυνήσας καὶ μεγάλα ποιησάμενος ὅτι τε ἡ ἀμαρτὰς οἱ ἐς δέον ἐγγόνεε καὶ ὅτι ἐπὶ τύχησι χρηστῆσι ἐπὶ δεῖπνον ἐκέκλητο, ἦε ἐς τὰ οἰκία).

What such respect, in this particular case, involved is unknown although the tractate - with its invocations of Self-Restraint, the imperturbable, the unwaveringly noble, of a contemplative silence, and its declamation of "go within" - is suggestive of a simple, unadorned, silent, respect for the numinous and the divine, as might perhaps be manifest in a slight bowing of the head. Cf. John 4:20 where the type of reverence is also unknown,

οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ προσεκύνησαν· καὶ ὑμεῖς λέγετε ὅτι ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις ἐστὶν ὁ τόπος ὅπου προσκυνεῖν δεῖ.

Our ancestors gave reverence on this mountain but you say that the necessary place of reverence is in Jerusalem.

17.

Logos Δ. The MSS at this point have the heading ὑμνωδία κρύπτη, λόγος Δ. While ὑμνωδία κρύπτη is understandable - Esoteric Song, Cantio Arcana, Secret Chant - the meaning of λόγος Δ is conjectural, with suggestions including The Fourth Song, The Fourth Formula, and the Fourth Discourse, with the obvious implication that there are, or were, four such hermetic songs, formulae, or discourses, with various suggestions as to those other three, such as Poemandres 31, tractate V:10, and Asclepius 41, all of which are relatively short.

every Physis of Kosmos. Among the presencings of the Kosmos described here by their physis are Earth, Trees, the Heavens, Air, and Water.

In respect of Kosmos and physis, qv. tractate XII:14,

ἀνάγκη δὲ καὶ ἡ πρόνοια καὶ ἡ φύσις ὄργανά ἐστι τοῦ κόσμου

Necessitas, foreseeing, and physis, are implements of Kosmos

Gaia. γῆ. Earth as elemental principle, hence the personification here since Earth is being directly, personally, invoked.

open. ἀνοίγνυμι. Cf. Papyri Graecae Magicae, XXXVI. 312ff. The term was often used in both mystic odes and in classical magicae incantations. The Latin *aperio* well expresses the sense, as in "aperire librum et septem signacula eius," (Jerome, Revelation V:5) and "et cum aperuisset sigillum secundum." (Jerome, Revelation VI:3)

μοχλός. Here, not a literal 'bolt' or 'lock' but what prevents (access to) or is a defence against something.

Abyss. ἄβυσσος. This is the emendation of Reitzenstein for the various readings of the MSS. Nock has ὄμβρου which does not make sense here, for why "open what prevents" rain? In respect of ἄβυσσος, qv. tractate III:1.

incurvate. This unusual English term is appropriate here to poetically suggest the sense of the Greek - σείω - which is to bend from side to side as if shaken by an earthquake, by a trembling of the Earth.

Master Artisan. κτίσεως κύριον. 'Founding Lord', or less poetically, Lord of Creation. Theos as creator-artisan is mentioned in Poemandres 9, with the term there, and in tractate IV:1, being δημιουργόν. Qv. also δύναμις δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἰών (the craft of theos: Aion) in tractate XI:3.

clan. κύκλος. Here signifying a particular group, or a particular assembly, of people as in the English expression "the inner circle." Hence, "the clan of

theos".

Sweet water. γλυκὺ ὕδωρ. The sweetness of water suitable to drink. Cf. John 4:10, ὕδωρ ζῶν, the 'living water' - that is, the water of life, ὕδωρ ζωῆς.

bring light to. In respect of φαίνω as 'bringing light', cf. Plato, Timaeus, 39b,

φῶς ὁ θεὸς ἀνῆψεν ἐν τῇ πρὸς γῆν δευτέρᾳ τῶν περιόδων, ὃ δὲ νῦν
κεκλήκαμεν ἥλιον, ἵνα ὅτι μάλιστα εἰς ἅπαντα φαίνοι τὸν οὐρανὸν

theos ignited a light in that second circle from Earth, named now as Helios, so that it could bring light to all of the heavens

fond celebration. Regarding εὐλογία in a neutral way which does not impute the Christian sense of "praise the Lord", qv. Poemandres 22,

παραγίνομαι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ὁ Νοῦς τοῖς ὁσίοις καὶ ἀγαθοῖς καὶ καθαροῖς
καὶ ἐλεήμοσι, τοῖς εὐσεβοῦσι, καὶ ἡ παρουσία μου γίνεται βοήθεια,
καὶ εὐθὺς τὰ πάντα γνωρίζουσι καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἰλάσκονται
ἀγαπητικῶς καὶ εὐχαριστοῦσιν εὐλογοῦντες καὶ ὑμνοῦντες
τεταγμένως πρὸς αὐτὸν τῇ στοργῇ

I, perceivation, attend to those of respectful deeds, the honourable, the refined, the compassionate, those aware of the numinous; to whom my being is a help so that they soon acquire knowledge of the whole and are affectionately gracious toward the father, fondly celebrating in song his position.

my Arts. As at Poemandres 31 - which is also a traditional doxology (δοξολογία) to theos - the sense of δυνάμεων is not 'powers', forces (or something similar and equally at variance with such a laudation) but 'arts'; that is, particular abilities, qualities, and skills. Here, these abilities and skills - the craft - relate to esoteric song; to be able to be an effective laudator in respect of theos and "every Physis of Kosmos."

18.

numinous. ἅγιος. As in the Poemandres tractate and other tractates.

knowledge. As at Poemandres 26, γνῶσις here could be transliterated as gnosis although I incline toward the view that such a transliteration might - given what the term gnosis now imputes, as for example in being a distinct 'spiritual way' - lead to incorrectly imposing modern meanings on the text.

numinal understanding. φωτίζω here implies an understanding given by a divinity, as for example in spiritual enlightenment, something that is not conveyed if a single word such as 'enlightened' is used as a translation. In order to express something of the Greek, I had used the term 'numinal understanding' with numinal implying 'divine' as at tractate III:1,

Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεὸς καὶ θεῖον καὶ φύσις θεία

The numen of all beings is theos: numinal, and of numinal physis.

phaos. As at Poemandres 4ff - and in other tractates - a transliteration of φῶς - using the the Homeric φάος, given that it (like physis) is a fundamental principle of Hermetic weltanschauungen and one which the overused English word 'light', with all its modern and Christian interpretations, does not satisfactorily express.

mastery. Implying mastery over one's self, cf. Chaucer, The Physician's Tale: "Bacus hadde of hir mouth right no maistrie." (v. 58)

respectful of custom. δίκαιος. Not 'righteous', which imposes abstract theological meanings (mostly derived from the Old and New Testaments) on the text, but rather 'respectful of custom', of dutifully doing one's duty (that is, being honourable) toward both the gods and other mortals.

Honesty. ἀλήθεια. Given that those who are urged to sing are personifications, this is not some abstract, disputable, 'truth' but as often elsewhere in classical literature, a revealing, a dis-covering, of what is real as opposed to what is apparent or outer appearance. In personal terms, being honest and truthful.

Through me, may Kosmos accept... δι' ἐμοῦ δέξαι τὸ πᾶν λόγῳ. I take this with the following λογικὴν θυσίαν, and τὸ πᾶν as vocative, and poetically combine the unnecessary λόγῳ with λογικὴν. As punctuated by Nock et al it would with λογικὴν θυσίαν literally be something such as "through me accept in speech All That Exists/the Kosmos, an offering spoken," which - in the context of the song and of theos being τὸ πᾶν, All That Exists/the Kosmos - is distinctly odd.

Here, as in v. 19, translating τὸ πᾶν as Kosmos, rather than 'All That Exists' to elucidate the meaning and avoid awkward phraseology.

respectful wordful offerings. Qv. Poemandres 31. The difficult to translate Greek term λογικὴν θυσίαν implies an offering, and one which is both respectful and conveyed by means of words but which words are of themselves insufficient, inadequate, with the term 'wordful' suggesting such insufficiency as well as doubling for λόγῳ in the previous line.

19.

I take λογικὴν θυσίαν (respectful wordful offerings) as the end of the named, the metaphysical, 'esoteric song' (ὕμνωδία κρύπτη) with what follows - lines 214-235, that is, until the interjection by Thoth - a personal evocation, a chant, to theos - τὸ πᾶν - for acceptance of the offering (the singing of the esoteric

song) followed by a personal request to remain enlightened, followed by an epiphonema which includes sentiments of personal gratitude.

Life, recure. σῶζε ζωή. Recure - from the classical Latin recuro - is an interesting, if neglected, English word and is apposite here implying as it does restore (to health), heal, and preserve. As mentioned in Poemandres 17 regarding Life and Phaos,

ὁ δὲ Ἄνθρωπος ἐκ ζωῆς καὶ φωτὸς ἐγένετο εἰς ψυχὴν καὶ νοῦν, ἐκ μὲν ζωῆς ψυχὴν, ἐκ δὲ φωτὸς νοῦν

Of Life and Phaos, the human came to be of psyche and perceivation; from Life - psyche; from Phaos - perceivation

Theos, spiritus. πνεῦμα θεέ. In respect of πνεῦμα Nock considered it doubtful and noted the suggestion of Keil, πνευμάτιζε, although πνεῦμα θεέ - theos, pneuma (spiritus) - does seem appropriate: theos, 'a breath', a breathing, Pneuma; which breathing imbues beings with life and spirit, with pneuma.

Breath-Giver, Artisan. πνευματοφόρε δημιουργέ. Literally, "Pneuma-Bearing, Artisan." The Master Craftsman whose craft is to make - to construct, to create - living beings.

20.

Because of your desire. Qv. v. 4, θελήματι θεοῦ.

21.

I follow Festugiere and take τῷ σῷ τὴν εὐλογίαν ταύτην λεγομένην as belonging to Thoth, not Hermes.

a more numinal perceivation. Regarding ἐπιφωτιζω, qv. v. 16, γνῶσις ἁγία, φωτισθεὶς ἀπὸ σοῦ and the comment on 'numinal understanding'. As there, what is meant is not some ordinary type of 'illumination' but rather a divinely-inspired or a divinely-given understanding. Here, this understanding has enhanced the perceivation Thoth has acquired.

from my heart. As at v. 4, φρήν as a metaphor for the heart. Which explains the response of Hermes: μὴ ἀσκόπως.

essentiator. Qv. v. 4.

kyrios. A transliteration of the Greek, appropriate here given what terms such as 'Lord' and 'Master' now so often denote, and given Poemandres 6,

Οὕτω γινώθι· τὸ ἐν σοὶ βλέπον καὶ ἀκοῦον, λόγος κυρίου, ὁ δὲ νοῦς
πατὴρ θεός. οὐ γὰρ διίστανται ἀπ' ἀλλήλων· ἔνωσις γὰρ τούτων ἐστὶν
ἡ ζωή

Then know that within you - who hears and sees - is logos kyrios, although
perceivation is theos the father. They are not separated, one from the other,
because their union is Life.

22.

invokation. εὐχομαι. Not 'pray' - which has too many Christian and other
non-Hellenic religious connotations - but invokation, as in appeal to a deity, to
call upon, to offer a laudation or an offering. Qv. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 933,
ἠύξω θεοῖς δείσας ἂν ὧδ' ἔρδειν τάδε, did you invoke the gods because you
feared doing such things?

the unrottable produce. τὰ ἀθάνατα γενήματα. Literally, "the
deathless/immortal produce". Taking ἀθάνατος metaphorically contrasts well
with the preceding 'bearing good fruit'.

the tradition. In respect of παράδοσις, cf. παραδιδόναι μοι in v. 1. As there, the
suggestion is of a disclosing of some ancestral teaching or wisdom; the
disclosing by a teacher or master to a pupil.

rouners. For 'rouner' in respect of διάβολος, qv. v. 13, εἰς δὲ ὑπεμνηματι σάμην
ἵνα μὴ ὧμεν διάβολοι τοῦ παντὸς εἰς τοὺς πολλούς.

noesis. A technical, mystical, term, qv. the comment on 'noetic sapientia' in v. 2.

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All translations by DW Myatt

Christianity, War, Paganism, And Honour

Preface

While David Myatt's post-2012 writings about extremism have (i) been prejudicially rejected by individuals of a particular political persuasion {1} and (ii) ignored, or even prejudicially rejected, by academics who have mentioned him usually in the context of certain unproven allegations, {2} a most interesting and neglected aspect those post-2012 writings concern war, Catholicism, and 'good and evil' in the context of Christianity, Islam, the modern State and his own pagan philosophy of pathei-mathos. {3}

Most interesting, for five reasons. First, because when studied without preconceptions they complement and extend his philosophy of pathei-mathos; second, because they are based on his personal experience of Christianity and Islam; thirdly because they reveal his scholarly knowledge of those subjects; fourthly, because the concept of the numinous is embedded in such writings, {4} and fifthly because they not only compliment his writings about his personal rejection of extremism but elegantly refute the aforementioned prejudicial rejection of his post-2012 writings.

Most of Myatt's writings concerning war, Catholicism, and 'good and evil' are contained in the following texts:

- (i) *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God* which forms part two of his 2013 *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*; {5}
- (ii) the 2018 essay *Persecution And War*; {6}
- (iii) his three part 2019 text *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*; {7}
- (iv) his 2013 book *Understanding And Rejecting Extremism*. {8}

Part One

Good, Evil, and Christianity

Catholicism

Myatt's views about Catholicism are relevant to both his understanding of the religion of Christianity and the development of his philosophy of pathei-mathos, and are summarized in Part One of *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*:

"why does someone who has developed a somewhat paganus weltanschauung – the mystical individualistic numinous way of pathei-mathos – now defend a supra-personal organization such as the Roman Catholic Church? Because I from personal experience appreciate that for all its many faults – recent and otherwise – and despite my disagreement regarding some of its teachings it still on balance does, at least in my fallible opinion, presence – as it has for centuries presenced – aspects of the numinous and which presencing has over centuries, again in my fallible opinion, had a beneficial affect on many human beings."

In Part Two of that text, his personal experience of Catholicism and his understanding and scholarly study of Christianity are evident, as in his comprehensive footnotes to the quotation below and which footnotes are included here for completeness:

<begin quotation>

"Two of the guiding practical principles of living as a Roman Catholic seem to me, on the basis of personal experience and fallible understanding, to be expiation and penance, related as they are to what was termed the Sacrament of Confession – now re-named the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation – and thence related to one of the founding principles of the Roman Catholic Church: that an ordained Priest has the religious authority [1] to give absolution for the "sins" [2] a person has committed, and the authority to specify what penance is required for expiation, but which absolution is dependant on the person making a full and truthful confession and being repentant.

Such personal confession, penance, and expiation, are evidential of how a practising Catholic interacts with the Divine and is thus personally reminded of what is spiritual, eternal, numinous, and beyond the causal everyday world."

ooo

[1] Qv. John 20:22-23,

λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἃν τινων ἀφῆτε τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἀφένται αὐτοῖς ἃν τινων κρατῆτε
κεκράτηνται

Receive Halig Spiritus: if you release anyone from their errors, they are released; if you hold onto them, they are held onto.

In regard to the term Spiritus, in my commentary on John 1:31 I wrote:

τὸ πνεῦμα. Almost without exception, since Wycliffe's Bible the Greek here has been translated as "the spirit", although the ASV [the Anglo-Saxon Version] has gast (gast of heofenum), whence the later English word 'ghost'. However, given what the terms 'spirit' and 'ghost' – both in common usage, and as a result of over a thousand years of Christian exegesis – now impute, it is apposite to offer an alternative and one which is germane to the milieu of the Gospels or which at least suggests something of the numinosity presenced, in this instance, via the Gospel of John.

Given that the transliteration pneuma – with its modern association with terms such as pneumatic – does not unequivocally suggest the numinous, I have chosen spiritus, as referenced in respect of gast in *Wright's Anglo-Saxon And Old English Vocabularies*.

In regard to the translation Halig Spiritus, in my commentary on John 5:33 I wrote:

I have here used the Old English word Halig – as for example found in the version of John 17.11 in the Lindisfarne Gospel, 'Du halig fæder' – to translate ἅγιος rather than the later word 'holy' derived as that is from halig and used as it was by Wycliffe in his 1389 translation of this phrase, "in the Hooly Gost", which itself echoes the ASV, "on Halgum Gaste."

The unique phrase *in Halig Spiritus* – in place of the conventional 'with the Holy Spirit' – may thus express something of the numinosity, and the newness, of the original Gospel, especially as the word 'holy' has been much overused, imputes particular meanings from over a thousand years of exegesis, and, latterly in common parlance, has become somewhat trivialized.

[2] As I have noted in several essays, and in my translation of the Gospel of John, I prefer to translate the Greek term ἁμαρτία not by the conventional 'sin' but rather by 'error' or 'mistake'.

As I wrote in the essay *Exegesis and Translation*,

One of the prevalent English words used in translations of the New Testament, and one of the words now commonly associated with revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam, is sin. A word which now imputes and for centuries has imputed a particular and at times somewhat strident if not harsh moral attitude, with sinners starkly contrasted with the righteous, the saved, and with sin, what is evil, what is perverse, to be shunned and shudderingly avoided. One of the oldest usages of the word sin – so far discovered – is in the c. 880 CE translation of the c. 525 CE text *Consolatio Philosophiae*, a translation attributed to King Ælfred. Here, the Old English spelling of syn is used:

þæt is swiðe dyslic & swiðe micel syn þæt mon þæs wenan scyle be Gode

The context of the original Latin of Boethius is *cogitare*, in relation to a dialogue about goodness and God, so that the sense of the Latin is that it is incorrect – an error, wrong – to postulate/claim/believe certain things about God. There is thus here, in Boethius, as in early English texts such as *Beowulf*, the sense of doing what was wrong, of committing an error, of making a mistake, of being at fault; at most of overstepping the bounds, of transgressing limits imposed by others, and thus being 'guilty' of such an infraction, a sense which the suggested etymology of the word syn implies: from the

Latin sons, sontis. Thus, this early usage of the English word syn seems to impart a sense somewhat different from what we now associate with the word sin, which is why in my translation of John, 8.7 I eschewed that much overused and pejorative word in order to try and convey something of the numinous original:

So, as they continued to ask [for an answer] he straightened himself, saying to them: "Let he who has never made a mistake [Αναμαρτητος] throw the first stone at her."

ὥς δὲ ἐπέμενον ἐρωτῶντες αὐτόν, ἀνέκυψεν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὁ ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν πρῶτος ἐπ' αὐτὴν βαλέτω λίθον.

Jesus here is not, in my view, sermonizing about sin, as a puritan preacher might, and as if he is morally superior to and has judged the sinners. Instead, he is rather gently and as a human pointing out an obvious truth about our human nature; explaining, in v.11, that he has not judged her conduct:

ἡ δὲ εἶπεν· οὐδεὶς, κύριε. εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· οὐδὲ ἐγὼ σε κατακρίνω· πορεύου, ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε

[And] she answered, No one, my Lord. Whereupon Jesus replied "Neither do I judge [κατακρίνω] you, therefore go, and avoid errors such as those."

The essay is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2013/04/26/exegesis-and-translation/> and was included as an Appendix to my *Mercvrii Trismegisti Pymander*.

ooo

<end quotation>

Myatt goes on to explain what he means by how 'a practising Catholic interacts with the Divine and is thus personally reminded of what is spiritual, eternal, numinous',

"This personal – and via the Confessional, this priestly – connexion to the Divine, with the attendant penitence, penance, personal expiation, seems to me to have been somewhat neglected when non-Catholics, and even some Catholics, criticize the Roman Catholic Church [...]

That is, such criticism is secular; based on what is temporal, causal, such as some secular law or some personal emotive reaction, with the spiritual – the eternal – dimension to mortal life unconsidered. Which spiritual dimension is for Catholics based on allowing for personal expiation by spiritual means such as confession, penitence, and penance [...]

For judgement according to such a spiritual dimension was, rightly or wrongly, often considered more important than secular recompense and secular punishment."

His argument being that, in judging the actions of a person, "the application of certain spiritual considerations" were, in the past, more important than secular ones because they are based "on the belief in the Eternal Life – in Heaven or in Hell – which awaits all mortals, one portal to such an Eternal Life in Heaven being, according to Catholic faith, the sacrament of confession."

He expands on this in Part Three - *Two Metaphysical Contradictions Of The Modern West* - writing that the expectations of the Catholic Church, as in a letter written by Pope Francis, dated 1^o de enero de 2019, in this era now seem to be:

"that secular justice - as understood and as implemented by the State - has a higher priority than *judicium divinum*, the divine justice of God or of the gods."

For centuries, the Catholic Church taught the primacy of divine justice, and that in his view

"the move toward the change [Pope Francis] suggests is in part at least placatory, in conformity with our epoch with its powerful secular Media and its powerful modern secular States; and second that the religious, the numinous, the spiritual, balance presented for millennia by aspects of the Roman Catholic Church - the devotion to the sacred over and above the secular - is continuing to be lost within the Roman Catholic Church, with *judicium divinum* and the secular justice of some State now apparently considered by the Pope as metaphysically equal."

Such temperate views, based on experience and study, are also evident in his *Questions of Good, Evil,*

Honour, and God where Myatt asks important ethical, philosophical, questions including whether "the definitions and thence the theology and epistemology and the morality of religions, over millennia, enabled more and more of us to avoid doing or causing what is bad," and "does jurisprudence - and thence The State - offer an acceptable alternative" and whether or not we as a species can change without "a belief in some reward or the threat of punishment - be such karmic, eschatological, or deriving from something such as a State."

Good And Evil

In his *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God* Myatt begins his analysis of the Christian answers by asking what is meant by the phrase γινώσκοντες καλὸν καὶ πονηρόν in Genesis 3.5 which is conventionally translated as "knowing good and evil".

He suggests that this presumes a theological ideation such as 'the forces/realm of good' contrasted with 'the forces/realm of evil' as if they have an existence external to us and associated with, in the case of 'evil', an entity

"described in the Hebrew scriptures as a serpent and in LXX as ὄφις, a mythological creature familiar to readers of Hesiod's Theogony and from myths and legends concerning the oracle at Delphi and the Πύθων."

Dissenting, Myatt asks whether,

"in respect of this 'good and evil', might the Greek of LXX - and the Hebrew text - suggest something other than such a theological ideation? That is, how might the Greek text have been understood in its time?"

There follows a lengthy section about (i) the meaning of κάλος and πονηρόν, in respect of which he quotes Homer and Sophocles, and that γινώσκοντες καλὸν καὶ πονηρόν might suggest some contrast between what is beneficial/admirable/beautiful /noble/honourable and what is wearisome/cowardly/dishonourable; (ii) the Hebrew of Genesis 3.5 - generally rendered as "knowing tov and rah" - with tov suggesting pleasing, pleasant, beautiful, and *rah* adversity, unpleasant, harmful, injurious; and (iii) Genesis 8.21 followed by Luke 6.43-5 in Greek with his own translation; and (iv) Aeschylus, Sophocles, and verses from Romans 12 and 13, again in Greek with his own translations.

He concludes the section by writing that

"what these examples reveal - and many other examples from Christian scripture could be adduced - is not abstract, impersonal, theological concepts of 'good' and 'evil' but rather something personal that individuals can relate to and understand, and it is tempting therefore to suggest that it was later, and theological, interpretations and interpolations which led to a harsh dichotomy, an apocalyptic eschatology, a 'war' between an abstract 'good' and 'evil', and that with such interpretations and interpolations - much in evidence in the persecution of alleged heretics - the simple gospel message of the health of love was somehow lost for a while, to be, later on, re-expressed by people such as William Penn, who wrote, in his *Some Fruits of Solitude*, "Let us then try what love can do."

Moving on to the Muslim view, he provides quotations from the Koran in Arabic followed by his own "fallible interpretations of meaning" in English, knowing from his Muslim years not to describe them as 'translations'.

He quotes Surah 5, Ayah 100, Surah 2, Ayah 267, and Surah 2, Ayah 267, the latter of which interprets:

"From what We give you from the earth and from the good things you have earned - disburse; but do not look toward disbursing those defective things, which you would never take [for yourself] unless your eyes were closed."

His view is that

"as with the New Testament, what these examples reveal - and many other examples could be adduced - is not abstract concepts of 'good' and 'evil' but rather something that is understandable by individuals and related to themselves and the world around them."

In his *The Way Of Jesus of Nazareth: A Question Of Hermeneutics?* {9} he expands upon his statement

that "the simple gospel message of the health of love was somehow lost for a while" by referencing his translation of the Gospel of John and concluding that:

What emerges from my own translation – that is, from my particular 'interpretation of meaning' of the Gospel According To John – is rather reminiscent of what individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox, and William Penn wrote and said about Jesus and the spiritual way that the Gospels in particular revealed. This is the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from supra-personal moralistic interpretations based on inflexible notions of 'sin' and thus on what is considered 'good' and what is considered 'evil'.

Hence why he writes that the Gospel of John "contains certain truths not only about our physis as human beings but also about our relation to Being, to the divine, to the numinous."

Thus for Myatt the Gospel of John forms part of what he terms 'the culture of pathei-mathos' {10} with their being

"in this culture of pathei-mathos a particular ethos: the tone of harmony, ἁρμονίη; of a natural balance, or rather of how certain human actions are hubris - ὕβρις - and not only disrupt this needful harmony but also cause or contribute to suffering. Of the importance, and perhaps the primacy, of human love; of how Eris is the child of Polemos and Hubris, and of how a lovelorn Polemos follows Hubris around, never requited. Of how the truths of religions and spiritual ways are, in their genesis, basically simple, always numinous, and most probably the same: guides to living in such a way that we can rediscover the natural balance, appreciate the numinous, and avoid hubris.

In Part Three of *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God* - subtitled *Religion, Law, and The Reformation of Individuals* - Myatt describes how all this, and his analysis Part Two of Islamic and Western jurisprudence, and of the modern State, relates to his philosophy of pathei-mathos. For the culture of pathei-mathos:

"not only provides, as does the modern State, a perspective (and a teleology) unrelated to the judgement of a supreme deity and the promise of an after-life, but also points us toward answers rather different from those provided by proponents of the State, of liberal democracy, and of a jurisprudence concerned with international law and codifying and criminalizing what politicians, and/or some political theory, ideology, dogma, or agenda, deem to be bad.

For what that culture provides is an understanding of how all forms - be they considered political, or codified ideologically or in the form of a dogmatic hierarchical religion - have caused suffering, or do cause suffering sooner or later, because they are judgemental, supra-personal; and that such suffering is unjustified because it is individual human beings and indeed the other life with which we share this planet who and which are important; and that to alleviate and to prevent and remove the causes of suffering is necessary because a manifestation of what is good; that is, a manifestation of reasoned, balanced, compassionate, personal judgement, and of that learning, that knowledge, the insights, that personal experience of conflict, war, disaster, tragedy, havoc, violence, hatred, and pain, have taught and revealed to individuals for some three thousand years."

Which, in his words, leads to

"an understanding of (i) how good and bad are not 'out there' and cannot be manifest or assumed to be manifest in some form, by some ideation, or in 'them' (the others), without causing or contributing to or being the genesis of suffering, but instead are within us as individuals, a part of our nature, our character, our φύσις, and often divergently expressed; and (ii) of how, in my view at least, personal honour and not a codified law, not a jurisprudence, is the best, the most excellent, way to define and manifest this 'good', with honour understood, as in my philosophy of pathei-mathos, as an instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous."

This relates to his understanding of honour as described in the *The Numinous Balance of Honour* section of chapter VI of his *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*. {11}

Which understanding, as with most of his philosophy of pathei-mathos, {12} he frames in terms of classical rather than modern philosophy and thus uses ancient Greek terms:

"In many ways, the personal virtue of honour, and the cultivation of wu-wei, are - together - a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἁρμονίη. For personal honour is essentially a presencing, a grounding, of ψυχή - of Life, of our φύσις - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη."

Myatt's understanding of honour as a personal presencing of the numinous and a consequence of empathy - that is, his understanding of good and evil - may be said to be one ultimately based on experience. For his philosophy:

"is not a conventional, an academic, one where a person intellectually posits or constructs a coherent theory - involving ontology, epistemology, ethics, and so on - often as a result of an extensive dispassionate study, review, or a criticism of the philosophies or views, past and present, advanced by other individuals involved in the pursuit of philosophy as an academic discipline or otherwise. Instead, the philosophy of pathei-mathos is the result of my own pathei-mathos, my own learning from diverse - sometimes outré, sometimes radical and often practical - ways of life and experiences over some four decades; of my subsequent reasoned analysis, over a period of several years, of those ways and those experiences; of certain personal intuitions, spread over several decades, regarding the numinous; of an interior process of personal and moral reflexion, lasting several years and deriving from a personal tragedy; and of my life-long study and appreciation of Hellenic culture."

Which brings us to the core of that experience, the concept of honour, and how experience and his learning from experience caused him to refine it over the decades. From being a codified part of his extremist ideology to being a manifestation, a personal understanding, of the essence of 'the human culture of pathei-mathos'.

This was the 'inner struggle' described in his autobiography *Myngath*, {13} during which Myatt's perception of honour and duty would be changed.

Part Two

Extremism, War, And Honour

In his old writings as a neo-nazi ideologist (1984-1998) and, later (2001-2008) as a Muslim apologist for al-Qaeda and the Taliban, Myatt eulogized Kampf and Jihad, and the role of "the warrior". {14}

This began to change when a personal tragedy led him to his question his extremist past and extremism in general; a questioning he wrote about in his semi-autobiographical 2013 book *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism: A Very Strange Peregrination*. {8}

A passage from that book provides the necessary personal and philosophical context, and a passage I quote in full since it also explains the genesis of his understanding of suffering, of the inhumanity of war, and of extremism in general:

"I have - fully knowing my past hubris, the suffering I have caused, and aware of my manifold errors and mistakes over four decades - a great respect for other religions and spiritual ways, and aware as I am how they each in their own manner, express, have expressed, or are intimations of, the numinous. For instance, I have come to appreciate, more and more over the past few years, the numinosity of the sacred music of the Christian Church (especially Catholicism), from before Gregorian chant to composers such as Byrd, Dowland, Lassus, to Palestrina, to Phillipe de Monte, and beyond. So much so that such sacred music is now the only music I can listen to, out of choice, redolent as it is, has become, for me, of the beautiful, of humility, of tragedy, of a sacred suprapersonal joy, of what is or can be divined through contemplative prayer. A remarkable treasure of culture, of pathei-mathos...

Without such religious, such spiritual, such organized, reminders, daily or weekly - that is, without prayer and without what is perhaps the best that religions and spirituality manifest - how do we balance another need of ours? That need to cause suffering and cry havoc, and a need whose genesis, perhaps, resides in our desire to be, to express, to re-affirm the separation-of-

otherness, manifest as this is and has been in our own self-importance, our egoism, our greed; and in our belief that 'we', our assumed or our assigned category, are better than, superior to, 'them', the others: that 'we' are 'right' or have right on our side while 'they' do not and are wrong, leading as such belief so often does and so often has done to conflict and war and to us treating 'the others' in a dishonourable, uncompassionate, way because we, or those we follow and obey, have dehumanized 'them'. For I now incline toward the view that without such categorization, such assumptions - such a prejudice, such a belief - about 'us' and 'them', without such greed, such self-interest, and such a need to express, to manifest, importance, then war and suffering-causing armed conflict are not possible.

Is humility, therefore and as most religions and spiritual ways inform us, a necessity for us, as human beings? And if so, then how to manifest such humility, to be reminded of such a need, if we, as I now, personally have no expectation of or belief in God, or in Allah - in Heaven or Jannah - or in gods, or even in mechanisms such as rebirth and karma? Such questions have greatly occupied me for the past three years.

Given what I have intuited about our human nature - what many others have intuited or discovered over millennia - and what I believe I may have learned from my own pathei-mathos, I feel humility is indeed a necessity for us, as a means of guiding us toward avoiding causing suffering; as a means of placing our own life in the cosmic perspective of Life. That is, as a means of appreciating our nature as fallible, error-prone, beings who have the ability, the character, to not only refrain from committing the error of hubris but to also rationally understand why hubris is an error and what the numinous may be, beyond ideations and beyond the myths, the allegories, the spiritualities, the words, that we have used and do use in order to try and express it.

As to how to manifest humility - sans religions, sans prayer to a deity or deities, (etcetera) - I admit I do not know, although my [philosophy of pathei-mathos] is my attempt to find, and to try and express, some answers. Fallible answers such as the importance, the numinosity, of personal love; fallible answers such as empathy, and the knowing, the understanding, of others (and of ourselves) that empathy provides and of how such empathy and such empathic knowing is and can only be personal."

Here we have, in what he termed the separation-of-otherness, the basis for his philosophy of pathei-mathos: (i) pathei-mathos, (ii) the knowledge provided by empathy, and (iii) that this knowing is personal and thus cannot form the basis for anything supra-personal such as a political ideology or a religion.

As he explains in that Part One of *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*:

[A]ll extremists accept - and all extremisms are founded on - the instinctive belief or the axiom that their cherished ideation(s) or abstraction(s) is or are more important, more valuable, than the individual and the feelings, desires, hopes, and happiness, of the individual. The extremist thus views and understands the world in terms of abstractions [...]

The abstractions of extremism are manifest in the ideology, which posits or which attempts to explain (however irrationally and intolerantly) some ideated form, some assumed or believed in perfect (ideal) form or category of some-thing, and which ideated form is or can be or should be (according to the ideology) contrasted with what is considered or assumed to be its 'opposite' [...]

The individual, extremist or otherwise, is therefore required to accept - be subservient to - the judgement that the ideology asserts, or which some ideologue proclaims, is correct; for all ideologies denigrate or require (overtly or otherwise) the suspension of individual judgement either in favour of the collective, 'correct', ideological one, or in favour of the judgement of some leader, ideologue, or some 'higher authority'.

What his own pathei-mathos and that of others revealed was:

"a quite simple truth; that what is wrong is causing or contributing to suffering, and that, with (at least in my admittedly fallible opinion) one exception and one exception only we cannot now (again, at least in my admittedly fallible opinion) morally justify intentionally causing or contributing to the suffering of any living being.

How many more centuries - or millennia - will we need? To learn, to change, to cease to cause such suffering as we have for so many millennia caused.

My own life - of four decades of suffering-causing extremism and personal selfishness - is, most certainly, just one more example of our manful capacity to be stupid and hubriatic. To fail to learn from the pathei-mathos of human culture, even though I personally had the advantages of a living in diverse cultures and of a 'classical education', and thus was taught or became familiar with the insights of Lao Tzu, of Siddhartha Gautama, of Jesus of Nazareth, of Sappho, Sophocles, Aeschylus, Cicero, Livy, Marcus Aurelius, Dante Alighieri, Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, TS Eliot, EM Forster, and so many others; and even though I had the opportunity to discover, to participate in, and thus felt, the numinosity, the learning, inherent in so many other things, from plainchant to Byrd, Dowland, Palestrina, Tallis, to JS Bach and beyond. And yet, despite all these advantages, all these chances to learn, to evolve, I remained hubriatic; selfish, arrogant, in thrall to ideations, and like so many men somewhat addicted to the joy, to the pleasures, of Kampf, placing pursuit of that pleasure, or some cause, or some ideation, or my own needs, before loved ones, family, friends. Only learning, only finally and personally learning, after a death too far."

Honour And Empathy

During Myatt's National Socialist years his perception of honour was of it as "the natural instinct for nobility made conscious and this is done through a Code of Honour" {15} which laid down rules of behaviour such as being reserved in public and not given to displays of emotion."

During his "inner struggle" between 2006 and 2009 such an impersonal written codification with its rules or commandments was at odds with the individual learning inherent in the culture of pathei-mathos:

"One uncomfortable truth from which even I with all my sophistry could not contrive to hide from myself, even though I tried, for a while. The truth that I am indebted. That I have a debt of personal honour to both Fran and to Sue, who died - thirteen years apart - leaving me bereft of love, replete with sorrow, and somewhat perplexed. A debt to all those other women who, over four decades, I have hurt in a personal way; a debt to the Cosmos itself for the suffering I have caused and inflicted through the unethical pursuit of abstractions.

A debt somehow and in some way - beyond a simple remembrance of them - to especially make the life and death of Sue and Fran worthwhile and full of meaning, as if their tragic early dying meant something to both me, and through my words, my deeds, to others. A debt of change, of learning - in me, so that from my pathei- mathos I might be, should be, a better person; presencing through words, living, thought, and deeds, that simple purity of life felt, touched, known, in those stark moments of the immediacy of their loss.

But this honour, I have so painfully discovered, is not the abstract honour of years, of decades, past that I in my arrogance and stupid adherence to and love of abstractions so foolishly believed in and upheld, being thus, becoming thus, as I was a cause of suffering. No; this instead is the essence of honour, founded in empathy; in an empathy with and thus a compassion for all life, sentient and otherwise. This is instead a being human; being in symbiosis with that-which is the essence of our humanity and which can, could and should, gently evolve us." {16}

In 2014 he expressed his understanding more philosophically, writing that personal honour

"presences the virtues of fairness, tolerance, compassion, humility, and εὐταξία - as (i) a natural intuitive (wordless) expression of the numinous ('the good', δίκη, συμπάθεια) and (ii) of both what the culture of pathei-mathos and the acausal-knowing of empathy reveal we should do (or incline us toward doing) in the immediacy of the personal moment when personally confronted by what is unfair, unjust, and extreme.

Of how such honour - by its and our φύσις - is and can only ever be personal, and thus cannot be extracted out from the 'living moment' and our participation in the moment; for it is only through such things as a personal study of the culture of pathei-mathos and the development of the faculty of empathy that a person who does not naturally possess the instinct for δίκη can develop what is essentially 'the human faculty of honour', and which faculty is often appreciated and/or discovered via our own personal pathei-mathos." {17}

This "cannot be extracted out from the living moment" also applies to empathy since

"empathy is a human faculty mean that the apprehension is wordless and personal and cannot be extrapolated beyond, or abstracted out from, the individual without losing some or all of its numinosity since the process of denotatum - of abstraction - devolves around the meanings

assigned to words, terms, and names, and which meanings can and do vary over causal time and may be (mis)interpreted by others often on the basis of some idea, or theory, or on some comparative exegesis." {18}

Furthermore, when asked in a 2022 interview:

"You appear to have forged an existential crucible from which many now draw inspiration. How would you like to see that inspiration embodied in the lives of those who look up to you?" {19}

Myatt's answer was:

"Just as my fallible understanding is that honour cannot be abstracted from a personal moment to become some sort of principle or guide, so my similar fallible understanding is that a person who learns by means of pathei-mathos cannot be or rather should not become such a guide or even an example and certainly should not assume any sort of guiding role."

In the same interview when asked where does he philosophically situate his own paganus weltanschauung, he replied:

"I do not situate my weltanschauung anywhere in terms defined or believed or discussed by others, ancient or modern, because it is just my weltanschauung, born from various experiences and the loss of loved ones, and nurtured by working and living on a farm in England, by solitary walks along a sea-shore and in the hills and deciduous woods of English Shires."

Which answers express the *raison d'être* of his philosophy: the personal pathei-mathos of one person and, as he also says in that 2022 interview, his "attempt at expiation".

Conclusion

Those answers in that 2022 interview return us to where we began: with his defence, based on personal experience, of Catholicism, and with his 2013 text *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*, the first chapter of which, titled *Numinous Expiation*, invokes the dilemma he faced when confronting his extremist past:

"One of the many problems regarding my own past which troubles me - and has troubled me for a while - is how can a person make reparation for suffering caused, inflicted, and/or dishonourable deeds done. For, in the person of empathy, of compassion, of honour, a knowledge and understanding of dishonour done, of the suffering one has caused - perhaps before one became such a person of compassion, honour, and empathy - is almost invariably the genesis of strong personal feelings such as remorse, grief, and sorrow. The type of strong feelings that Christopher Marlowe has Iarbus, King of Gaetulia, voice at the end of the play *The Tragedie of Dido Queene of Carthage*, written c.1587:

Cursed Iarbas, die to expiate
The grief that tires upon thine inward soul.

One of the many benefits of an organized theistic religion, such as Christianity or Islam or Judaism, is that mechanisms of personal expiation exist whereby such feelings can be placed in context and expiated by appeals to the supreme deity. In Judaism, there is Teshuvah culminating in Yom Kippur, the day of expiation/reconciliation. In Catholicism, there is the sacrament of confession and penance. In Islam, there is personal *dua* to, and reliance on, Allah Ar-Rahman, Ar-Raheem, As-Salaam.

Even pagan religions and ways had mechanisms of personal expiation for wrong deeds done, often in the form of propitiation; the offering of a sacrifice, perhaps, or compensation by the giving or the leaving of a valuable gift or votive offering at some numinous - some sacred and venerated - place or site."

The only answers Myatt could find were his pagan philosophy of pathei-mathos {3} and his writings about rejecting extremism. That certain academics and persons of a particular political persuasion have prejudicially rejected his answers surely reveals something significant about them.

Rachael Stirling
January 2023

References

URL's valid as of January 2023

{1} *In Their Prejudice They Prefer To Prejudge*, <https://concerningmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/09/dm-prejudged.pdf>

{2} *The Urban Tale Of Myatt And Long*, <https://concerningmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/09/urban-tale-myatt-o9a-v7a.pdf>

{3} The pagan nature of Myatt's philosophy is comprehensibly described in *The Pagan Philosophy Of David Myatt*, which includes the monograph *Western Paganism And Hermeticism: Myatt And The Renaissance of Western Culture*. <https://concerningmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/09/myatt-paganism.pdf>

{4} The use of the English term numinous dates from the 17th century, and Myatt explains his understanding of the numinous in his essay *From Mythoi To Empathy*:

"that it is primarily a perceivation, not a personal emotion or feeling, not a mysterium, and not an idea in the sense of Plato's εἶδος and thus is not similar to Kant's concept of *a priori*. As a perceivation, while it includes an apprehension of what is often referred to as 'the divine', 'the holy' - and sometimes thus is an apprehension of theos or theoi - it is not limited to such apprehensions, since as in the past it is often an intimation of, an intuition concerning, the natural balance of ψυχή; a balance which ὕβρις [hubris] upsets. This natural balance - our being as human beings - is or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful." *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, seventh edition, 2022, pp.38-41, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

{5} <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/religion-and-empathy.pdf>

{6} <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2018/09/09/persecution-and-war/>

{7} <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/in-defence-rc-1.pdf>

{8} *Understanding And Rejecting Extremism*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/david-myatt-rejecting-extremism.pdf>

{9} <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/09/30/the-way-of-jesus-of-nazareth/>

{10} Myatt describes this culture in the following terms:

"The pathei-mathos of individuals over thousands of years, often described in literature, poetry, memoirs, aural stories, and often expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, has resulted in an accumulation of insights; what we might with some justification describe as a culture, which, while often redolent of the spiritual, is not religious. That is, not doctrinal, not codified, not organized, and not presenting or manifesting a theology. A culture that is supra-national, containing as it does, among many other treasures, the observations of Lao Tzu, Siddhartha Gautama, Ovid, and Mohandas K. Gandhi; the thoughts of Aeschylus, Sappho, and Sophocles; the writings of Marcus Aurelius and Jane Austen; the allegory, the mysterium, of Jesus of Nazareth; and, importantly, the experiences - written, recorded, and aural - of those who over the centuries have endured suffering, conflict, disaster, tragedy, and war, and who were forever changed by the experience."

{11} *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, seventh edition, 2022, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

{12} This use of Greek terms, sometimes transliterated, sometimes not, makes his philosophy not only rather distinct among modern philosophies but also often obscure. In his defence, Myatt writes that

"the philosophy of πάθει μάθος has certain connexions to Hellenic culture and I tend therefore to use certain Greek words in order to try and elucidate my meaning and/or to express certain philosophical principles regarded as important in - and for an understanding of - this philosophy; a usage of words which I have

endeavoured to explain as and where necessary, sometimes by quoting passages from Hellenic literature or other works and by providing translations of such passages. For it would be correct to assume that the ethos of this philosophy is somewhat indebted to and yet - and importantly - is also a development of the ethos of Hellenic culture; an indebtedness obvious in notions such as δίκη, πάθει μάθος, avoidance of ὕβρις, and references to Heraclitus, Aeschylus, and others, and a development manifest in notions such as empathy and the importance attached to the virtue of compassion." Introduction to Part Two of *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, seventh edition, 2022, op.cit.

As with the philosophy of Heidegger, who also uses Greek terms and certain words, such as Dasein, in a particular philosophical way, Myatt's philosophy requires serious study.

{13} David Myatt, *Myngath*, 2013, pp.65-67, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/david-myatt-myngath.pdf>

{14} Rachael Stirling's *The Peregrinations Of David Myatt: National Socialist Ideologist* chronicles Myatt's extremist decades with quotations from his neo-nazi and Islamist writings.
<https://concerningmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/09/dm-ns-ideologue-second-edition.pdf>

{15} *The Meaning of National-Socialism*, included in *Selected National Socialist Writings Of David Myatt*, <https://archive.org/download/myatt-selected-ns-writings1/myatt-selected-ns-writings1.pdf>

{16} *Myngath*, pp.80-81, op.cit.

{17} *The Way Of Pathei-Mathos - A Précis*, included in his book *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*, 2014. A gratis pdf version is available at <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/one-vagabond-pathei-mathos.pdf>

{18} *From Mythoi To Empathy*, 2018. Included in *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, seventh edition, 2022, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

{19} *What is the Meaning of Myatt?* Included in *Three 2022 Interviews*, <https://concerningmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/11/dm-three-interviews.pdf>

The Question Of David Myatt And Expiation



One of the central themes of David Myatt's extensive post-2012 writings is expiation; of finding some means by which the mistakes of his past, of his forty or so years of political and religious extremism, may be offset or recompensed. Myatt, in his 2013 text *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos: Spirituality, Humility, and A Learning From Grief*, {1} devotes a whole chapter to expiation and his concerns, writing that:

One of the many problems regarding my own past which troubles me - and has troubled me for a while - is how can a person make reparation for suffering caused, inflicted, and/or dishonourable deeds done. For, in the person of empathy, of compassion, of honour, a knowledge and understanding of dishonour done, of the suffering one has caused - perhaps before one became such a person of compassion, honour, and empathy - is almost invariably the genesis of strong personal feelings such as remorse, grief, and sorrow [...]

One of the many benefits of an organized theistic religion, such as Christianity or Islam or Judaism, is that mechanisms of personal expiation exist whereby such feelings can be placed in context and expiated by appeals to the supreme deity. In Judaism, there is Teshuvah culminating in Yom Kippur, the day of expiation/reconciliation. In Catholicism, there is the sacrament of confession and penance. In Islam, there is personal dua to, and reliance on, Allah Ar-Rahman, Ar-Raheem, As-Salaam.

Even pagan religions and ways had mechanisms of personal expiation for wrong deeds done, often in the form of propitiation; the offering of a sacrifice, perhaps, or compensation by the giving or the leaving of a valuable gift or votive offering at some numinous - some sacred and venerated - place or site [...]

All such religious mechanisms of expiation, whatever the theology and regardless of the motivation of the individual in seeking such expiation, are or can be cathartic; restorative, healing. But if there is no personal belief in either a supreme deity or in deities, how then to numinously make reparation, propitiation, and thus to not only expiate such feelings as remorse, grief, and sorrow but also and importantly offset the damage one's wrong actions have caused, since by their very nature such suffering-causing actions are ὄβρις and not only result in harm, in people suffering, but also upset the natural balance. In truth, I do not know the answer to the question how to so numinously make reparation, propitiation. I can only conject, surmise [...]

In relation to his own beliefs, or lack of them, the important section is:

"if there is no personal belief in either a supreme deity or in deities, how then to numinously make reparation, propitiation, and thus to not only expiate such feelings as remorse, grief, and sorrow but also and importantly offset the damage one's wrong actions have caused." {1}

The answer he apparently settles on is to write about his past, about his regrets, about his decades of extremism; and how he came to reject such extremism, political and religious; with his philosophy of pathei-mathos being, for him, expiative:

"In a very personal sense, my philosophy of pathei-mathos is expiative, as are my writings concerning

extremism, such as my *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism: A Very Strange Peregrination*." {2}

"After 2006, I increasingly felt compelled to develop [that philosophy] in expiation, in search of answers, and in an effort to understand myself, my extremist pasts, and the suffering I finally came to realize I had caused. {3}

Never Forgive?

Are such expiatory writings by Myatt sufficient? His many political enemies do not believe so, for one or more of the following reasons. Firstly, because of their ideological axiom "never forgive, never forget" which in practice, on the human level, means that they are unable or unwilling to forgive him, and can be vindictive, vengeful, with hatred and prejudice motivating their actions and their deeds.

Secondly, because their prejudice and hatred motivates many of them to believe his post-2012 writings are lies, a deception. Thirdly, because of their zealous certitude that he, despite his denials, is Anton Long and the founder of the occultic Order of Nine Angles (O9A, ONA) and has never publicly condemned it or its policies such as support for the 'culling' of certain humans.

In respect of such people Myatt wrote, in 2012,

"are those who in the past have prejudged me - who have written about me as a violent extremist - accepting of individual change, of the virtues of reformation and pardonance? [...] Are they open to the possibility of my change and reformation? Or will they continue with 'the party line' and thus continue to insist that I am some sinister person whose recent mystical writings are just some sort of diabolical ploy?

More interestingly (perhaps) could my career as an extremist have been brought to an earlier end had one or some of my opponents taken the trouble to get to know me personally and rationally revealed to me the error of my suffering-causing, unethical, extremist ways? Perhaps; perhaps not - I admit I do not know. I do know, however, how my personal interaction with, and the ethical behaviour of, the Police I interacted with from the time of my arrest by officers from SO12 in 1998, permanently changed (for the better) my attitude toward the Police." {4}

Two years later he would write:

"I harbour no resentment against individuals, or organizations, or groups, who over the past forty or so years have publicly and/or privately made negative or derogatory comments about me or published items making claims about me. Indeed, I now find myself in the rather curious situation of not only agreeing with some of my former political opponents on many matters, but also (perhaps) of understanding (and empathizing with) their motivation; a situation which led and which leads me to appreciate even more just how lamentable my extremism was and just how arrogant, selfish, wrong, and reprehensible, I as a person was, and how in many ways many of those former opponents were and are (ex concessio) better people than I ever was or am.

Which is one reason why I have written what I have recently written about extremism and my extremist past: so that perchance someone or some many may understand extremism, and its causes, better and thus be able to avoid the mistakes I made, avoid causing the suffering I caused; or be able to in some way more effectively counter or prevent such extremism in the future." {5}

In respect of founding a covert Occult group in the 1970s, Myatt's explanation has always been that his purpose was for it to be used to aid National Socialism, and which explanation is both explicit and expressive of his extremist, immoral and fanatical belief at the time that any means were justified in the political and revolutionary struggle he believed in and was then fighting:

"In respect of covert action, I came to the conclusion, following some discussions with some C88 members, that two different types of covert groups, with different strategy and tactics, might be very useful in our struggle and thus aid us directly or aid whatever right-wing political party might serve as a cover for introducing NS policies or which could be used to advance our cause. These covert groups would not be paramilitary and thus would not resort to using armed force since that option was already covered, so far as I was then concerned, by C88.

The first type of covert group would essentially be a honeytrap, to attract non-political people who might be or who had the potential to be useful to the cause even if, or especially if, they had to be 'blackmailed' or persuaded into doing so at some future time. The second type of covert group would be devoted to establishing a small cadre of NS fanatics, of 'sleepers', to - when the time was right - be disruptive or generally subversive.

Nothing came of this second idea, and the few people I recruited during 1974 for the second group, migrated to help the first group, established the previous year. However, from the outset this first group was beset with problems for - in retrospect - two quite simple reasons, both down to me. First, my lack of leadership skills, and, second, the outer nature chosen for the group which was of a secret Occult group with the 'offer', the temptation, of sexual favours from female members in a ritualized Occult setting, with some of these female members being 'on the game' and associated with someone who was associated with my small gang of thieves." {6}

In effect, Myatt is concatenating his founding of an Occult movement, which he does not name, with his political and religious extremism and with his rejection of all extremism with the result, although unstated, that he apparently considers such a manifestation of Occultism as just another extremism. Perhaps unsurprisingly this concatenation does not satisfy his political opponents, and Myatt was asked about this in regard to his past as a neo-nazi in a 2022 interview:

RS: Yet your many vociferous politically motivated opponents have not accepted that you have rejected extremism with many still considering you a neo-nazi. Does that bother you?

DM: No. For judging by their deeds and words they live in a different world from the one I now inhabit or rather that I now perceive. My perceivation is a very local and personal one; of my locality, of Nature and its local emanations; of my relatives and friends and my interactions with and concern for them. That other world beyond - or should that be those other worlds beyond - this local personal world no longer concern me given my plenitude of past mistakes, my past hubriatic suffering-causing interference, and my recently discovered Uncertainty Of Knowing.

They, those opponents, in comparison seem to have that Certitude Of Knowing that I for many decades had, breeding as it did and does prejudice, intolerance, hatred, and discouraging as it did and does empathy, forgiveness, and a personal Uncertainty Of Knowing. {7}

In another interview he was asked a similar question:

[T]hey claim you are still a neo-nazi; that what you write and have written since 2010 such as your autobiography should be treated with suspicion and not taken seriously; that unless you come out in public to attend some sort of 'media circus' and directly answer their questions, they will never believe you.

Myatt replied:

φημί ἐγώ, Μαθεῖν θέλω τὰ ὄντα καὶ νοῆσαι τὴν τούτων φύσιν καὶ γινῶναι τὸν θεόν·

Such a seeking to apprehend such things is what now and for the past twenty or so years has occupied me [...] As for what they or others claim or believe about me now and the past, it is their burden howsoever brought-into-being, howsoever nurtured and howsoever it might be described by them or by others. {7}

It is possible, therefore, to conclude, especially given their silence about Myatt's post-2012 writings about Christianity, that such opponents are acting in an intolerant way inconsistent with the message of the Christian gospels and what many, including Myatt, believe is the gospel message of forgiveness.

Christianity And The Gospels

To many it seems strange that the later Myatt, manifest in his post-2012 writings, would write positively about Christianity and especially about Catholicism, given the widespread and decades-long and often politically motivated accusations of him being a 'satanist'. These writings include his three-part *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*, {8} *Miserere Mei, Deus*, {9} and his translation of and commentary of chapter one to five of the Gospel of John. {10}

In this respect, a section in his *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism: A Very Strange Peregrination* is relevant:

"I have - fully knowing my past hubris, the suffering I have caused, and aware of my manifold errors and mistakes over four decades - a great respect for other religions and spiritual ways, and aware as I am how they each in their own manner, express, have expressed, or are intimations of, the numinous. For instance, I have come to appreciate, more and more over the past few years, the numinosity of the sacred music of the Christian Church (especially Catholicism), from before Gregorian chant to composers such as Byrd, Dowland, Lassus, to Palestrina, to Phillippe de Monte, and beyond." {11}

In his *The Way Of Jesus of Nazareth* he provides his interpretation of the Gospel of John:

"What emerges from my own translation - that is, from my particular 'interpretation of meaning' of the Gospel According To John - is rather reminiscent of what individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox, and William Penn wrote and said about Jesus and the spiritual way that the Gospels in particular revealed. This is the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from supra-personal moralistic interpretations based on inflexible notions of 'sin' and thus on what is considered good and what is considered evil." {12}

One of most recent writings expresses his feelings in regard to Christianity:

"The liturgical season of The Passion is upon us again and I find myself appreciating once more how the numinous allegory of The Passion was presented in liturgical music from the Graduale *Christus Factus Est* to Vittoria's *Popule meus, quid feci tibi* - Ἅγιος ὁ Θεός, Ἅγιος ἰσχυρός, Ἅγιος ἀθάνατος, ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς - to Scarlatti's Stabat Mater to JS Bach's St John and Matthew Passions. And I reminded so movingly of - when a monk - singing Tenebrae amid the flickering then extinguished light of candles...

So much human suffering for so many millennia which the allegory of The Passion of Jesus of Nazareth reminded so many of, century after century; as it reminded me several times in the depths of my decades of extremism. In comparison with such numinous music, liturgical and otherwise, what is my own wordy

weltanschauung of pathei-mathos worth? Very little it now seems to me, if anything at all." {13}

However, so far his political opponents have not commented on, or possibly not read, such writings perhaps because, as I assume, they consider them just another part of the 'diabolical ploy', the deception, they believe and claim are his post-2012 writings. Which silence is perhaps one more expression of their prejudice, hatred, and un-Christian attitude, although to many unbiased readers such writings are indicative of a person who is not only remorseful but able to understand and place his own life into a wider human perspective.

A Lingering Influence

That Myatt despite his post-writings and rejection of all extremism, political, religious, and Occult, has a lingering influence on extremists both neo-nazi and Occult, with for example "most of his neo-nazi writings are still essential reading in many militant far-right groups and circles" {14} may partly explain the ideological, 'hard-line', attitude of many of his opponents.

Is such influence Myatt's fault or the fault of his opponents with their 'never forgive' attitude and their prejudicial assumption that those post-2012 writings are a deception? Given that Myatt's post-2012 writings are voluminous and consistent in content over a period of ten years with his philosophy of pathei-mathos also consistent with his rejection of extremism, the logical answer would seem to be that it is such prejudicial ones, with their continual propagation of their unfounded allegations, who are at fault.

Perhaps it will take several scholarly, unbiased, studies of those writings and that philosophy to redress the balance although given the current state of academia where certain matters are verboten such studies may be many decades in the future.

Rachael Stirling
June 2023

{1} <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/religion-and-empathy.pdf>

{2} *Some Questions For DWM, March 2014*. <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/dwm-2014-questions.pdf>

Myatt's philosophy is outlined in the seventh edition of his *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

{3} The quotation is from page 72 of Myatt's 2013 autobiography *Myngath*. <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/david-myatt-myngath.pdf>

{4} *A Matter Of Honour*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/08/a-matter-of-honour.pdf>

{5} *Pathei-Mathos - Genesis of My Unknowing*, 2012, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2012/06/23/pathei-mathos-genesis-of-my-unknowing/>

{6} *Ethos of Extremism*, 2012, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2017/10/ethos-extremism-extracts.pdf>

{7} *An Uncertitude Of Knowing, Four Interviews With David Myatt*, 2023. International Standard Book Number 979-8394746574

{8} <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/in-defence-rc-1.pdf>

{9} <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2013/03/10/miserere-mei-deus/>

{10} His translation and commentary of chapters one to five of the Gospel of John is available at <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2017/10/gospel-of-john-1-5.pdf>

{11} *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/david-myatt-rejecting-extremism.pdf>

{12} <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/09/30/the-way-of-jesus-of-nazareth/>

{13} *Tenebrae*, April 2023. <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2023/04/06/tenebrae/>

{14} Daniel Koehler. *From Traitor to Zealot: Exploring the Phenomenon of Side-Switching in Extremism and Terrorism*. Cambridge University Press, 2021. p.162

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Image credit: David Myatt, 1995, visiting a Catholic Church

Scholarship, Primary Sources, And Mr Myatt

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Aristotelis Hermeneutica Analytica Elenctica

Εστί δὴ τῶν ἐν τῷ διαλέγεσθαι λόγων τέτταρα γένη, διδασκαλικοί καὶ διαλεκτικοί καὶ πειραστικοί καὶ ἐριστικοί [...]

διδασκαλικοὶ μὲν οἱ ἐκ τῶν οἰκείων ἀρχῶν ἐκάστου μαθήματος καὶ οὐκ ἐκ τῶν τοῦ ἀποκρινομένου δοξῶν συλλογιζόμενοι (δεῖ γὰρ πιστεῦειν τὸν μανθάνοντα), διαλεκτικοὶ δ' οἱ ἐκ τῶν ἐνδόξων συλλογιστικοὶ ἀντιφάσεως, πειραστικοὶ δ' οἱ ἐκ τῶν δοκούντων τῶν ἀποκρινομένων καὶ ἀναγκῶν εἰδέναι τὸ προσποιούμενόν ἔχειν τὴν ἐπιστήμην (δύ τρόπον δὲ, διώρισται ἐν ἐτέροις), ἐριστικοὶ δ' οἱ ἐκ τῶν φαινομένων ἐνδόξων μὴ ὄντων δὲ συλλογιστικοὶ ἢ φαινόμενοι συλλογιστικοί. περὶ μὲν οὖν τῶν ἀποδεικτικῶν ἐν τοῖς ἀναλυτικοῖς εἴρηται, περὶ δὲ τῶν διαλεκτικῶν καὶ πειραστικῶν ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις· περὶ δὲ τῶν ἀγωνιστικῶν καὶ ἐριστικῶν νῦν λέγωμεν.

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Scholarship And Primary Sources

A study of primary sources is the scholarly, the civilized, way for an individual to understand, to acquire a learned knowledge of a subject, such as a philosophy or a weltanschauung be such a weltanschauung a spiritual or a religious one. Thus to understand in such an individual, civilized, way the religion of Christianity a detailed study of the four gospels in their original language is required since they are primary sources in respect of that religion given that Christian tradition considers them the oldest and most reliable sources. Similarly, to understand in such a way a philosophy such as that of Immanuel Kant a study of his writings, and his writings alone and in their original language is necessary, since to rely on the translations of others is to rely on the interpretation of those others, as is considering and giving weight to the opinions or the conclusions of others regarding Kant's philosophy.

To be learned, to be a scholar in the traditional sense, is to have a profound knowledge gained by study.

Scholarly (skɒˈlɹli), *a.* [f. SCHOLAR + -LY¹.]
Not in Johnson or Todd.
Pertaining to, or characterizing, a scholar; befit-
ting, or natural to, a scholar; learned, erudite.

Learned:

2. Of a person: In early use, that has been taught; instructed, educated. In later use with nar-
rowed sense: Having profound knowledge gained
by study, esp. in language or some department of
literary or historical science; deeply-read, erudite.
Const. *in*, † *of*. (Superseding the earlier LERED.)
Learned society: a society formed for the prosecution of
some branch of learning or science.

However, in this era where the interpretations, the opinions, the often fallaciously made conclusions, of others are readily available by means of printed articles and books, by the Media, and by mediums such as the Internet, this scholarly, civilized, rational, slow way to acquire a balanced knowledge and understanding of a subject is a dying, unpopular, Cræft {1} even in academia. For the designation 'academic' in this era does not necessarily imply that a person who is employed in academia is learned, erudite, in a particular subject as for example the scholar Richard Jebb was erudite in Ancient Greek. Instead, it is often the case that a published work by a modern academic is not based on their own detailed scholarly research {2} using primary sources {3} but on the opinions, or the conclusions, of others, and thus often on fallacies such as Appeal to Authority. {4}

The particular Cræft under consideration was, in the early decades of the twentieth century, practised by many if not most of what are now described as 'intelligence' or security service agencies but has become deprecated because as experience has revealed the political paymasters of such agencies do not want to be informed of what may contradict their political agenda and personal opinions but only of what may be politically or personally advantageous to them and their government, and if some analyst provides an inconvenient report then politicians, as they have done multiple times recently in regard to Western actions in Iraq and Afghanistan, have no hesitation in censoring or concealing or denying the truth in the belief that through manipulation of the Media that truth will 'go away' or that certain documents will 'go missing' or that it will be officially suppressed for fifty years or more under what is known, in Britain, as the fifty year rule.

This deprecation of the scholarly Cræft is particularly evident in the case of Wikipedia.

Wikipedia

In the last decade or so the Internet articles which are collected together under the term Wikipedia - the so-called "free encyclopedia that anyone can edit" - have become the first and often the only source most people turn to find out about a subject or an event or a group or an individual partly because, given massive financial and other support to the Wikipedia Foundation from the corporate worldwide business Google (with an annual revenue, as of 2023, around US\$200 billion) Wikipedia items always appear at the top of internet searches using Google Search as they invariably do when other 'search engines' are used given the volume of traffic to Wikipedia generated by Google Search.

But this support by Google comes at a cost, as evident in the criteria Wikipedia uses for what they regard as a 'reliable

source'. Their criteria is to reject primary sources in favour of interpretive secondary and tertiary source material produced by established publishers or by news media (including digital, on-line ones) whose authors are regarded by the often anonymous editors of Wikipedia as authoritative about a subject simply because their items are published by such publishers and news media or have appeared elsewhere in the mass media. Thus opinion pieces by academics, by journalists and others which meet the Wikipedia criteria of being such secondary or tertiary sources provide the basis for Wikipedia articles even if the authors of cited books or articles commit fallacies such as the Appeal To Authority and the Fallacy of Incomplete Evidence and have not used primary sources as the basis for their conclusions.

The consequence is that most of those using Wikipedia unknowing commit the fallacy of Appeal To Authority, relying as they do on the opinions and conclusions of others and thus on secondary and tertiary sources.

This reliance on such a mass media source as Wikipedia is indicative of our era for two reasons. Firstly, because it is a radical departure from the civilized, rational, way of personally acquiring a balanced knowledge and understanding of a subject or a person by using primary sources or by searching for books and items written by those who are scholars and thus who have used primary sources and drawn conclusions based on logical reasoning. Secondly, because such reliance is invariably a reliance on what has become or appears to be the accepted public or Establishment opinion {5} about a subject or a person often based as such an opinion is on propaganda, and thus is an example of the fallacy of ad populum which is when a person 'follows the crowd' and believes or claims that because so many others have claimed or believe something it is probably true, as in the old proverb 'no smoke without fire'.

Thus, far from being used by many to access knowledge of a scholarly nature, the Internet and digital resources such as Wikipedia are used by the majority to access what has become the accepted public or Establishment opinion about a subject or a person.

A Modern Example

In the matter of Wikipedia an example of their use of secondary and tertiary sources, and thus of opinion pieces by journalists, politicians, academics and others, is the article about the controversial modern figure David Myatt, former neo-nazi activist and ideologue, former Catholic monk, former supporter of bin Laden and the Taliban, and apparently now a reformed extremist who has developed a mystical philosophy centred around virtues such as compassion and empathy.

The Wikipedia article relies almost entirely on secondary and tertiary sources; provides no link to Myatt's current weblog, and no quotations from his recent writings. Instead, it is dominated by the allegation of him being "the political and religious leader of the White nationalist theistic Satanist organization [the] Order of Nine Angles".

As 'evidence' for this allegation the secondary and tertiary sources include mainstream published opinion pieces by antifascists and journalists; citations to reports and articles by government sponsored policy groups such as the Combating Terrorism Center at the Establishment-run West Point Military Academy; and academics such as Goodrick-Clarke and Senholt.

Yet when examined, none of these secondary and tertiary sources provide any probative evidence for the accusations they make. Pertinent examples are:

° The referenced report by the Combating Terrorism Center simply states that "the O9A is a occultist current founded by David Myatt in the late 1960s in the United Kingdom," with their only citation being a book by Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke. However, on examination, that cited book provides no evidence from primary sources.

For Goodrick-Clarke's identification of Myatt as 'Anton Long' - in his book *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism, and the Politics of Identity*, NYU Press, 2003 - is solely based on his claim that Myatt was the author of a typescript titled *Diablerie*, a copy of which is in the British Library, General Reference Collection Cup.711/742, BNB GB9219567. However, he provided no evidence, no sources, for this claim of his, or for his other claims such as that "the ONA was founded by David Myatt" and that Myatt was "a long time devotee of satanism."

Goodrick-Clarke also failed to research and provide any documentary evidence from primary sources regarding Myatt's life so that it could be compared to the life described in the *Diablerie* manuscript; he failed to ask Myatt himself about the manuscript which Myatt his 2012 text *A Matter of Honour* denounced as a work of fiction. {6}

The fact that Goodrick-Clarke's book is and has often been cited as 'proof' that DM=AL thus provides another classic example of the fallacy of appeal to authority.

° That Jacob Senholt is cited and quoted as writing that "ONA-inspired activities, led by protagonist David Myatt, managed to enter the scene of grand politics and the global War On Terror" and yet Senholt, as described in Appendix One of our article, not only failed to provide evidence from primary sources but committed the fallacy of Incomplete Evidence.

° In regard to Myatt's rejection of extremism, the citation is not to primary sources written by Myatt since 2012 but to a secondary source: an article by Daveed Gartenstein-Ross & Madeleine Blackman, with Daveed Gartenstein-Ross in a later, 2023, article - *The Order of Nine Angles: Cosmology, Practice & Movement*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2023.2186737> - claiming that "[Anton] Long's writings display thematic and linguistic similarities to those of Myatt" while not providing details of what these similarities are, nor any evidential facts regarding them nor providing any citations to where such similarities have been analysed and evidential facts presented. We can only presume that the now discredited assumptions of Senholt - qv. Appendix One below - were the source.

° In regard to opinion pieces by lay-persons, a 2003 book by a journalist - *Into a World of Hate* by Nick Ryan - is

mentioned although the claims made by the author, such as that Myatt wrote "the publicly available teachings of the ONA under the pseudonym Anton Long", are simply the author's personal opinion with no scholarly citations given to support them. Which mention of such a book by a lay-person is yet another example of how the editors of the Wikipedia article about Myatt commit the fallacy of Appeal to Authority.

The logical conclusion is that the Wikipedia article about Myatt, based as it is on secondary and tertiary sources, is unbalanced, remiss, failing as it does to cite or provide quotations from primary sources such as Myatt's extensive post-2012 writings {7} referencing as it does only the accepted Establishment opinion about him evident in such government and corporate sponsored policy groups such as the Combating Terrorism Center. Hence why the minimal reference in the Wikipedia article about Myatt having rejected extremism and developed his own philosophy is not to Myatt's writings on the matter but to interpretive secondary sources such as a 2012 book by Roger Griffin titled *Terrorist's Creed: Fanatical Violence and the Human Need for Meaning*.

Conclusion

Is this examination such as we have conducted just a pedantic aside which can easily be ignored in the maelström of the modern world with its rapid easily accessible transmission, and acceptance of, personal opinion and propaganda?

We believe it is not a pedantic aside, for the reliance on secondary and tertiary sources, the committal by politicians, journalists and even by academics of fallacies of reasoning, expose how our Western civilization has apparently declined because we have forsaken its core essentials: scholarship, logical reasoning, and the Aristotelian essentials which are:

- (i) Reality (existence) exists independently of us and our consciousness, and thus independent of our senses;
- (ii) our limited understanding of this independent 'external world' depends for the most part upon our senses – that is, on what we can see, hear or touch; that is, on what we can observe or come to know via our senses;
- (iii) logical argument, or reason, is perhaps the most important means to knowledge and understanding of and about this 'external world';
- (iv) the cosmos (existence) is, of itself, a reasoned order subject to rational laws.

Essentials also expressed in relation to science by Isaac Newton in his *Principia*,

"We are to admit no more causes of natural things than such as are both true and sufficient to explain their appearance [...] for Nature is pleased with simplicity, and affects not the pomp of superfluous causes."

To conclude, we would controversially claim that David Myatt, object of much Establishment propaganda as exemplified in the Wikipedia article about him, is in his later life one modern example of the *raison d'être* of our Western civilization, as evident in such post-2012 writings of his as (i) *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, (ii) *The Gospel According To John: A Translation And Commentary*, Chapters 1-5; (iii) *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*; and (iv) *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*.

All of which writings, available both in print and on his weblog, are not even mentioned in that Wikipedia article or even by academics.

Haereticus Reputandus

September 2023

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{1} Cræft: this older spelling implies more than the modern usage associated with the word 'craft'.

III. † 5. The learning of the schools, scholarship. b. (with *a* and *pl.*) A branch of learning or knowledge, a science. *The seven crafts*: the 'seven arts' of the mediæval Universities: see ART 7. *Obs.*

c 1205 LAY. 10923 On bocken heo cuðe godne cræft. *Ibid.* 30493 An clarc þe com from Spaine . . feole craftes he cuðe. a 1225 *Leg. Kath.* 522 Fifti scolmeistres, of alle þe creftes þet clerc ah to cunnen. a 1300 *Cursor M.* 4647 (Cott.) þe seuen craftes all he can. a 1400-50 *Alexander* 33 þe pasage of þe planettis, þe poyntes & þe sygnes. þai ware þe kiddest of þat craft knawyn in þaire tyme. 1483 *Cath. Angl.* 79 A Crafte, *ars liberalis, sciencia* [etc.]. 1530 *PALSGR.* 210/1 Crafte of multiplyeing, *alquenemie*.

IV. A branch of skilled work.

6. An art, trade, or profession requiring special skill and knowledge; *esp.* a manual art, a HANDICRAFT; sometimes applied to any business, calling, or profession by which a livelihood is earned.

c 897 K. ÆLFRED *Gregory's Past.* i. 24 Se cræft þæs lareowdomes bið cræft ealra cræfta. c 900 *Beda's Hist.* iv. xiii, Seo þeod ðone cræft ne cuðe ðæs fiscnoþes. c 1040 *Rule St. Benet* 94 For ingehide his cræftes. 1340 *Ayenb.*

{2} The criteria of scholarship are: (i) a detailed, meticulous, unbiased original research on and concerning a specific topic or topics or subject undertaken over a year or more in duration and involving primary source material; (ii) an ability to be able to read primary sources in their original language; and (iii) a rational assessment of the knowledge acquired by such research, with such conclusions about the topic, topics, or subject being the logical result of the cumulative scholarly learning so acquired. If the researcher cannot read primary sources in their original language and has to rely on the translations of others then their conclusions are not original and not scholarly just as if they commit logical fallacies - such as the fallacy of Incomplete Evidence - then their conclusions are also not scholarly.

{3} Primary sources include contemporaneous manuscripts, letters, diaries, memoirs, personal journals, interviews, speeches, and other materials individuals used to describe (i) events in which they were participants or observers, and (ii) ideas or creations - such as a philosophy, music, literature, or art-work - which they were responsible for. Hence in the matter of a philosophy such as that of Heidegger the primary sources are his published writings, authenticated recordings or transcriptions of his speeches/lectures, and authenticated unpublished manuscripts if any. The writings, opinions, and conclusions of others about that philosophy are secondary or tertiary sources.

{4} See Appendix Two for fallacies such as Appeal to Authority.

{5} By the Establishment is meant those who in modern Western societies have the power, the means, to influence and to shape 'public opinion' on matters political and social. The Establishment thus includes politicians and the incumbent government and often the 'political opposition', large often multinational corporate businesses, the mainstream Media (including national newspapers, television and internet news media and outlets), well-funded special-interest advocacy groups both political and business-orientated; established academics whose work has featured in mainstream publications, and so-called 'independent' or 'freelance' journalists whose work appears in or is cited by the mainstream Media or established publishers.

An Establishment represents the orthodoxy, the zeitgeist, of a particular era, with adherence to or a belief in that orthodoxy a good indication of who or what is part of the Establishment, with the orthodoxy of the current Western current era including support for the idea of modern democracy even if the result of elections has been influenced by particular business and political concerns and 'special interest' groups who have the financial resources to employ professional lobbyists, Media consultants, and propagandists and who often have politicians to further their interests or agenda.

{6} <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/08/a-matter-of-honour.pdf>

{7} <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/>

Appendix One

Senholt And the Fallacy Of Incomplete Evidence

Jacob Senholt, in a revised version of his 2009 MA thesis titled *Political Esotericism & the convergence of Radical Islam, Satanism and National Socialism in the Order of the Nine Angles* published as a chapter in the 2012 book *The Devil's Party - Satanism in Modernity* {1} alleged that Myatt wrote the terrorist manual *A Practical Guide to Aryan Revolution* which it has been claimed influenced David Copeland, and Senholt like others before and since - including the authors of the 2023 article *The Order of Nine Angles: Cosmology, Practice & Movement*, DOI:10.1080/1057610X.2023.2186737 - Senholt provided no evidential facts in support of that particular allegation, and did not mention that following Myatt's arrest in early 1998 by police officers from Special Branch based at Scotland Yard, the British police in conjunction with the Canadian police and the FBI spent three years trying to prove that Myatt wrote that document, having seized his computers and files, searched his home for over seven hours, and travelled to places such as Canada to interview witnesses. They failed to find any evidence and Myatt was released from his bail in the Summer of 2001.

Senholt also presented his circumstantial evidence that Myatt=Long and in the process and probably inadvertently commits the fallacy of incomplete evidence which is when only certain evidence is presented with other evidence not found, or ignored or deliberately suppressed.

Circumstantial Evidence

i) He mentions a 1978 text, *Copula cum Daemone*, which he claims was written by a DW Myatt and was "in a collection of ONA manuscripts" manuscripts but does give the title of this collection nor any details of publication or images of the text nor any evidence that it was written by Myatt. He then claims that in later digital editions of this text - which again he provides no references to or images of - it was attributed to various other authors and concludes that this is "a clear example of a text originally issued by Myatt, and later disguised with a pseudonym."

In other words, he does not provide any evidential facts but presents only his personal opinion.

ii) He goes on to claim that the *Diablerie* manuscript - a copy of which is in the British Library {2} - "reveals details of Long's life that appear remarkably similar to Myatt's own life" and cites Goodrick-Clarke and yet as with Goodrick-Clarke {3} does not provide comparisons using research based on documentary evidence from primary sources regarding Myatt's life.

Thus and yet again Senholt does not provide any evidential facts but presents only his personal opinion.

iii) His next claim is that since writings by Myatt and the ONA have been published by the same publisher there "is a direct connection" which is a spurious conclusion since publishers often print items from various authors which does not mean the various authors are connected in any way.

iv) His next piece of circumstantial evidence "concerns the use of alternate dating-systems", about which he states that since both Myatt in his National Socialist writings and the ONA use "yf, designating the Year of the Führer" there is a connection, neglecting to mention - or failing to discover through research - that other groups such as the Ku Klux Klan and William Pierce of National Alliance fame and other neo-nazis have used the same dating system, both in its English form and its German form of 'Jahr des Fuhrers' {4}.

(v) His final piece of circumstantial evidence is linguistic, claiming that "when one has a closer look at many of the basic ideas and the terminology used in the ONA, it appears as if there are many glaring similarities to Myatt's own ideas." He cites terms such as Homo Galactica, causal and acausal, and Aeons while failing to mention that such borrowing of terms, ideas and concepts, is and has been common for centuries and is not evidence of a direct and personal link between those using such terms, ideas and concepts.

However, he not only does not provide any evidence from forensic linguistics but fails to mention numerous texts by Anton Long and by self-declared O9A adherents in which he explains the purpose of Anton Long's Labyrinthos Mythologicus which implies:

"myth-making; creating or concerned with mythology or myths; a mythical narrative, and is both (a) a modern and an amoral version of a technique often historically employed, world-wide among diverse cultures and traditions both esoteric and otherwise, to test and select candidates, and (b) a mischievous, japing, sly, and sometimes (for mundanes) an annoying, part of the O9A sinister dialectic." {5}

In other words, it was used not only to test and select candidates but also had an antinomian, dialectical, and japing purpose with Anton Long in a 28th August 103yf [1992] letter to Temple of Set member David Austen writing that the intent was "to make people like you draw the conclusion you were intended to make." {6} There is also the problem of the O9A 'manual of style' in relation to the claim that

"since one or more ONA blogs or websites, or some articles, use the same or similar styling and/or layout as some blog or website or article by or assumed to be by Myatt, it means that Myatt is behind them all - clearly ignoring the obvious fact that such similarities, if not just coincidental, could well be a deliberate imitation designed to get mundanes to jump to such a silly, fallacious, conclusion." {7} {8}

In regard to forensic linguistics,

"author profiling is subjective not empirical and thus not definitive. Second, and most important in this case, the task would be formidable with the result easily open to question given the volume of material written by both Myatt and the pseudonymous Anton Long over several decades and given that the forensic profiler would have to subjectively select what texts from what years to compare.

What would their subjective criteria for such a selection be? To compare a few texts from around the same time? To compare a few texts from the same decade? To compare just a few or dozens of texts from three or four decades?

Since 1984 with the publication of his 45 page tract *Vindex - Destiny of the West* to 2022 with the publication of his *Numinosity, Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition*, Myatt has written thousands of pages of texts. The texts also vary in subject matter, from polemical propagandistic texts in support of National Socialism (1984-1998) to ideological tracts in support of his 'ethical National Socialism' (1996-1998) to items supporting a particular and radical interpretation Islam (2001-2008) to his post-2012 writings about his philosophy of pathei-mathos to his autobiographical effusions such as his 2014 collection of essays titled *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods* and the letters included in parts two and three of his 2013 book *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*. There is also the matter of Myatt's translations of and commentaries on tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum (2017) and his 2017 scholarly monographs *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* and *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*.

In the case of Anton Long there are also thousands of pages of texts, from most of the typescripts included in the compilation *Naos* (1989) to *The Satanic Letters* (1992) to *Enantiodromia - The Sinister Abyssal Nexion* (2012). The issue is further complicated by writings published between 1992 and 2011 which do not bear the name 'Anton Long' and thus are anonymous but which anonymous texts many critics have assumed were written by Anton Long but for which assumption they have not and never have provided any evidence." {7}

Insight Roles

Following his circumstantial evidence, Senholt also claims that Myatt's diverse and exeatic life is an example of O9A Insight Roles which mean "gaining real-life experience by working undercover for a period of 6-18 months".

Of five Insight Roles, Senholt cites three - (a) "Join or form a covert insurrectionary organization, dedicated to National Socialism", (b) "Convert to Islam and aid, through words, or deeds, or both, those undertaking Jihad against Zionism and the NWO", and (c) "Join or form a National Socialist group or organization, and aid that organization and especially aid and propagate historical revisionism" - which he claims Myatt has undertaken.

What Senholt neglects to mention is that Myatt promoted National Socialism for thirty years (1968-1998) not for the "6-18 months" of an Insight Role, and was a Muslim who supported Jihad for over ten years (1998-2009) not for the "6-18 months" of an Insight Role.

Which places Senholt's claim into perspective. In addition, he does not mention the obvious facts that the O9A might have been inspired by the nature of Myatt's exeatic life to concoct such Insight Roles, and that Myatt's life does not include other suggested roles such as being an assassin and joining the police or the armed forces.

Conclusion

In summary, Senholt does not provide any evidential facts in regard to the urban tale that Myatt was/is Anton Long and founded the O9A. Instead, he commits the fallacy of incomplete evidence. That his work is often cited as 'proof' of that urban tale about Myatt being Anton Long provides another example of people committing the fallacy of appeal to authority.

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{1} Per Faxneld and Jesper Aa. Petersen (editors), *The Devil's Party: Satanism in Modernity*, Cambridge University Press, 2012.

{2} A copy of the 19 page *Diablerie - Revelations of a Satanist* typescript is in the British Library: General Reference Collection Cup.711/742, BNB GB9219567.

{3} Goodrick-Clarke's identification of Myatt as 'Anton Long' - in his book *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism, and the Politics of Identity*, NYU Press, 2003 - is solely based on his claim that Myatt was the author of a typescript titled *Diablerie*, a copy of which is in the British Library, General Reference Collection Cup.711/742, BNB GB9219567.

He provides no evidence, no sources, for this claim of his, or for his other claims such as that "the ONA was founded by David Myatt" and that Myatt was "a long time devotee of satanism."

Goodrick-Clarke also failed to research and provide any documentary evidence from primary sources regarding Myatt's life so that it could be compared to the life described in the Diablerie manuscript; he failed to ask Myatt himself about the manuscript which Myatt his 2012 text *A Matter of Honour* denounced as a work of fiction:
<https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/08/a-matter-of-honour.pdf>

That Goodrick-Clarke's book is and has been often cited as 'proof' that DM=AL thus provides another classic example of the fallacy of appeal to authority.

{4} <https://web.archive.org/web/20230511054221/https://www.nytimes.com/1991/11/03/world/klan-seizes-on-germany-s-wave-of-racist-violence.html>

{5} *A Glossary of Order of Nine Angles Terms*, v. 7.05, included in *Order Of Nine Angles Subculture: A Complete Guide*, e-text, 1520 pages, 2021.

{6} The letter is included in facsimile in volume one of *The Satanic Letters of Stephen Brown*, Thormynd Press, 1992.

{7} Kerri Scott, *Author Profiling In The Case Of David Myatt And Anton Long*, e-text, 2022.

{8} The O9A 'manual of style' was publicly mentioned in several 2015 and 2016 Internet posts such as this one from 2016:

That you equate me/us with someone else who has posted about the O9A on some forum (which has since banned all discussion of the ONA) is both flattering and mildly amusing. Perhaps it's the still secret "ONA Manual Of Style" that keeps outsiders making such assumptions...

<https://web.archive.org/web/20220511055625/https://annaczereda.wordpress.com/2016/09/13/mad-as-a-hatter/>

It was also described in a 2016 article titled *The O9A Manual Of Style*,

"As mentioned to some correspondents over the years, those who are associated with the Falciferian O9A have had an 'ONA Manual of Style' just as many older, established, newspapers (such as the Guardian and the New York Times) have their in-house manuals of style and usage. Such manuals are often updated every few decades, and are useful guides that enable printed items to have an 'in-house' style. Given the non-hierarchical structure and ethos of the O9A, the manual offers guidance, recommending best practice rather than giving rules which are expected be followed.

The ONA manual deals not only with the specific - O9A assigned - meaning of certain words (such as nexion, presencing, mundanes, culling) but also with many other topics, such as (i) whether certain words - for example 'satanism' and 'satan' - should be with an upper or a lower case S, (ii) how titles and subtitles should appear (usually, and against current convention) with all words beginning with upper case), (iii) how footnotes should be numbered and displayed (usually numbered within curly brackets), (iv) how each page should be set out, (v) how texts should display the name of the author, and (vi) how the introduction to following paragraphs should be phrased, with suggestions ranging from 'However' to 'In addition' to 'Thus'

[...]

Initially compiled by 'Anton Long' in the early 1990s, the manual has gone through several editions, with one of its main functions being inspired by what was once termed the Aquino fallacy."

The article *The O9A Manual Of Style* was included in the compilation *The Dialectical Order Of Nine Angles*, e-text, 2016.

Appendix Two

The Fallacy Of Appeal To Authority

The fallacy of appeal to authority, also known as the fallacy of Argumentum ad Verecundiam, is somewhat misunderstood in this age of the Internet. It is not only citing or quoting a person or persons who is/are regarded, by the person citing or quoting or by others, as an authority or 'expert' on a subject but also citing or quoting the opinion given by some institution, or 'policy/advisory group' or similar, on a subject, regardless of whether or not the 'expert' or institution or whatever has their opinion published by some means or some medium regarded as 'mainstream', academic, or 'respectable' or authoritative.

The crux of the fallacy is a reliance by someone or by some others on who or what is regarded in a particular society as an authority on or as having a detailed or 'expert' knowledge of a subject or subjects.

Thus a statement such as the fallacy of appeal to authority "is when the opinion of a non-expert on a topic is used as evidence" is itself fallacious because although it appears to be a decisive statement regarding 'authority' it is logically not so having not only restricted the fallacy to those are not 'experts' but does not define what an 'expert' or a 'false expert' is or are or who or what person or institution, or 'policy/advisory group' or similar has the 'authority' to declare someone an 'expert' or a 'false expert' in a certain subject or subjects, and from whence a person or an institution, or 'policy/advisory group' or similar derives their own authority to make such declarations.

The corollary of the appeal to authority, as defined in the first paragraph, is personal research by scholarly means of a subject using primary sources. Which leads to the definition of what constitutes primary sources and scholarly means, as defined below.

Fallacy Of Ad Populum

This is when a person 'follows the crowd' and believes or claims that because so many others have claimed or believe something it is probably true.

Fallacy Of Argumentum ad Hominem

This belongs to the category ignoratio elenchi. Argumentum ad hominem is when the character and/or the motives and/or the identity of the person presenting an argument is/are maligned or called into question often in an attempt to deflect attention away from the topic being discussed or from their failure to answer questions asked of them.

Fallacy of Composition

Also known as the Fallacy of Illicit Transference. This is an example of equivocation, and is when a generalization is made from a few specific instances or examples with the generalization then applied to pejoratively describe or malign a group or organization or person.

Fallacy Of The False Cause

Generally referred to by the Latin phrase *non causa pro causâ*. This fallacy is the assumption that one thing is the cause of another without any logical reasoning.

Fallacy Of Incomplete Evidence

Also known as the fallacy of suppressed evidence. This is when evidence which disproves or may disprove a claim or conclusion is not considered either deliberately (suppressed evidence) or because of a lack of detailed and scholarly research.

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The criteria of scholarship are: (i) a detailed, meticulous, unbiased original research on and concerning a specific topic or topics or subject undertaken over a year or more in duration and involving primary source material; (ii) an ability to be able to read primary sources in their original language; and (iii) a rational assessment of the knowledge acquired by such research, with such conclusions about the topic, topics, or subject being the logical result of the cumulative scholarly learning so acquired. If the researcher cannot read primary sources in their original language and has to rely on the translations of others then their conclusions are not original and not scholarly just as if they commit logical fallacies - such as the fallacy of Incomplete Evidence - then their conclusions are also not scholarly.

Primary sources include contemporaneous manuscripts, letters, diaries, memoirs, personal journals, interviews,

speeches, and other materials individuals used to describe (i) events in which they were participants or observers, and (ii) ideas or creations - such as a philosophy, music, literature, or art-work - which they were responsible for. Hence in the matter of a philosophy such as that of Heidegger the primary sources are his published writings, authenticated recordings or transcriptions of his speeches/lectures, and authenticated unpublished manuscripts if any. The writings, opinions, and conclusions of others about that philosophy are secondary or tertiary sources.

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Another Iconoclastic Translation

Although David Myatt's translation of the gospel of John from the Christian New Testament is, as of the date of writing, a work-in-progress, sufficient has been released for a preliminary review. Thus far he has published the completed translation of and extensive commentary on the whole of chapters 1 to 5, which partial translation is available from his blog. {1}

To describe the translation as iconoclastic is something of an understatement. Perhaps more aptly it is heretical in the sense that Wycliffe's 14th century and Luther's 16th century translations were at the time considered by some to be heretical. To understand why it might be considered heretical, by mainstream Christians at least, we need to examine Myatt's methodology.

Methodology

Myatt's methodology is the same as that used in his translations of chapters from the Corpus Hermeticum which was written in the same Hellenistic Greek as the New Testament. His methodology is to use some transliterations – theos instead of god/God; phaos instead of light; and so on – and to find unusual English words for Greek terms which he considers are important to preserve the meaning current at the time the writings were composed. His reasoning is that particular English words – and angel, Word, spirit, prison, heaven, hour, and Jews, come to mind vis-a-vis the gospels – have acquired or now convey meanings which are not appropriate to the time of the gospels and which thus distort the text.

One very striking example is his translation of verse 24 of chapter 3. The King James Bible has "For John was not yet cast into prison." All other English translations are similar. Myatt, however, has "And John had yet to be hurled into a guarded cage."

In his commentary on this verse he writes,

βεβλημένος εἰς τὴν φυλακὴν. A phrase deserving some consideration, for φυλακή is not 'prison' as prisons are understood today and in the past few centuries but rather 'a guarded cage', with βεβλημένος εἰς implying a forceful 'throwing' or a hurling into such a cage.

A quick check of a dictionary of ancient Greek reveals that φυλάσσω – the origin of the term φυλακή – does mean "to keep guard" and figuratively, in the likes of Herodotus, implies a 'cage'.

But possibly most controversial of all is his rejection of English terms such as *Jews*, *angel* and *heaven*. In place of Jews he has Judaeans, writing in a comment on chapter 1 verse 19,

After much consideration I have translated Ἰουδαία not by the conventional term 'Jews' but rather by Judaeans, given (i) that the English terms Jews and Jewish (deriving from the 13th/14th century words gyv/gyw and lewe) have acquired connotations (modern and medieval) which are not relevant to the period under consideration; and (ii) that the Greek term derives from a place name, Judaea (as does the Latin iudaeus); and (iii) that the Anglo-Saxon version (ASV) retains the sense of the Greek: here (iudeas) as elsewhere, as for example at 2.6, æfter iudea gecleansunge, "according to Judaeian cleansing."

In a long and bound to be controversial comment on the term 'heaven' he writes,

Conventionally, οὐρανός here is always translated as 'heaven' although the term 'heaven' – used in the context of the Gospels – now has rather different connotations than the Greek οὐρανός, with the word 'heaven' now often implying something explained by almost two thousand years of exegesis and as depicted, for example, in medieval and Renaissance Christian art. However, those hearing or reading this particular Greek gospel for the first time in the formative years of Christianity would most probably have assumed the usual Greek usage of "the heavens" in the sense of the "the star-filled firmament above" or in the sense of "the sky" or as the abode of theos and/or of the gods (ἐν οὐρανῷ θεοί), an assumption consistent with the fact that the Evangelist explains and interprets certain non-Greek words (qv. the comment on 1.42) and considering also his use of a colloquial Greek expression (qv. the comment on 1.51).

It therefore seems apposite to suggest a more neutral word than 'heaven' as a translation of οὐρανός and one which might not only be understood in various 'classical' ways by an audience of Greek speakers (such as the ways described above) but also be open to a new, and Christian, interpretation consistent with the milieu that existed when the Gospel of John was written and first heard. That is, before the exegesis of later centuries and long before post-Roman Christian iconography. Hence my suggestion of the post-classical Latin term Empyrean, which can bear the interpretation of the abode of theos and/or of the gods, of "the sky", of the "the star-filled firmament above; and a Christian one suggested by Genesis 2.8 – παράδεισον ἐν Εδεμ (the Paradise of Eden) – and also by shamayim.

Which is why the standard translation of a verse such as chapter 1,19 – "And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who are you?" – is interpreted by Myatt as

For such was the evidence John gave when the Judaeans dispatched priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him: "Who are you?"

Heresy

His heretical interpretation is evident in so many passages it is difficult to pick out just one or two. But the following is a typical example, from chapter 3, verses 19-21, with Myatt pointing out in his commentary that in the gospel of John *the phaos* is identified as Jesus himself and thus is in the gospel of John a synonym for Jesus.

And this is the condemnation: That the Phaos arrived in the world but mortals loved the darkness more than the Phaos, for their deeds were harmful. For anyone who does what is mean dislikes the Phaos and does not come near the Phaos lest their deeds be exposed. But whomsoever practices disclosure goes to the Phaos so that their deeds might be manifest as having been done through Theos.

This is conventionally translated as "And this is the verdict, that the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light, because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come toward the light, so that his works might not be exposed. But whoever lives the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God."

The effect of Myatt's interpretation of the gospel is that it not only humanizes Jesus but also Christianity, with Myatt writing in the Preface that,

"it imparts something important regarding the teachings, and the life, of Jesus of Nazareth: something quite human, something rather different from a stern preacher preaching about 'sin'; something which seems to express what the Beatitudes express, and something which individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox and William Penn many centuries later tried to say and write about Christianity and about the teachings and the life of Jesus of Nazareth."

He also mentions Julian of Norwich, George Fox and William Penn in his 2017 essay *The Way Of Jesus of Nazareth: A Question Of Hermeneutics?* where, giving several examples from his translation and commentary, he writes that the gospel expresses

"the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from supra-personal moralistic interpretations based on inflexible notions of 'sin' and thus on what is considered 'good' and what is considered 'evil'. {2}

His iconoclasm - heresy? - is also evident in his translation and commentary on The Beatitudes, {3} from The Gospel According To Matthew 5:1–10, and which translation is:

- 1 Observing the multitudes, he ascended the hill and, having sat down, his disciples approached him.
- 2 Then, a revelation, for he instructed those there by saying this:
- 3 Fortunate, those humble with spiritus, for theirs is the Kingdom of Empyrean.
- 4 Fortunate, those who grieve, for they shall have solace.
- 5 Fortunate, the gentle, for they shall acquire the Earth.
- 6 Fortunate, those who hunger and thirst for fairness, for they shall be replete.
- 7 Fortunate, the compassionate, for they shall receive compassion.
- 8 Fortunate, the refined of heart, for they shall perceive Theos.
- 9 Fortunate, the peaceable, for they shall be called children of Theos.
- 10 Fortunate, those harassed due to their fairness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Empyrean.

The translation, as he explains in his commentary, uses his interpretation of particular Greek words in the Gospel of John, rather than the conventional ones, examples in The Beatitudes being 'theos' instead of God, 'fortunate' instead of blessed, 'spiritus' instead of spirit, and Empyrean instead of Heaven; all of which he explains in detail in his commentary on John and quotes from in his commentary on the Beatitudes.

Conclusion

As to whether Myatt's translation of John, when completed, will find a niche is an interesting question given not just his iconoclastic methodology but also the esteem in which the gospels are held by Christians the vast majority of whom, were they to read his interpretation, would probably be offended even though his explanations in his commentary are extensive and scholarly.

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{1} <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2023/08/myatt-gospel-john-1-5.pdf>
{2} <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2023/08/dm-way-of-jesus.pdf>
{3} <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2023/08/the-beatitudes-v1.pdf>

Editorial Note:

An earlier version of this article was originally published in 2017 on the now defunct regardingdavidmyatt blog.
We have updated the URL's

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Notes On Expiation, Forgiveness, And Implacability

In the matter of the post-2012 writings of David Myatt, ⁽¹⁾ in which he described his rejection of National Socialism, of all types of extremism, and expounded his weltanschauung of pathei-mathos ⁽²⁾ with its virtues of compassion, empathy, and honour, there are only two logical approaches. Either (i) they are, as his former political opponents believe, Myatt "lying through his teeth", ⁽³⁾ a deception, and that he is still an extremist, a neo-nazi; or (ii) they are as Myatt writes expiative ⁽⁴⁾ and express what he has slowly learned from his own pathei-mathos: from his three decades as a neo-nazi activist and ideologue, from his decade as a Muslim, from the deaths of two loved ones, and from a scholarly study in their original language of Ancient Greek, Hellenistic, and Christian literature including Aeschylus, Sophocles, Aristotle, Cicero, the Corpus Hermeticum, the Christian Gospels and The Fathers Of The Church such as Tertullian, Augustine and Maximus of Constantinople whose writings are included in the collections, edited by Migne, titled *Patrologia Graeca* and *Patrologia Latina*, also known under the title *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*. ⁽⁵⁾

In regard to the belief of his former political opponents the question they have to answer is where is their evidence, their proof? For the civilized rule is that the burden of proof is on those who accuse.

Reasonable doubt: is there any other reasonable explanation for those writings other than the accusation they are lies, a deception? Yes, that they are expiative and born of pathei-mathos, in support of which they are consistent over a period of some ten years and detailed both in autobiographical terms, in terms of the scholarly, poetic and other references and quotations, and particularly in terms of the philosophy expressed by means of their ontology, ethics, and epistemology.

Evidential facts: are there any evidential facts that make their accusation substantially more probable to be true rather than false? No. One such evidential fact would be a forensically verified recorded or written confession by Myatt under Police caution in which he admitted they were a deception and that he was still a neo-nazi. No such confession exists.

His accusers have provided no evidence, no proof, and It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the accusation, by whomsoever made and whatever their status, is false. Which logically leads to the questions (i) of why was the accusation not only made but propagated by the accuser(s) for nearly a decade via modern mass media, and (ii) of why no academic or journalist questioned the accusation and asked for or sought evidence for and against it?

Implacability And Peer Pressure

The most obvious and logical answer as to why the accusation was made is the implacability of Myatt's political opponents born as this is from a belief in, an adherence to, an ideology with its uncompassionate axiom of "never forget, never forgive."

A secondary answer is that it is their nature, their character, to be unforgiving and to believe they do not require evidence because they already knew, or felt, that a person was guilty as many of those who, for example, did regarding the accused in the witch-trials such as in Salem and in Scotland, with such verbal evidence as was given in such trials imaginary, emotionally or religiously biased, vindictive, hateful, or prejudiced as in being in those cases misogynistic.

The logical answer as to why the accusation has been assiduously propagated by the accuser(s) is in the second answer: because it is in their nature, their character to do so.

The logical answer to why the accusation has never been rationally investigated or challenged by others is two fold. First, the fallacies of appeal to authority and of ad populum. The appeal to authority is when a person, journalists and academics included, accepts what someone else says or writes because they accept or believe that those making or repeating the accusation are some sort of 'authority' on the matter; the fallacy of ad populum is when they, including many journalists and academics, believe that because so many others believe or accept the accusation as true it must be true.

Second, it has not been investigated because of 'peer pressure'. In this case, the 'peer pressure' is the current Establishments of the West and their shared zeitgeist which Establishments, as evident in the repetition of the accusation against Myatt by politicians, by the mass media and in 'reports' by government and corporate sponsored policy groups, accept the accusation as true. For the careers, the livelihood of most journalists and academics depends on not crossing certain boundaries. In the case of the witch-trials the boundaries were set by the Church and its believers; now the often unacknowledged boundaries are set by current Establishments, by the mass media and by government and corporate sponsored policy groups.

Forgiveness

Forgiveness is one of the virtues of the religion of Christianity. Of religions in general Myatt wrote:

"In fifty years of diverse peregrinations - which included forty years of practical involvement with various religions and spiritual ways, practical involvement with extremisms both political and religious, and some seven years of intense interior reflexion occasioned by a personal tragedy - I have come to appreciate and to admire what the various religions and the diverse spiritual ways have given to us over some three thousand years.

Thus have I sensed that our world is, and has been, a better place because of them and that we, as a sentient species, are en masse better because of them. Thus it is that I personally - even though I have developed my own non-religious weltanschauung - have a great respect for religions such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism; for spiritual ways such as Buddhism, Taoism [...]

One of the greatest gifts such religions and spiritual ways offer seems to me to be the gift of humility: the insight that we human beings are fallible and transient, and that there is some-thing 'out there' which is numinous, sacred, more vast and more powerful than us whether we call this some-thing God, or Allah, or θεοί or Nature, or δίκη or Wyrð, or Karma or ψυχή or simply the acausal. The insight that to disregard this some-thing, to disrespect what-is numinous, is unwise - ὕβρις - and perpetuates suffering or is the genesis of new suffering and which new suffering may well continue long after we, who brought it into being and who gave it life, are dead." ⁽⁶⁾

Of Catholicism:

"Why does someone who has developed a somewhat paganus weltanschauung - the mystical individualistic numinous way of pathei-mathos - now defend a supra-personal organization such as the Roman Catholic Church? Because I from personal experience appreciate that for all its many faults - recent and otherwise - and despite my disagreement regarding some of its teachings it still on balance does, at least in my fallible opinion, presence - as it has for centuries presenced - aspects of the numinous and which presencing has over centuries, again in my fallible opinion, had a beneficial affect on many human beings." ⁽⁷⁾

In his 2013 *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*:

"I have - fully knowing my past hubris, the suffering I have caused, and aware of my manifold errors and mistakes over four decades - a great respect for other religions and spiritual ways, and aware as I am how they each in their own manner, express, have expressed, or are intimations of, the numinous. For instance, I have come to appreciate, more and more over the past few years, the numinosity of the sacred music of the Christian Church (especially Catholicism), from before Gregorian chant to composers such as Byrd, Dowland, Lassus, to Palestrina, to Phillipe de Monte, and beyond." ⁽⁸⁾

In his 2017 *The Way Of Jesus of Nazareth* he provides his understanding of the Gospel of John:

"What emerges from my own translation - that is, from my particular 'interpretation of meaning' of the Gospel According To John - is rather reminiscent of what individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox, and William Penn wrote and said about Jesus and the spiritual way that the Gospels in particular revealed. This is the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from supra-personal moralistic interpretations." ⁽⁹⁾

Considering the failure of Myatt's accusers to comment on such writings, and their failure to produce any evidence whatsoever for their accusations about his post-2012 writings, it is logical to conclude that they not only consider such writings about Christianity and forgiveness as part of the deception they accuse him of, but also that they do not believe in the virtue of forgiveness, or if they do then they are ideologically, politically, and thus cunningly selective about those few they believe such forgiveness applies to.

Changing The Narrative

Given the influence of current Western Establishments, the power of the mass media with its concerns for profits and adherence to the zeitgeist of those Establishments, and given the proliferation of national and international government, corporate and commercially sponsored policy groups - vulgarly and misleadingly termed 'think-tanks' - there is little prospect of changing the popular perception of Myatt manufactured by his political opponents, propagated by governments, policy groups and the mass media and accepted by journalists and academics.

In a 2022 interview Myatt was asked about the problem:

[Y]our many vociferous politically motivated opponents have not accepted that you have rejected extremism with many still considering you a neo-nazi. Does that bother you?

DM: No. For judging by their deeds and words they live in a different world from the one I now inhabit or rather that I now perceive. My perceivation is a very local and personal one; of my locality, of Nature and its local emanations; of my relatives and friends and my interactions with and concern for them. That other world beyond - or should that be those other worlds beyond - this local personal world no longer concern me given my plenitude of past mistakes, my past hubriatic suffering-causing interference, and my recently discovered Uncertitude Of Knowing.

They, those opponents, in comparison seem to have that Certitude Of Knowing that I for many decades had, breeding as it did and does prejudice, intolerance, hatred, and discouraging as it did and does empathy, forgiveness, and a personal Uncertitude Of Knowing. ⁽¹⁰⁾

Yet human nature being what it is and has been for millennia, with decades sometimes centuries of strife, repression, intolerance and censorship followed by brief periods of enlightenment where honour and reason burst forth again, there is the possibility that Myatt will be rehabilitated even given that currently the majority of people support or are indifferent to a status quo where no evidence for accusations is required in the 'special cases' manufactured by

Establishments who have managed to convince most of the populace that 'falsehood is truth' and 'dishonour is honour' as occurs every time they designate a group, or some nation, or some person or some belief or cause, as evil and the enemy of the freedom they constantly announce their Establishments uphold. Relevant examples in recent times being the rendition and torture of suspects and their detention in Guantánamo; the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan; the killing without due process of law of individuals by military drones, and the current proxy war against Russia designated by Western Establishments as the new 'evil Empire' controlled by a new 'evil tyrant' and which Establishments have gone so far as to indite the new 'evil tyrant' for 'war crimes' while their own illegalities, such as invasions and extra-judicial killings, are ignored.

That it took centuries for the Salem, the Scottish and other witch-trials to be rationally perceived for what they were is a relevant historical example of how long such rehabilitation may take.

Conclusion

A suitable summation:

Is to not judge others without a personal knowing of them, to not commit fallacies such as *a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter*, and to allow for personal expiation, perhaps to presence the numinous in at least one small and quite individual way? Personally, I am inclined to believe it is.

Pietatis fons immense, ἐλέησον,
Noxas omnes nostras pelle, ἐλέησον.

Those words were written by David Myatt in 2018, ⁽⁷⁾ include an ancient doxology, and place certain accusations, and the individuals who make them, who believe them and propagate them, into the necessary perspective, human, divine, and otherwise.

JR Wright
2023

(1) Most of these writings are listed at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2018/03/09/david-myatt-opera-omnia/>

(2) The Ancient Greek term πάθει μάθος in this context means a personal "learning from adversity and experience". Of pathei-mathos, Myatt writes that an:

"intimation of wisdom - and perhaps one of the most significant - is pathei-mathos, with Aeschylus writing, in his Agamemnon, that the Immortal, Zeus, guiding mortals to reason, provided we mortals with a new law, which law replaces previous ones, and which new law - this new guidance laid down for mortals - is pathei-mathos. That is, that for we human beings, pathei-mathos possesses a numinous, a living, authority; that the wisdom, the understanding, that arises from one's own personal experience, from formative experiences that involve some hardship, some grief, some personal suffering, is often or could be more valuable to us (more alive, more meaningful) than any doctrine, than any religious faith, than any words one might hear from someone else or read in some book." <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

(3) The expression was used by a British antifascist - honoured in 2016 by the British Establishment with the award of an MBE - and repeated by him in an interview with Canadian journalist Justin Ling that was published in March 2022.

(4) One of the subjects of David Myatt's post-2012 writings is expiation; of finding some means by which the mistakes of his past, of his forty or so years of political and religious extremism, may be offset or recompensed. In his 2013 text *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos: Spirituality, Humility, and A Learning From Grief* - <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/religion-and-empathy.pdf> - he devotes a chapter to expiation and his concerns, from which chapter this is an extract:

"One of the many problems regarding my own past which troubles me - and has troubled me for a while - is how can a person make reparation for suffering caused, inflicted, and/or dishonourable deeds done. For, in the person of empathy, of compassion, of honour, a knowledge and understanding of dishonour done, of the suffering one has caused - perhaps before one became such a person of compassion, honour, and empathy - is almost invariably the genesis of strong personal feelings such as remorse, grief, and sorrow [...]

One of the many benefits of an organized theistic religion, such as Christianity or Islam or Judaism, is that mechanisms of personal expiation exist whereby such feelings can be placed in context and expiated by appeals to the supreme deity. In Judaism, there is Teshuvah culminating in Yom Kippur, the day of expiation/reconciliation. In Catholicism, there is the sacrament of confession and penance. In Islam, there is personal dua to, and reliance on, Allah Ar-Rahman, Ar-Raheem, As-Salaam.

Even pagan religions and ways had mechanisms of personal expiation for wrong deeds done, often in the form of propitiation; the offering of a sacrifice, perhaps, or compensation by the giving or the leaving of a valuable gift or votive offering at some numinous - some sacred and venerated - place or site [...]

All such religious mechanisms of expiation, whatever the theology and regardless of the motivation of the individual in seeking such expiation, are or can be cathartic; restorative, healing. But if there is no personal

belief in either a supreme deity or in deities, how then to numinously make reparation, propitiation, and thus to not only expiate such feelings as remorse, grief, and sorrow but also and importantly offset the damage one's wrong actions have caused, since by their very nature such suffering-causing actions are ὕβρις and not only result in harm, in people suffering, but also upset the natural balance. In truth, I do not know the answer to the question how to so numinously make reparation, propitiation. I can only conject, surmise."

His answer of how to make reparation was to write about his past, about his regrets, about his decades of extremism, and about how he came to reject such extremism, political and religious; with his philosophy of pathei-mathos part of the expiation required:

"In a very personal sense, my philosophy of pathei-mathos is expiatory, as are my writings concerning extremism, such as my *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*." Some Questions For DWM, March 2014, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/dwm-2014-questions.pdf> (5)

(5) References to and quotations from those and other classical authors occur in many of Myatt's philosophical works and autobiographical writings such as in his 2012 *Some Philosophical and Moral Problems of National-Socialism* - <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/moral-problems-of-national-socialism/> - and his *Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>. There is also his translation of and extensive commentary on tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

In regard to Christianity and Fathers Of the Church, there are, for example, (i) his translation of and extensive commentary on chapters from the Gospel of John - <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/gospel-john-chapters1-5.pdf> - (ii) his monograph *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* - <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/tua-es-diaboli-ianua.pdf> - (iii) essays such as *Persecution And War* - <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/about/persecution-and-war/> - where he references *De Civitate Dei contra Paganos* and *Contra Faustum Manichaeum*, and his commentary of tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum. Thus in his commentary on verses 14 and 15 of Tractate XI of the Corpus Hermeticum he writes:

14.
enos. ἔνωσις. A transliteration given that it is a mystical term with a particular meaning and describes something more than is denoted by the ordinary English word 'union'. It was, for example used by Plotinus, by Maximus of Constantinople, and was part of the mystic philosophy attributed to Pseudo-Dionysius, The Areopagite - qv. Migne, Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca. vol IV, 396A. 1857 - and denoted, for Plotinus, a desirable ascent (ἄνοδος) and a 'merging with The One', and for both the Areopagite and Maximus of Constantinople a self-less mystical experience of God.

15.
eikon. εἰκὼν. Another mystical term requiring contextual interpretation, cf. Poemandres 31, regarding which I wrote in my commentary: "I have transliterated εἰκὼν as here it does not only mean what the English words 'image' or 'likeness' suggest or imply, but rather it is similar to what Maximus of Constantinople in his *Mystagogia* [Patrologiae Graeca, 91, c.0658] explains.

Which is of we humans, and the cosmos, and Nature, and psyche, as eikons, although according to Maximus it is the Christian church itself (as manifest and embodied in Jesus of Nazareth and the Apostles and their successors and in scripture) which, being the eikon of God, enables we humans to recognize this, recognize God, be in communion with God, return to God, and thus find and fulfil the meaning of our being, our existence."

<https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

(6) *Fifty Years Of Diverse Peregrinations in Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*, 2013, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/religion-and-empathy.pdf>

(7) *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*, 2018, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/in-defence-rc-1.pdf>

(8) <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/david-myatt-rejecting-extremism.pdf>

(9) <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/09/30/the-way-of-jesus-of-nazareth/>

(10) *An Uncertainty Of Knowing, Four Interviews With David Myatt*, 2023, <https://archive.org/download/myatt-four-interviews/myatt-four-interviews.pdf>

David Myatt - Selected Favourites

Music

JS Bach:

Aria: *Erbarme Dich* (St Matthew Passion) [counter-tenor]
Cantata: Aria - *Ich habe genug* BWV 82
Cantata: *Vergnügte Ruh, beliebte Seelenlust* BWV 170
Cantata: *Gott hat alles wohlgemacht* BWV 35
Cantata: *Widerstehe doch der Sünde* BWV 54
Art of Fugue
Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 1 BWV 846-869 [Rosalyn Tureck]
Sonatas for Flute and Violin (BWV 1030-1035)
Mass in B minor (BWV 232)
Violin Concerto in D minor BWV 1052

Purcell:

When I Am Laid in Earth (sung by Emma Kirkby)
Music For A While (sung by a young Alfred Deller)

Gregorian Chant: *Iste Confessor* (Sarum Office)

Josquin Desprez: *Kyrie* from *Missa L'homme Arme*

Chant Vieux-Roman: *Offertoire: Terra Tremuit*

John Dunstable: *Preco preheminencie*

Palestrina: *Magnificat* - Primi Toni; Tertii Toni

Thomas Tallis: *Miserere Nostri*

Allegri: *Miserere mei, Deus*

Brahms:

Fourth Symphony
Piano: Opus 76, Opus 116-119
Piano Concerto No 1 in D minor, Op 15

Chopin: *Etudes*, Opus 25

William Byrd:

Ave Verum Corpus
Nunc Dimittis
Tristitia et anxietas - Sed tu Domine

Phillipe de Monte: *Super Flumina Babylonis*

John Dowland:

Lachrimae Antiqua
Burst Forth My Tears [Catherine King/Jacob Heringman/Rose Consort of Viols]

Joseph Haydn:

Late String Quartets
Die sieben letzten Worte unseres Erlösers am Kreuze [Opus 51]
Maestoso ed adagio

Albinoni: Concerto for Trumpet after Sonata da chiesa in D minor [Alison Balsom]

Georg Philipp Telemann: Les Janissaires

Mozart:

Piano Concerto no.20 in D minor, K.466
Piano Concerto no.21 in C, K.467 [Dinu Lipatti]
Sinfonia Concertante in E-flat major, K.364
String Quartet in D minor, K.421

Symphonies 39, 40, 41
Mass in C minor, K.427
Requiem Mass in D minor

Schubert: Quartettsatz in C minor D703

Clara Schumann: Konzertsatz in F minor

Hildegard von Bingen:

O Eucharisti in Leta Via
O clarissima mater
Hodie aperuit
Quia ergo femina
O frondens virga
O viridissima virga

Anonymous: Le Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc

Guillaume Dufay: Ecclesiae militantis

Sibelius: *The Swan of Tuonela*

Ξαρχάκος: *Βαρκαρόλα* [Αγνή Μπάλτσα, Μπουζούκι]

Literature

Αισχύλου Ἀγαμέμνων
Σοφοκλέους Ἀντιγόνη
Σοφοκλέους Οἰδίπους Τύραννος
Ομήρου Οδύσσεια
M. Tullius Cicero - Epistulae ad Familiares
Μάρκος Αὐρήλιος - Τὰ εἰς ἑαυτὸν

Films

Howards End (with Antony Hopkins)
Out of Africa (with Meryl Streep)
Shadowlands (with Antony Hopkins)
Apollo 13
The Cruel Sea (with Jack Hawkins)
Sense and Sensibility (with Emma Thompson)
Letter from an Unknown Woman (with Joan Fontaine)
The Hours (with Nicole Kidman)
The Remains Of The Day (with Emma Thompson)
Carol (with Cate Blanchett)
Charlotte Gray (with Cate Blanchett)
The Salt Of The Earth (Juliano Ribeiro Salgado)

TV Series

Inspector Morse
Brideshead Revisited (with Anthony Andrews)
Lewis
Endeavour
Lark Rise to Candleford
The Great War (BBC documentary)
Great War Diaries (BBC documentary)
Pride and Prejudice (with Jennifer Ehle)

Fiction

EM Forster: Howards End
Charles Dickens: Bleak House
Charles Dickens: Oliver Twist
Charles Dickens: Nicholas Nickleby
Flora Thompson: Lark Rise to Candleford
Evelyn Waugh: Brideshead Revisited
Jane Austen: Pride and Prejudice

Modern Poet

TS Eliot

Poems

The Waste Land
Little Gidding (Four Quartets)

Introduction

This compendium includes a selection of the post-2010 writings of David Myatt, including his latest one dated September 2023, regarding religion in general and Christianity in particular, as well as several personal writings which are spiritual in nature. For completeness we have included Myatt's translation of and extensive commentary on chapters one to five of the Gospel of John; and his translation of and commentary on eight of the tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum since they include extensive reference to Christianity.

The writings are followed by reviews by other hands which provide an overview of those writings by Myatt and how and perhaps why they have been assiduously neglected both by academics who have written about Myatt and especially by Myatt's former and current political enemies.

The compendium should therefore enable readers to make their own assessment of Myatt, as seems only fair and fitting. One caveat is that since both the reviews and Myatt's writings include multiple references to texts on his personal wordpress weblog, which being 'free' is unfortunately replete with advertisements, we advise using the Firefox browser with extensions such as 'noscript' and 'unblock origin' and with images disabled by changing, in Firefox, the preference 'permissions.default.image' in 'about:config' to 2 instead of 1.

A quotation from one of Myatt's writings included in the compendium perhaps illustrates his sentiments in respect of Christianity:

"Catholicism did manifest, and to an extent still does manifest, aspects of the numinous and therefore this particular guide to human living is one which I understand and appreciate as one style of earthly-harmony [...]

Catholicism (before the reforms imposed by the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican) represented, in my view, the original Way known as Christianity, and was – at least before those reforms – quite distinct from those schisms which are now known as Protestantism and Orthodox Christianity. Indeed, distinct enough – until those reforms – to be considered a different Way of Life, a Way evident, for example, in Catholic rites (such as the Tridentine Mass), in monasticism, in Papal authority, in the use of Latin, and in the reverence accorded The Blessed Virgin Mary.

Furthermore, it is my view that the schism now termed Protestantism was a classic example of the religious attitude predominating over numinosity – and thus that it is and was redolent of attempts to reduce The Numen to linear causal abstractions. Thus, Mysteriums such as the Tridentine Mass became replaced with recitation of Scripture in the vernacular and with attempts to rationally explain – according to some abstract causal theory – the mystery of the consecration." *Soli Deo Gloria*, 2011

In regard to God, Myatt has written several times about the equivalence of the fundamental message of the major religions:

"Pathei-mathos – the personal learning from grief, suffering, pain, adversity, and experience – directly connects us to and thus enables us to personally experience and appreciate the numinous, sans words, ideations, ideology, theology, and dogma. An experience and an appreciation outwardly and inwardly manifest in a personal humility; in the knowledge of ourselves as but one fallible, mortal, fragile, human emanation of and connexion to Being; and in an empathic understanding of how all religions and spiritual ways, in their genesis and in their original emanations, express – or try to express – the same wisdom: manifest in an appreciation of the numinous, and in our human necessity for the natural balance that is humility and a very personal honour. And, because of this spiritual and religious equivalence, it does not matter if the individual of pathei-mathos, having so touched and felt the numinous, develops their own weltanschauung or none, or leaves or finds an existing spiritual or religious one, although it is and often has been such pathei-mathos which reveals to individuals, or which enables them to rediscover, the essence of a particular religion or a particular spiritual way: that simple and similar numinous essence which schisms, harsh interpretations, dogma, and ideology, have so often and for so long obscured." *Exegesis and Translation: Some Personal Reflexions*, 2013

"[The] beautiful traditional music many employing Maqam modes [...] brought memories of a different plane of existence, far removed from the turmoil, the Machiavellian machinations, the egoism, the materialistic, and often godless, modern Western world. I was back in the Sahara Desert where as I once said I wordlessly had intimations of Being, of The Acausal, of The-Unity, of The One-The Only (τὸ ἓν), of The Monas (μονάς) which 'acausal' Being Muslims called Allah and Christians called God. I was back in Arabic – Muslim – lands where I had travelled and stayed and learnt. I was back as a novice in a Catholic monastery, wandering outside the Abbey in the contemplative period between chanting Matins and Lauds." *A Rare Moment*, 2023

A Few Minor Missives 2023



Missa Pro Defunctis

What have we in over four and a half centuries to compare, in terms of presencing the numinous, with *Missa pro defunctis* by Francisco Guerrero? Perhaps some music by JS Bach?

Here I am almost half a century since I as part of a choir sang in a public performance of Mozart's Requiem having possibly in those intervening years learnt some things about myself and about our human nature. Who reads, who even cares about such pathei-mathos? Yet such numinous music remains to remind, if only a few, while we en masse as a species seemingly move on to new diversions which betake us further and further from such presencings of the numinous as may ineluctably change and rebirth us as individuals.

September 2023

Memory Of A Beautiful World

One of the pleasures I have found in old age – beyond my three score years and ten – is recalling alone or reminiscing to others about times past. One especial memory is of when a younger version of me was cycling home from work one Summer in Shropshire [1] when I chanced upon someone – a celebrated cycling time-trial champion whom I seem to recall at one time held every RTTC record from 25 miles to 12 hours – while he was out training. We chatted as the comradeship of cycling decreed, and together cycled along together for many miles at over 20mph. A pace I intuitively knew from years of competing in local club and RTTC Time Trials.

But then he gradually increased the pace up to almost 30mph until after a few miles I made some excuse and turned left onto some minor road to collapse onto the grass verge. But it was wonderful, lying there, in the quiet isolation of a country English lane with only the breeze rustling trees and birdsong for company. Then, in those moments, that was my simple, my entire, life. If only – if only – it had lasted; if only – if only – I had somehow in some way managed to make it last so that it and similar moments became my life thereafter.

But it was not alas then to be, for I soon, so soon, returned to the world of extremism, of causal abstractions with its dialectic of opposites which so engendered a supra-personal certitude of knowing and the inevitable suffering of others. And it would take some twenty years for me to recall that – and similar – moments again following the most traumatic incident of my life: the unexpected suicide of my then fiancée, genesis as that incident was of my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos.

Mea Culpa; Mea Culpa, Mea Maxima Culpa. But even now saying that, and Κύριε ελέησον, out loud does not help in these twilight years of my life. For there seems to be no expiation for my extremist past with its certitude of knowing. A certitude of knowing which is glorified even unto this day by others with their -isms and -ologies and the causal abstractions, the often suffering causing dialectic, on which they are based.

May 2023

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[1] I was riding my hack work-bike; a Mercian 531 frame, Cinelli bars and stem; TA double-chainset; Mavic G40 rims with Campag Record hubs; and – a concession to comfort – a leather well-broken in saddle.

A Rare Moment

There are few moments that I believed could surprise this somewhat world-weary man beyond his three score and ten mortal years. But some information received from a middle-Eastern contact was one of them.

Knowing my love of classical Arabic music and of how I used to (badly) play the Persian Daf, the information was regarding the Syrian Takht Ensemble whose beautiful traditional music – many employing Maqam modes – and their innovations of such music, brought memories of a different plane of existence, far removed from the turmoil, the

Machiavellian machinations, the egoism, the materialistic, and often godless, modern Western world.

I was back in the Sahara Desert where as I once said I wordlessly had intimations of Being, of The Acausal, of The-Unity, of The One-The Only (τὸ ἓν), of The Monas (μονάς) which 'acausal' Being Muslims called Allah and Christians called God. I was back in Arabic – Muslim – lands where I had travelled and stayed and learnt. I was back as a novice in a Catholic monastery, wandering outside the Abbey in the contemplative period between chanting Matins and Lauds.

Such a waste for over forty years of such experiencing, such wordless knowing. There are no excuses; for the fault, the hubris, was mine. All I have to offer in recompense, in expiation, is my wordfull weltanschauung of pathei-mathos, which compared to such wordless personal experiencing and such Arabic music is so woefully inadequate.

August 2023

One Tree Among Many

Beside the stone wall that marks one of the boundaries of what has for several years been my home is an evergreen Oak; almost a dome of spreading branches and so tall it might well be an hundred or so years in age. The tallest tree around from near where several other and various and tallish specimens of arboreal life provide perches for those whose Dawn Chorus becomes, was, is, a hymnal to such natural Life as has for centuries pleased us.

Two months ago, the Oak was sad; with leaves dry and dying and infested. But now, as clouds break to reveal sky-blue, bringer of early Summer warmth: the tree has that light green of leaf rebirth, and catkins heralds of acorns an English season hence. So there is joy within as this aged man "his foliage drying up and no stronger than a child, with three feet to guide him on his travels, wanders – appearing a shadow in the light of day." [1]

Would that he might hear one more Dawn Chorus to so remember those, these, simple natural beauties of life which he as so many others so easily forgot enwrapped as he, they, were in believed in, in felt, selfish concerns which all will, must, die with us while the Sun again warms each year as it warms and life-sprouting rain seeds rebirth without any interference from us at all.

So I sit, windows of sky and trees to enlighten again my life, listening to a heartbreaking, suspended moment in my measured out so very limited timespan of causal life: the 12th century Cistercian *Répons de Matines pour la fête de saint Bernard*.

6th June 2023

[1] τό θ' ὑπέργηρων φυλλάδος ἤδη κατακαρφομένης τρίποδας μὲν ὁδοὺς στείχει, παιδὸς δ' οὐδὲν ἀρείων ὄναρ ἡμερόφαντον ἀλαίνει. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 79-82. My translation.

Tenebrae

The liturgical season of The Passion is upon us again and I find myself appreciating once more how the numinous allegory of The Passion was presented in liturgical music from the Graduale *Christus Factus Est* to Vittoria's *Popule meus, quid feci tibi* – Ἅγιος ὁ Θεός, Ἅγιος ἰσχυρός, Ἅγιος ἀθάνατος, ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς – to Scarlatti's Stabat Mater to JS Bach's St John and Matthew Passions. And I reminded so movingly of – when a monk – singing Tenebrae amid the flickering then extinguished light of candles...

So much human suffering for so many millennia which the allegory of The Passion of Jesus of Nazareth reminded so many of, century after century; as it reminded me several times in the depths of my decades of extremism. In comparison with such numinous music, liturgical and otherwise, what is my own wordy weltanschauung of pathei-mathos worth?

Very little it now seems to me, if anything at all.

April 2023

The Hour Before Dawn

It is the hour before Dawn on the Spring Equinox, dark outside, with the Blackbird in the tree at the edge of the garden already singing. No other sounds, as yet, and there arises within me questions I have felt several times in the past few years.

Which are: is what we in a land such as this – a modern Western land such as England as Spring dawns even within, upon, urban conurbations – have acquired, developed, manufactured over the past few hundred years worth the

suffering that has been inflicted upon other human beings, upon our forebears, and upon Nature? Is that suffering the price of such societies as we have developed and now seek to maintain?

Numerous overseas conflicts; two World Wars with millions upon millions dead, injured, traumatized, and cities, towns, Nature, destroyed. Numerous invasions and wars since then. Poverty, homelessness, injustice, inequality, crime, still within our lands. Has anything in terms of our humanity, of we being self-controlled, rational, honest and honourable – of ourselves as causes and vectors of suffering – really changed?

It is not as if I am exempt from having caused suffering. My past decades long suffering-causing deeds are my burden and will be until I die.

My personal, fallible, answers born of my pathei-mathos, is that unfortunately we as individuals have not as yet *en masse* changed sufficiently so as to cease to be a cause and a vector of suffering. Tethered as we still apparently are to causal abstractions, to -isms and -ologies, and thus to denotata and the dialectic of opposites, to the conflict that such denotata is the genesis of.

Perhaps we need another hundred, two hundred, or more years. Our perhaps we will continue, *en masse*, as we mostly now are, the eventual extinction of our sometimes stable causal societies of human beings acausally inevitable, fated; until the planet we call Earth finally meets its Cosmic end as all planets do, with we human beings never making real the visionary dream of a few to venture forth and colonize the stars. And even if we did somehow realize that dream, would we venture forth as the still savage, dishonourable, war-mongering species we still are?

Yet all I have in answer, in expiation for my own past suffering-causing deeds, is my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos; so insufficient in so many ways.

March 2023

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DW Myatt 2023

Soli Deo Gloria

Being extracts from a letter written in reply
to someone enquiring about the philosophy of The Numinous Way.

Since you enquire about the veracity of my Numinous Way, I should perhaps emphasize – as I have mentioned several times over the past few years – that this Way represents only my own fallible answers born from my own pathei-mathos, and that I am acutely aware that the answers of many other Ways, such as Buddhism and the answers of conventional religions such as Catholicism, also in their own particular harmonious manner express something of the numinous and may thus for many people provide a guide to living in a more numinous way.

As I wrote many years ago:

The Numinous Way is but one answer to the questions about existence, [and] does not have some monopoly on truth, nor does it claim any prominence, accepting that all the diverse manifestations of the Numen, all the diverse answers, of the various numinous Ways and religions, have or may have their place, and all perhaps may serve the same ultimate purpose – that of bringing us closer to the ineffable beauty, the ineffable goodness, of life; that of transforming us, reminding us; that of giving us as individuals the chance to cease to cause suffering, to presence the good, to be part of the Numen itself. For what distinguishes a valuable, a good, a numinous Way or religion, is firstly this commitment, however expressed, to the cessation of suffering through means which do not cause more suffering; secondly, having some practical means whereby individuals can transform themselves for the better, and thirdly, possessing some way of presenting, manifesting, presencing what is sacred, what is numinous, thus reconnecting the individual to the source of their being, to their humanity.

In my fallible view, any Way or religion which manifests, which expresses, which guides individuals toward, the numinous humility we human beings need is good, and should not be stridently condemned.

For such personal humility – that which prevents us from committing hubris, whatever the raison d'être, the theology, the philosophy – is a presencing of the numinous. Indeed, one might write and say that it is a personal humility – whatever the source – that expresses our true developed (that is, rational and empathic) human nature and which nature such Ways or religions or mythological allegories remind us of. Hence the formulae, the expression, *Soli Deo Gloria* being one Western cultural manifestation of a necessary truth, manifesting as it does one particular numinous allegory among many such historical and cultural and mythological allegories. Just as, for example, the sight of King Louis IX walking barefoot to Sainte Chapelle was a symbol of the humility which the Christian faith, correctly understood, sought to cultivate in individuals.

As I mentioned in my essay *Humility, Abstractions, and Belief*,

One of the great advantages – a manifestation of humanity – of a Way such as Islam and Christianity and Buddhism is that they provide, or can provide, us with the supra-personal perspective, and thus the humility, we human beings require to prevent us veering into and becoming subsumed with the error of hubris.

As it says in the Rule of Saint Benedict:

" The peak of our endeavour is to achieve profound humility..." Chapter 7, *The Value of Humility*

As it says in the Quran:

" The 'Ibaad of Ar-Rahman [Allah] are those who walk on earth in humility." 25:63

As it says in the Dhammapada:

" Yo bâlo maññati bâlyaè paúóitovâpi tena so bâlo ca paúóitamânî sa ve bâloti vuccati."

" Accepting of themselves, the simple person in their simplicity is wise, although if they pride themselves they are wise, they are simply full of pride. "

Furthermore, such Ways provide such a supra-personal perspective in a manner which is living – that is, these Ways are presented to us as something which has a historical genesis and which lives among us, in our own times, in and through those devoted to them in that dignified manner which makes such people living examples of those tenets, of those Ways. That is, the dignified people who follow such Ways – who are inspired by those Ways to practice humility in their own lives – thus manifest the numinous, the sacred, among us, and so can provide us with practical, and personal, guidance, and a sense of belonging.

Thus, I now have, partly from practical experience, come to apprehend a certain unity, a certain common insight, behind many outwardly differing Ways and religious forms, to the extent that I personally have been considered by some people to be some kind of Buddhist-Taoist-Muslim-Sufi-Catholic-NuminousWay-pagan-mystic hybrid. But in truth, I am merely someone who as a result of pathei-mathos knows their limitations, their fallibility, and thus who empathically resonates with past and present emanations of the numinous, often because of struggling to answer certain questions about our human nature, about our mortal existence, and about the nature of Reality which many others over millennia have also sought to answer.

Since you especially ask about Catholicism in relation to the Numinous Way, all I can say in my experience – having been raised a Catholic and having spent some time as a Catholic monk – is that Catholicism did manifest, and to an

extent still does manifest, aspects of the numinous and therefore this particular guide to human living is one which I understand and appreciate as one style of earthly-harmony.

As I wrote a year or so ago:

"The Latin Tridentine Mass of the Catholic Church [...] evolved over a certain period of causal time, and became, for many Catholics, the main ritual, or rite, which imbued their ordinary lives with a certain numinosity – a certain awareness of the sacred, with attendance at this rite involving certain customs, such as modest and clean dress, and women covering their heads with a veil. This rite was, in essence, a *Mysterium* – that is, it embodied not only something holy and somewhat mysterious (such as the Consecration and Communion) but also was wordlessly un-mundane and so re-presented to most of those attending the rite, almost another world, with this re-presentation aided by such things as the use of incense, the ringing of the Sanctus bell, and the genuflexions. In addition, and importantly, the language of this rite was not that of everyday speech, and was not even, any longer, a living changing language, but rather had in many ways become the sacred language of that particular Way.

The Catholic rite endured for centuries and, indeed, to attend this particular rite marked, affirmed and re-affirmed one as a Catholic, as a particular follower of a particular Way, and a Way quite distinct from the schism that became Protestantism [1], a fact which explained, for instance, the decision, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth the First of England, to punish by fine or imprisonment those who attended this rite, and to persecute, accuse of treason, and often execute, those who performed this rite.

However, the reforms imposed by the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican replaced this numinous rite, this *Mysterium*, with rites and practices redolent of un-numinous Protestantism. Why? Most probably because those involved in such planning and producing and implementing such reforms were swayed by the causal abstractions of "progress" and "relevancy" – desiring as they did and do to be in accord with the causal, material, *Zeitgeist* of the modern West where numbers of adherents, and conformity to trendy ideas and theories, are regarded as more important than presencing The Numen in a numinous manner. When, that is, some profane causal abstractions come to be regarded as more relevant than experiencing and manifesting the sacred as the sacred.

Yet this does not mean that Catholicism, before the reforms imposed by the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, was or remained a Way, *per se*. Only that, of all the variants of what are now termed Christianity, it retained a certain numinosity expressed by the original Way; that, through its *Mysteriums* such as the Tridentine Mass, it still presenced something of The Numen; and that it managed to avoid the worst excesses of the religious attitude, maintaining as it did a monasticism which by its own particular way of life encouraged the cultivation of a genuine, non-dogmatic, humility." Source – *Concerning The Nature of Religion and The Nature of The Numinous Way*

As that quotation – and the associated footnote – make clear, it is my personal opinion that traditional Catholicism, with its Tridentine Mass and its particular conservative traditions, was a somewhat better, more harmonious, expression of the numinous (a necessary and relevant expression of the numinous), than both Protestantism and the reforms introduced by the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, and which reforms served only to undermine the numinous, to untwist the threads that held together its "hidden soul of harmony".

However, what really matters in my view in respect of considering how we judge and evaluate other Ways and other styles of earthly-harmony (that is, what are often regarded as religious expressions of the numinous), is not so much their veracity as perceived and/or assumed by us during one span or certain spans of causal Time, but rather how those Ways, those expressions, affect people and predispose them toward or guide them toward living in a more numinous manner. That is, by criteria such as humility, avoidance of hubris, compassion, fairness toward others: by those things which express, which manifest, the numinous in us, in terms of our character, our behaviour. Not, that is, by some abstract criteria which we posit and which we with arrogance use to condemn or malign, often based on some vainglorious assumption or need that our own beliefs, our own answers, are the correct ones.

There is thus a tolerance, a respect; a desire not to stridently condemn; an awareness of our own fallibility deriving from our own *pathei-mathos* and from the numinous perspective, the silent wordless clarity, that such a personal learning from the suffering of experience brings.

All I have tried to do in respect of The Numinous Way is present what I hope is an alternative style of earthly-harmony, and sought to clarify how this alternative differs from others. For instance, in the matter of empathy, of honour, and of seeking to avoid the dogma arising from some causal abstraction or other. As to the veracity of my personal answers, I admit I do not know.

David Myatt
June 2011 CE

Footnotes:

[1] Catholicism (before the reforms imposed by the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican) represented, in my view, the original Way known as Christianity, and was – at least before those reforms – quite distinct from those schisms which are now known as Protestantism and Orthodox Christianity. Indeed, distinct enough – until those reforms – to be considered a different Way of Life, a Way evident, for example, in Catholic rites (such as the Tridentine Mass), in monasticism, in Papal authority, in the use of Latin, and in the reverence accorded The Blessed Virgin Mary.

Furthermore, it is my view that the schism now termed Protestantism was a classic example of the religious attitude predominating over numinosity – and thus that it is and was redolent of attempts to reduce The Numen to linear causal abstractions. Thus, Mysteries such as the Tridentine Mass became replaced with recitation of Scripture in the vernacular and with attempts to rationally explain – according to some abstract causal theory – the mystery of the consecration.

Catholic Still In Spirit?

Perhaps I remain, partially at least, a Catholic in spirit – in my heart – though not, most of the time, in words and deeds. For while I intellectually and empathically disagree with the teachings of the Catholic Church on many matters – such as homosexuality, contraception, and on divorcées who have remarried being excluded from Holy Communion (unless they have resorted to a Papal Annulment) – I still find myself in my inner weakness not only sometimes frequenting the Lady Chapel of my nearest RC Church – lighting a candle, kneeling, and in reverent silent contemplative prayer remembering, in the felt presence of The Blessed Virgin Mary, those now dead loved ones such as my mother and father and Sue and Francis, and those other women hurt by my selfishness – but also traveling several times a year to where Gregorian chant is sung and where the Tridentine Mass is celebrated, bringing as such Latin chant and such a Latin Mass still do, in me, a renewed awareness of the numinous and a renewal of such humility as I strive – and sometimes still so often fail – to remember and feel.

There seems to me no intricate and difficult interior problem here derived from my somewhat pagan way of pathei-mathos, for that way is essentially – for me, even born as it is from my own pathei-mathos – rather intellectual, a perceivization, lacking as it does something outward, practical, supra-personal, and communal, to presence the numinous and thus affect one's very being in a spiritual way. So I seem to now exist – and have for several years existed – between two worlds: apparently emotionally needing something practical, living, and spiritual beyond myself and my intellectualism, and yet knowing in a rather unemotional manner that it is the way of pathei-mathos, and not Catholicism, which is my weltanschauung.

No intricate and difficult interior problem, no inner dichotomy, because I know the many flaws in my weltanschauung and in myself; and one cannot intellectually create some-thing – manufacture some-thing devoid of ψυχή – to presence the numinous. For it seems to me that such a presencing has to evolve, organically, over causal time, because it has been wordlessly presenced in other mortals and then kept alive because also felt by some of a newer generation. Will – can – such a presencing of the numinous arise from that way of pathei-mathos? Most probably not, intellectual and so very personal as it is.

So the need for some inner, numinous, sustenance remains; for fulfilling as a lot of classical music – such as the Cantatas of JS Bach – is and are, and fulfilling as walks alone in wild and rural Nature are, I sense a yearning in me for something more: some wordless intimation of the Divine which betakes me so far away from my still egoistic self that I am both awed and humbled again, as I often was in Winter wandering a darkened cloister as a monk in that quiet contemplative time between Matins and Lauds.

David Myatt
2015

Extract From A Letter To A Friend

Persecution And War

A Remembering

Reared as a Roman Catholic, educated for a while at a Catholic preparatory school and then – again for a while – at a Catholic boarding school, I remember the history taught by our teachers and Priests of the centuries-long persecution of English and Irish Catholics that began in the 16th century. There were stories of martyrs; of recusants; of secret Masses; of anti-Catholic polemics and propaganda; and of the monks who – after the suppression of the monasteries, the theft of monastic lands and wealth, begun by a tyrannos named Henry – escaped to France and founded monasteries such as the one at Dieulouard in Lorraine.

There thus was engendered in we Catholic children a feeling of difference, aided by the fact that our Mass was in Latin, by our sacrament of confession, by the practice of Gregorian chant, and by the singing of hymns such as Faith Of Our Fathers with its memorable verses

Faith of our Fathers living still
In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword [...]
We will be true to thee till death [...]

Our Fathers, chained in prisons dark,
Were still in heart and conscience free [...]
Faith of our Fathers, Mary's prayers
Shall win our country back to thee

This feeling of difference was forcefully remembered when I in the early 1970's – during The Troubles – ventured to visit Northern Ireland; when I in the mid-1970's and as a Catholic monk spent several weeks staying at a Presbytery in Dublin; and when I in the mid-1990's – before the Good Friday Agreement – visited Derry.

Forcefully remembered because I listened to accounts of the burning of Catholic homes by Protestant mobs in 1969 and the subsequent flight of hundreds of Catholic families to the Irish Republic where they were housed in refugee camps; listened to witness accounts of the killing of eleven Catholics, including a Priest, by the British Army in Ballymurphy in 1971; listened to witness accounts of the killing of fourteen Catholics, again by the British Army, in Derry in 1972; and listened to stories of the persecution of Irish Catholics under British rule.

Such a remembering, such a childhood feeling of difference, formed part of the years-long personal and philosophical reflexion that occupied me for several years as I, between 2006 and 2009, developed my 'numinous way' and then between 2011 and 2012 gradually refined it into the 'way of pathei-mathos', with the core of that reflexion concerning matters such as extremism, my own extremist past, war, prejudice, intolerance, and persecution.

War And Combat

Familiar as I was with ancient works by Thucydides, Herodotus, Livy, and others; with many works concerning more recent European history by modern historians, as well as with personal accounts of those who had fought for both the Allies and the Axis during World War Two, I recalled some words of Cicero:

"Aliis ego te virtutibus, continentiae, gravitatis, iustitiae, fidei, ceteris omnibus."

"because of your other virtues of self-restraint, of dignity, of fairness, of honesty, and all other such qualities..." [1]

Which led me to consider making a distinction between war and a more personal combat, between a modern *krieg* and the Old Germanic *werra*, given that war, from my reading of and admittedly fallible understanding of history, seemed to me to involve – by its very nature of necessitating killing and causing injury – intolerance, hatred, a divisive sense of difference often involving "us" believing we were "better" (or more civilized) than them, our enemies, thus leading to a dehumanization of "the enemy". A divisive sense of difference and a dehumanization often aided (particularly in modern times) by polemics, rumour, and propaganda; and a divisive sense of difference, a dehumanization, together with polemics, rumour, and propaganda, which I knew from my own decades of political and religious activism formed a core part of all types of extremism.

The distinction I considered was that personal combat unlike war did not involve large armies fighting against each other because of some diktat or personal agenda by some tyrannos or because of some ideology or religion or policy of some State or government. Instead, combat involved small groups – such as clans or tribes or neighbours – fighting because of some personal quarrel or some wrong or some perceived grievance.

But the more I considered this supposed distinction between combat and war the more I realized that in practice there was no such distinction since both involved principles similar to those of the Ancient Roman *Leges Regiae* – qv. the *Jus Papirianum* attributed to Sextus Papirius – where someone or some many possess or have acquired (through for example force of arms) or have assumed authority over others, and who by the use of violence and/or by the threat of punishment and/or by oratory or propaganda, are able to force or persuade others to accept such authority and obey the commands of such authority.

This acceptance by individuals of a supra-personal authority – or, more often, the demand by some supra-personal authority that individuals accept such a supra-personal authority – was manifest in the Christian writings of Augustine (b.354 CE, d.430 CE), such as his *De Civitate Dei contra Paganos* where in Book XIX, chapter xiii, he wrote of the necessity of a hierarchy in which God is the supreme authority, with peace between human beings and God requiring

obedience to that authority; with peace between human beings, and civil peace, also of necessity requiring obedience to an order in which each person has their allotted place, "Ordo est parium dispariumque rerum sua cuique loca tribuens dispositio."

Which hierarchy and acceptance of authority led Augustine to describe – in book XXII of *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* – the concept that war requires the authority of a person (such as a monarch) who has such "necessary" authority over others. This concept regarding war has remained a guiding principle of modern Western nations where the authority to inaugurate and prosecute a war against perceived enemies resides in the State, and thus in modern potentates who have seized power or in elected governments and their representatives such as Presidents and Prime Ministers.

Authority And Society

In the nations of the West, such a hierarchy of authority applies not only to war and its prosecution but also to changes, to reform, in society [2] for there is, as I mentioned in *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*,

"a hierarchy of judgement involved, whatever political 'flavour' the government is assigned to, is assumed to represent, or claims it represents; with this hierarchy of necessity requiring the individual in society to either (i) relinquish their own judgement, being accepting of or acquiescing in (from whatever reason or motive such as desire to avoid punishment) the judgement of these others, or (ii) to oppose this 'judgement of others' either actively through some group, association, or movement (political, social, religious) or individually, with there being the possibility that some so opposing this 'judgement of others' may resort to using violent means against the established order." [3]

In the way of pathei-mathos authority is personal, based on individual empathy and a personal pathei-mathos; both of which have a local horizon so that what is

"beyond our personal empathic knowing of others, beyond our knowledge and our experience [our pathei-mathos], beyond the limited (local) range of our empathy and that personal (local) knowledge of ourselves which pathei-mathos reveals – is something we rationally, we humbly, accept we do not know and so cannot judge or form a reasonable, a fair, a balanced, opinion about. For empathy, like pathei-mathos, lives within us; manifesting, as both empathy and pathei-mathos do, the always limited nature, the horizon, of our own knowledge and understanding." [4]

In practical terms this means trying to cultivate within ourselves the virtues mentioned by Cicero – self-restraint, dignity, fairness, honesty – and implies we have no concern for or we seek to cultivate no concern for supra-personal hierarchies and supra-personal authority – whether political, religious, or otherwise – and thus move away from, try to distance ourselves from, the consequences of such supra-personal hierarchies and supra-personal authority manifest as the consequences are and have been, throughout our history, in war, prejudice, intolerance, unfairness, extremism, and persecution in the name of some ideology, some religion, or because someone has commanded us to persecute those that they and others have declared are "our" enemies, and which war and persecutions are often, especially in modern times, accompanied by propaganda and lies.

Thus in the case of my Catholic remembering, those soldiers in Ballymurphy and in Derry shot and killed civilians, women included, because those soldiers believed them to be "enemies", because propaganda had dehumanized those enemies; because those soldiers were part of and obeyed a hierarchical, supra-personal, chain-of-command by being there armed and prepared to use deadly force and violence against individuals they did not personally know; and because in the aftermath of those killings, and for years afterwards, they were not honest and hence did not contradict the propaganda stories, the lies, about those events which some of their superiors and others circulated in an attempt to justify such acts of inhumanity.

Yet for me the real tragedy is that events similar to those of my very personal remembering have occurred on a vaster scale millennia after millennia and are still occurring, again on a vaster scale and world-wide, despite us having access to the wisdom of the past, manifest as such wisdom is, for those reared in the West, in the Agamemnon of Aeschylus, in the Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles, in the mythos of Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες [5], in many of the writings of Cicero, in Τὰ εἰς ἑαυτὸν by Marcus Aurelius, in the numinous beauty of Gregorian chant, in the music of JS Bach, and in so many, many, other writers and artists ancient and modern.

Đa sceolde se hearpere weorðan swa sarig
þæt he ne meahte ongemong oðrum mannum bion
(XXXV, 6)

David Myatt
9.ix.18

[1] M. Tullius Cicero, *Pro Murena Oratio*, 23. My translation.

[2] By 'society' in the context of this essay and the way of pathei-mathos is meant a collection of individuals who dwell, who live, in a particular area and who are subject to the same laws and the same institutions of authority. Modern society is thus a manifestation of some State, and States are predicated on individuals actively or passively accepting some supra-personal authority, be it governmental (national) or regional (county), or more usually both.

[3] *Society, Politics, Social Reform, and Pathei-Mathos. The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*. Seventh edition.
<https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

[4] *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*. 2015. <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/dwm-some-metaphysical-questions-v5b.pdf>

[5] "Trimorphed Moirai with their ever-heedful Furies." Aeschylus (attributed), *Prometheus Bound*, 516. My translation.

Questions Of Hermeneutics And Exegesis

For over twenty years questions of hermeneutics and exegesis in relation to religions, ideologies, and philosophies have interested and concerned me, leading to my conjecture that the use of denotata to express a revelation, a spirituality, an idea, an ideal, or a philosophy, results in not only a dialectic of opposites - for example in the Gospels of Christianity ἁμαρτία (conventionally interpreted in Gospel translations as sin) contrasted with 'righteousness' (and being saved, rewarded by God with everlasting life in Heaven) and φαῦλος (conventionally in interpreted in Gospel translations as evil) contrasted with 'good' - but also in problems of exegesis: as in how Hellenistic Greek is expounded in terms of a modern language such as English. Thus, is the interpretation of 'sin' from the Hellenistic Greek ἁμαρτία imposing a meaning that may not have been germane to the milieu of such an ancient period in all or certain instances? [1]

In the matter of the Gospels of John did the author use ἁμαρτία to express, to expound, something - 'sin' - which might well have been a foreign concept to speakers of the Greek of that time when there was a common belief among many of them in a hierarchy of pagan deities and of propitiation (such as offering gifts or a sacrifice to the gods) for misdeeds or for 'offending' a god or gods or to ask for their help?

Consider the tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum some arguably written around the time or not long after that Gospel, with the Poemandres tractate centred around θεός as in this from v.3:

φημὶ ἐγώ, Μαθεῖν θέλω τὰ ὄντα καὶ νοῆσαι τὴν τούτων φύσιν καὶ γνῶναι τὸν θεόν·

"I answered that I seek to learn what is real, to apprehend the physis of beings, and to have knowledge of theos." [2]

Is theos here the Jehovah of the Hebrews and the God of Christianity? Or is it better to understand theos in a non-anthropomorphic way as Being, the source of beings, mortal and otherwise? If the interpretation is 'God' then this tractate, and many of the others, arguable express early Christian weltanschauungen with an implicit dialectic of opposites, unlike the neutral, non-anthropomorphic Being which can metaphysically be understood as 'the divine', the numinous. [3]

Such a dialectic, as I have previously endeavoured to explain, [4] invariably leads to conflict both internal, within some individuals, and external between individuals and entities, such as religious or political groups or factions who or which claim to have the correct or a better interpretation or understanding of their beliefs or ideology. Hence extremism [5] and the suffering that such extremism causes.

My personal experiences, over some four decades, and my subsequent reflexion on that experience, have led me to conclude that, rather than denotata, the personal experiencing of the numinous through empathy and pathei-mathos is of fundamental importance in understanding both our physis (φύσις) - and thus our relation to Being and to beings - and Being, the numinous, itself. [6]

To illustrate the dialectic of denotata and the subsequent suffering caused there is the National Socialism of Germany between 1933 and 1945. This was a way of life centred around denotata such as kampf, nation, and ethnic identity, with individuals judged by, and expected to judge others by, the primary criterion of ethnicity, with particular ethnicities assigned a certain value (high or low), and each individual judged by how well they adhered to the duty they were expected to do in respect of their nation (their land) and the ethnicity they were said to belong to or believed they belonged to. In addition, kampf between individuals, ethnicities, and nations was considered healthy and necessary, with such struggle revealing the worth of individuals and thus those considered fit to lead and assume positions of authority.

This German National Socialist way of life was therefore a collective, supra-personal, one with the empathy and pathei-mathos of individuals, and the personal judgement and compassion derived from them, ignored or suppressed in favour of obedience to the 'will of the collective' (the folk, the nation) embodied by Der Führer and through the führerprinzip and with disobedience not only disapproved of but liable to be punished. This dialectic of opposites - of certain types of individuals or ways of behaviour being better than others and with The Third Reich having a particular destiny achievable through kampf - naturally led to the impersonal harshness of the Nürnberger Gesetze, as well as to the invasion of Poland and thence to the Second World War with the attendant deaths and suffering of millions of human beings. German National Socialism was thus from its beginnings to its ending in 1945 an extremism whose principles, causes, and characteristics promoted and incited harsh, uncompassionate, actions.

In contrast, the personal empathy and pathei-mathos of individuals provides a natural balance devoid of denotata, expressed or implied, and can only promote individual actions consistent with compassion. It cannot be extrapolated from the individual lexperiencing to form anything supra-personal expressed by a denotatum or by some denotata such as an -ism or an -ology be such religious, ideological, or political or otherwise, since in doing so its individual physis, its natural nameless balance, is replaced sooner or later by a dialectic of opposites.

In practical terms this implies the mortal individual could, at best, be a fallible example or inspiration for some others, since to claim or to be perceived by others as other than fallible and mortal, and other than a possible and personal inspiration, is ὕβρις (hubris) and a contradiction of the nameless balance that for centuries we have, according to my

understanding, erroneously denoted by appellations such as θεός, ὁ θεός, and God with the inevitable dialectic of exegesis and conflict and of suffering.

In relation to hubris,

σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης, μὴ δ' ὕβριν ὀφελλε:
ὕβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῷ βροτῷ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς
ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύναται, βαρύνθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς
ἐγκύρσας ἄτησιν: ὁδὸς δ' ἐτέρηφι παρελθεῖν
κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει
ἐς τέλος ἐξελθοῦσα: παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω

Hesiod, Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι, vv 213-218

You should listen to [the goddess] Fairness and not oblige Hubris
Since Hubris harms unfortunate mortals while even the more fortunate
Are not equal to carrying that heavy a burden, meeting as they do with Mischief.
The best path to take is the opposite one: that of honour
For, in the end, Fairness is above Hubris
Which is something the young come to learn from adversity. [7]

ἐξ ὧν δὲ ἡ γένεσις ἐστὶ τοῖς οὖσι, καὶ τὴν φθορὰν εἰς ταῦτα γίνεσθαι κατὰ τὸ χρεῶν· διδόναι γὰρ αὐτὰ
δίκην καὶ τίσιν ἀλλήλοις τῆς ἀδικίας κατὰ τὴν τοῦ χρόνου τάξιν. Anaximander [8]

Where beings have their origin there also they cease to exist: offering payment to balance, one to another,
their unbalance for such is the arrangement of what is passing. [9]

David Myatt
July 2023

[1] I expounded on the matter of the word sin in *Interpretation and The Question of Sin* which forms part of my 2013 essay *Exegesis and Translation, Some Personal Reflexions*. <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/exegesis-and-translation-partsone-two.pdf>

[2] My translation, from *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

[3] From *Mythoi To Empathy: A New Appreciation Of The Numinous*, appendix II of *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

[4] In Part Seven, *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*, of *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>; and in the essay *Numinosity, Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/03/dwm-denotata-empathy-v1b.pdf>

[5] In *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism* I defined extremism and an extremist thus:

"By extreme I mean to be harsh, so that my understanding of an extremist is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious nature. Here, harsh is: rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic.

Hence extremism is considered to be: (1) the result of such harshness, and (2) the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists. In addition, a fanatic is considered to be someone with a surfeit of zeal or whose enthusiasm for some objective, or for some cause, is intemperate.

In the philosophical terms of my weltanschauung, an extremist is someone who commits the error of hubris." <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/david-myatt-rejecting-extremism.pdf>

[6] My conclusions are outlined in two works: *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>, and *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/david-myatt-rejecting-extremism.pdf>

[7] Notes on my translation:

a. δίκη. The goddess of Fairness/Justice/Judgement, and – importantly – of Tradition (Ancestral Custom). In Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι, as in Θεογονία (Theogony), Hesiod is recounting and explaining part of that tradition, one important aspect of which tradition is understanding the relation between the gods and mortals. Given both the antiquity of the text and the context, 'Fairness' – as the name of the goddess – is, in my view, more appropriate than the now common

appellation 'Justice', considering the modern (oft times impersonal) connotations of the word 'justice'.

b. Μischief. The sense of ἄτησιν here is not of 'delusion' nor of 'calamities', per se, but rather of encountering that which or those whom (such as the goddess of mischief, Ἄτη) can bring mischief or misfortune into the 'fortunate life' of a 'fortunate mortal', and which encounters are, according to classical tradition, considered as having been instigated by the gods. Hence, of course, why Sophocles [Antigone, 1337-8] wrote ὥς πεπρωμένης οὐκ ἔστι θνητοῖς συμφορᾶς ἀπαλλαγὴ (mortals cannot be delivered from the misfortunes of their fate).

c. δίκαιος. Honour expresses the sense that is meant: of being fair; capable of doing the decent thing; of dutifully observing ancestral customs. A reasonable alternative for 'honour' would thus be 'decency', both preferable to words such as 'just' and 'justice' which are not only too impersonal but have too many inappropriate modern connotations.

d. νήπιος. Literal - 'young', 'uncultured' (i.e. un-schooled, un-educated in the ways of ancestral custom) - rather than metaphorical ('foolish', ignorant).

[8] Diels-Kranz, 12A9, B1

[9] In respect of χρόνος, it is not here a modern abstract measurable 'time' but 'the passing' of living or events as evident in the Agamemnon:

ποίου χρόνου δὲ καὶ πεπόρθηται πόλις 278

Then - how long has it been since the citadel was ravaged?

τίς δὲ πλὴν θεῶν ἅπαντ' ἀπήμων τὸν δι' αἰῶνος χρόνον 554-5

Who - except for the gods - passes their entire life without any injury at all?

In respect of ἀδικία, here it simply implies unbalance in contrast to the balance that is δίκη. The translation 'disorder' - like 'order' for δίκη - is too redolent of some modern or ancient morality designed to manifest 'order' in contrast to its dialectical opposite 'disorder'.

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All translations by DW Myatt

Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos

Spirituality, Humility, and A Learning From Grief

David Myatt

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Prefatory Note

This compilation is of some letters and essays of mine written during the past two years (2012 - 2013) dealing with questions of religion, redemption, expiation, humility, and spirituality in general, and thus compliments both the collection of my writings about the philosophy of pathei-mathos in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos* and my autobiography *Myngath*.

All translations, and interpretations of the meaning of texts (Quranic, poetic and otherwise), are mine, and, in the interests of clarity, I have included a glossary of terms and Greek words - taken from *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos* - given that (i) I tend to use certain Greek words to express my meaning, and (ii) I often have a particular philosophical interpretation or understanding of certain English terms.

David Myatt
2013

In Loving Remembrance of Sue, died 4th April 1993
In Loving Remembrance of Frances, died 29th May 2006

o o o

I Numinous Expiation

One of the many problems regarding my own past which troubles me - and has troubled me for a while - is how can a person make reparation for suffering caused, inflicted, and/or dishonourable deeds done. For, in the person of empathy, of compassion, of honour, a knowledge and understanding of dishonour done, of the suffering one has caused - perhaps before one became such a person of compassion, honour, and empathy - is almost invariably the genesis of strong personal feelings such as remorse, grief, and sorrow. The type of strong feelings that Christopher Marlowe has Iarbus, King of Gaetulia, voice at the end of the play *The Tragedie of Dido Queene of Carthage*, written c.1587:

Cursed Iarbas, die to expiate
The grief that tires upon thine inward soul.

One of the many benefits of an organized theistic religion, such as Christianity or Islam or Judaism, is that mechanisms of personal expiation exist whereby such feelings can be placed in context and expiated by appeals to the supreme deity. In Judaism, there is Teshuvah culminating in Yom Kippur, the day of expiation/reconciliation. In Catholicism, there is the sacrament of confession and penance. In Islam, there is personal dua to, and reliance on, Allah Ar-Rahman, Ar-Raheem, As-Salaam.

Even pagan religions and ways had mechanisms of personal expiation for wrong deeds done, often in the form of propitiation; the offering of a sacrifice, perhaps, or compensation by the giving or the leaving of a valuable gift or votive offering at some numinous - some sacred and venerated - place or site.

One motivation, in the case of pagan religions and ways, for a person to seek expiation is fear of *wrake*; fear of the retribution or of the misfortune, that - from the gods - might befall them or their descendants in this life. Similarly, for those acceptive of an all-knowing, all-seeing supreme deity - or even of the Buddhist mechanism of karma - there is also fear of *wrake*; fear of the punishment, the retribution, the misfortune, that might await them in the next life; or, in the case of Buddhism, the type of life that might result when next they are reborn.

As the Owl explains in the mediæval English religious allegory *The Owl and the Nightingale*,

ich wat þar schal beo niþ & wrake

I can see when there shall be strife and retribution [1]

All such religious mechanisms of expiation, whatever the theology and regardless of the motivation of the individual in seeking such expiation, are or can be cathartic; restorative, healing. But if there is no personal belief in either a supreme deity or in deities, how then to numinously make reparation, propitiation, and thus to not only expiate such feelings as remorse, grief, and sorrow but also and importantly offset the damage one's wrong actions have caused, since by their very nature such suffering-causing actions are ὕβρις and not only result in harm, in people suffering, but also upset the natural balance.

In truth, I do not know the answer to the question how to so numinously make reparation, propitiation. I can only conject, surmise. One of my conjectures is enantiodromia; of the process, mentioned by Diogenes Laërtius and attributed to Heraclitus, of a wholeness arising both before and after discord and division [2]. This wholeness is the healthy, the numinous, interior, inward, and personal balance beyond the separation of beings - beyond πόλεμος and ὕβρις and thus beyond ἔρις; beyond the separation and thence the strife, the discord, which abstractions, ideations, encourage and indeed which they manufacture, bring-into-being. As Heraclitus intimated, according to another quotation attributed to him -

εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἔόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα [χρεών]

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord δίκη, and that beings are naturally born by discord. [3]

But what, then, in practical personal terms are this wholeness and this process termed enantiodromia? To me, this wholeness is a knowing and an acceptance of both the importance of the numinous principle of Δίκη [4] and the necessity of wu-wei [5] - and a knowing which empathy can provide - and thence a desire to live life in a non-interfering manner consistent with empathy, compassion, reason, honour, and humility. And it is this very knowing, this very desire to live in such a manner, which is enantiodromia; which is cathartic, restorative, healing; with a natural humility and the cultivation and practice of reason - σωφρονεῖν, a fair and balanced judgement - being the essence of this personal process, the essence of enantiodromia.

For the human virtue of humility is essential in us for us not to repeat our errors of ὕβρις, a humility which our πάθει μάθος makes us aware of, makes us feel, know, in a very personal sense. For we are aware of, we should remember, our fallibility, our mortality, our mistakes, our errors, our wrong deeds, the suffering we have caused, the harm we have done and inflicted; how much we personally have contributed to discord, strife, sorrow.

In addition, by and through humility, we do what we do not because we expect some reward, or some forgiveness, given by some supra-personal supreme Being, or have some idealized duty to such a Being or to some abstraction (such as some nation, some State) but because it is in our very nature to do an act of compassion, a deed of honour: to do something which is noble and selfless. That is, we act, not out of duty, not out of a desire for Heaven or Jannah, or enlightenment or some other “thing” we have posited – not from any emotion, desire or motive, not because some scripture or some revelation or some Buddha says we should – but because we have lost the illusion of our self-contained, personal, identity, lost our Earth-centric, human-centric, perspective, lost even the causal desire to be strive to something different, and instead just *are*: that is, we are just one microcosmic living mortal connexion between all life, on Earth, and in the Cosmos. For our very nature, as human beings, is a Cosmic nature – a natural part of the unfolding, of the naturally and numinously changing, Cosmos.

Thus a personal humility is the natural balance living within us; that is, we being or becoming or returning to the balance that does not give rise to ἔρις. Or, expressed simply, humility disposes us toward gentleness, toward kindness, toward love, toward peace; toward the virtues that are balance, that express our humanity.

This personal humility inclines us toward σωφρονεῖν; toward being fair, toward rational deliberation, toward a lack of haste. Toward a balanced judgement and thence toward a balanced life of humility, wu-wei, and a knowing of the wisdom of Δίκη.

There is nothing especially religious here, nor any given or necessary praxis. No techniques; no supplication to some-thing or to some posited Being. No expectation of reward, in this life or some posited next life. Only an interior personal change, an attempt to live in a certain gentle, quiet, way so as not to intentionally cause suffering, so as not to upset the natural balance of Life.

DWM
February 2012

Notes

[1] v.1194. The text is that of the Cotton Caligula MS in the British Library as transcribed by JWH Atkins in *The Owl and the Nightingale*, Cambridge University Press, 1922.

[2] The quotation from Diogenes Laërtius is: πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ’ εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα (ix. 7)

My translation is: *All by genesis is appropriately apportioned [separated into portions] with beings bound together again by enantiodromia.*

As I mentioned in my essay *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*:

I have used a transliteration of the compound Greek word - *ἐναντιοδρομίας* - rather than given a particular translation, since the term enantiodromia in my view suggests the uniqueness of expression of the original, and which original in my view is not adequately, and most certainly not accurately, described by a usual translation such as 'conflict of opposites'. Rather, what is suggested is 'confrontational contest' - that is, by facing up to the expected/planned/inevitable contest.

Interestingly, Carl Jung - who was familiar with the sayings of Heraclitus - used the term enantiodromia to describe the emergence of a trait (of character) to offset another trait and so restore a certain psychological balance within the individual.

[3] Fragment 80. qv. my *Heraclitus - Some Translations and Notes*

As I noted in *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*, it is interesting that:

"in the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, and in circulation at the time of Heraclitus, a personified *πόλεμος* (as the *δαίμων* of kindred strife) married a personified *ὑβρις* (as the *δαίμων* of arrogant pride) [8] and that it was a common folk belief that *πόλεμος* accompanied *ὑβρις* - that is, that Polemos followed Hubris around rather than vice versa, causing or bringing *ἔρις*."

[4] As mentioned in my *Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*, *Δίκη* is that noble, respectful, balance understood, for example, by Sophocles (among many others) - for instance, Antigone respects the natural balance, the customs and traditions of her own numinous culture, given by the gods, whereas Creon verges towards and finally commits, like Oedipus in *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the error of *ὑβρις* and is thus "taught a lesson" (just like Oedipus) by the gods because, as Aeschylus wrote -

*Δίκη δὲ τοῖς μὲν παθοῦσιν
μαθεῖν ἐπιρρέπει*

In respect of Δίκη, I write and spell it thus – in this modern way and with a capital Δ – to intimate a new, a particular and numinous, philosophical principle, and differentiate it from the more general δίκη. As a numinous principle, or axiom, Δίκη suggests what lies beyond and what was the genesis of δίκη personified as the goddess, Judgement – the goddess of natural balance, of the ancestral way and ancestral customs.

Thus, Δίκη implies the balance, the reasoned judgement, the thoughtful reasoning – σωφρονεῖν – that πάθει μάθος brings and restores, and which accumulated πάθει μάθος of a particular folk or πόλις forms the basis for their ancestral customs. δίκη is therefore, as the numinous principle Δίκη, what may be said to be a particular and a necessary balance between ἀρετή and ὕβρις – between the ὕβρις that often results when the personal, the natural, quest for ἀρετή becomes unbalanced and excessive.

[5] Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in my philosophy of The Numinous Way "to refer to a personal 'letting-be' deriving from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive – that is, is ὕβρις. In practice, this is the cultivation of a certain (an acausal, numinous) perspective – that life, things/beings, change, flow, exist, in certain natural ways which we human beings cannot change however hard we might try; that such a hardness of human trying, a belief in such hardness, is unwise, un-natural, upsets the natural balance and can cause misfortune/suffering for us and/or for others, now or in the future. Thus success lies in discovering the inner nature of things/beings/ourselves and gently, naturally, slowly, working with this inner nature, not striving against it."

I first became acquainted with the concept of wu-wei when, as a youth living in the Far East, I studied Taoism and a learnt a martial art based on Taoism. Thus it might be fair to assume that Taoism may well have influenced, to some degree, the development of my weltanschauung.

II Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God Some Personal Musings

Introduction

For the past three or so years, as I developed my 'numinous way' and then last year refined it into the philosophy of pathei-mathos, I have reflected more and more on questions concerning good, evil, honour, God, and religion and ethics in general; related as these matters are (at least according to my fallible understanding) to our nature, and possible development, as human beings, and thence to matters such as society, culture, and the jurisprudence by which modern societies function, or endeavour or aspire to function; and manifesting, as answers to such questions should, at least some explanations concerning the evidence that we human beings possess, and have possessed for thousands upon thousands of years, a paradoxical character, capable of - and having done - both honourable and dishonourable deeds, of being both 'good' and 'bad'.

Thus some of the questions of concern are: (i) what is 'good' and 'bad'; (ii) have the definitions and thence the theology and epistemology and the morality of religions, over millennia, enabled more and more of us to avoid doing or causing what is 'bad'; (iii) what, if anything, can or perhaps should replace such definitions, such theology, such epistemology, such morality - such religions - for those who do not or cannot accept such religious answers and the guidance so offered; (iv) does jurisprudence - and thence The State - offer an acceptable alternative; and, perhaps most importantly, as I have endeavoured to intimate in some other recent musings, (v) can we as a species change, sans a belief in some reward or the threat of punishment - be such karmic, eschatological, or deriving from something such as a State - or "are we fated, under Sun, to squabble and bicker and hate and kill and destroy and exploit this planet and its life until we, a failed species, leave only dead detritic traces of our hubris?" [1]

Today - thousands of years after the births of Lao Tzu, of the Buddha, of Moses, of Jesus of Nazareth, of Muhammad - horrid things still happen every minute of every day to people who do not deserve them, who have done nothing dishonourable. Horrid things caused by other human beings, and it certainly

seems to me that we, as a species - en masse, world-wide - cannot seem to prevent ourselves from doing what is bad, here understanding and accepting, initially at least, 'the bad' as that which harms or kills or causes suffering to others. All we seem to have done is manufacture more excuses for ourselves and for others in order to try and justify the harm done, and the killings and the suffering caused, and thus

"...latterly, in the name of some country, or some nation, or some political ideal, or some cause, or on behalf of some-thing supra-personal we believed in, we sallied for to war or did deeds that caused suffering, death, destruction, and inflicted violence on others. Defending this, or attacking that. Invading here; or colonizing there. Dreaming of or determined to find glory. Always, always, using the excuse that our cause, our ideal, our country, our nation, our security, our prosperity, our 'way of life', our 'destiny', hallowed our deeds; believing that such suffering, death, destruction as we caused, and the violence we inflicted on others, were somehow justified because 'we' were right and 'they' our foes, were wrong or in some way not as 'civilized' or as 'just' as us since 'their cause' or their 'way of life' or way of doing things was, according to us, reprehensible." [2]

But is 'the bad' really that which harms or kills, or causes suffering to, others, and if so, is it necessary - moral - to qualify this understanding by appending 'without just cause' to it, and what, therefore - as others, from the *Jus Papirianum* attributed to Sextus Papirius to Augustine of Hippo to Thomas Aquinas and beyond, have sought to define - is a 'just cause' so that 'the bad' is then understood to be "that which harms or kills or causes suffering to others without just cause".

This essay presents some musings of mine regarding such questions.

DWM
April 2013

Part One

Good and Evil - An Early Christian Perspective

Given the influence of Christianity over individuals in the West during the past two millennia, especially in terms of eschatology and jurisprudence, it seems apposite to consider how the concepts of 'good' and 'evil' are presented in

Christian scripture.

In Genesis 3.5 it is written that:

ἤδει γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ὅτι ἐν ἧ ἅν ἡμέρᾳ φάγητε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, διανοιχθήσονται
ὕμῶν οἱ ὀφθαλμοί, καὶ ἔσεσθε ὡς θεοὶ γινώσκοντες καλὸν καὶ
πονηρόν. [3]

What, therefore, is meant by γινώσκοντες καλὸν καὶ πονηρόν? Most translations - modern and otherwise - provide something akin to "knowing good and evil" which we, after two thousand years, presume to associate with some theological ideation such as 'the forces/realm of good' contrasted with (or verses) 'the forces/realm of evil' as if both have or can have an existence independent of the physical world and independent of ourselves, an existence or a force associated, or seemingly associated, with a being described, in the Hebrew scriptures, as שָׁרָפִי - a serpent - and in LXX as ὄφις, a mythological creature familiar to readers of Hesiod's *Theogony* [4] and from myths and legends concerning the oracle at Delphi and the Πύθων, which is both curious and interesting given that שָׁרָפִי can signify divination (qv. Genesis 44.15, for example) and the whisper (the hiss) of a soothsayer or an enchantress.

But, in respect of this 'good and evil', might the Greek of LXX - and the Hebrew text - suggest something other than such a theological ideation? That is, how might the Greek text have been understood in its time?

The Greek of LXX contrasts κάλος with πονηρόν. Now, κάλος is classically understood (as often in Homer) as 'what is pleasing' (as in pleasing to look upon) and that which is considered beneficial and/or admirable (as in admirable deeds); whence what is beautiful/healthy and what is noble or honourable. Classically understood, πονηρόν is 'wearisome' (as in Hesiod, for instance in reference to the tasks that Hercules has to endure) and also what is considered dishonourable or cowardly, as in Sophocles, *Philoctetes* v.437 - πόλεμος οὐδέν' ἄνδρ' ἐκὼν αἰρεῖ πονηρόν, ἀλλὰ τοὺς χρηστοὺς αἰεὶ (battle does not willingly take cowards, but - as of old - the honourable).

The classical meaning of the Genesis text - of the Greek still understood at the time of LXX (c. 250 BCE) and before later interpretations [5] - might therefore seem to suggest some contrast between what is beneficial/admirable/beautiful/noble/honourable and what is wearisome/cowardly/dishonourable.

Interestingly, the sense of the Hebrew text of Genesis 3.5 seems to follow the sense of the Greek, or vice versa [6] - יָדַעַי טוֹב וְרָע . That is, "knowing tov and rah," with טוֹב suggesting pleasing, pleasant, beautiful; and רָע suggesting adversity, unpleasant, harmful, injurious.

In Genesis 8.21, πονηρόν also occurs, again usually translated as some abstract

'evil' - man's heart is evil from his youth, and so on - even though the classical/Hebrew understanding of the term suggests the former more personal sense of dishonourable/injurious, as does its occurrence in the New Testament, as, for example, in Luke 6.45 where it is - interestingly - contrasted not with κάλος but with ἀγαθός, and where the context - of a healthy (a good, κάλος) tree not bearing rotten/bad (σαπρός) fruit, καλὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν σαπρὸν - also suggests not some abstract (demonic) 'evil' but a dishonourable (a bad, cowardly) person bringing forth some-thing bad, burdensome, dishonourable, and thus unhealthy, as rotten fruit is unhealthy and harmful, and with Luke 6.43-5 therefore translated thus:

For no healthy tree brings forth rotten fruit just as a rotten tree cannot bring forth healthy fruit. For each tree is judged by its fruit. A good person from the store of good in their heart brings forth what is good, and a bad person from their bad store brings forth what is bad; for it is because of an overflowing heart that the mouth speaks.

Οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν δένδρον καλὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν σαπρὸν, οὐδὲ πάλιν δένδρον σαπρὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν καλόν, ἕκαστον γὰρ δένδρον ἐκ τοῦ ἰδίου καρποῦ γινώσκεται· ὁ ἀγαθὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ θησαυροῦ τῆς καρδίας προφέρει τὸ ἀγαθόν, καὶ ὁ πονηρὸς ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ προφέρει τὸ πονηρόν· ἐκ γὰρ περισσεύματος καρδίας λαλεῖ τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ

This 'healthy tree' and 'rotten fruit' make sense, for how can a tree be evil? Similarly, the contrast of πονηρόν with ἀγαθός also makes sense in referring to a bad person and good person, for ἀγαθός is classically understood as brave; honourable; well-bred (as often in Homer) and as implying a personal quality, such as prowess, excellence, in some-thing - or good at some-thing - as in The Agamemnon of Aeschylus:

ὅστις δ' ἀγαθὸς προβατογνώμων,
οὐκ ἔστι λαθεῖν ὄμματα φωτός,
τὰ δοκοῦντ' εὐφρονος ἐκ διανοίας
ὕδαρεϊ σαίνειν φιλότῃτι.

Yet to he who has a good knowledge of his herd
A person's eyes cannot conceal what is a feeble begging for friendship
Behind a pretence of reasoned good judgement. (vv. 795-798)

and as in Oedipus Tyrannus by Sophocles:

ὄρᾳς ἴν' ἤκεις, ἀγαθὸς ὦν γνώμην ἀνήρ,
τοῦμόν παριεῖς καὶ καταμβλύνων κέαρ;

Observe where you have come to with your prowess in reason
By me giving way and blunting my passion. (vv. 687-8)

The scriptural contrast of rottenness and health is also evident, for instance, in Romans 12.21:

μη νικῶ ὑπὸ τοῦ κακοῦ ἀλλὰ νίκα ἐν τῷ ἀγαθῷ τὸ κακόν

where ἀγαθός is contrasted with κακός rather than with πονηρόν. Although the verse is often translated along the lines of 'Do not let evil conquer you, instead conquer evil with good,' classically understood, κακός is what is 'bad' in the sense of some-thing rotten or unhealthy, or - the opposite of κάλος - what is displeasing to see. κακός is also what is unlucky, a misfortune, and/or injurious, as for example in The Agamemnon

τὸ μὲν γυναῖκα πρῶτον ἄρσενος δίχα
ῥῆσθαι δόμοις ἔρημον ἔκπαγλον κακόν

Primarily, for a lady to be separate from her mate -
To remain unprotected by family - is a harsh misfortune (vv. 862-3)

Given the sense of ἀγαθός previously mentioned (with reference for example to Luke 6.45) and this sense of κακός, then Romans 12.21 might suggest: "Do not let what is rotten win; instead, overpower what is rotten with what is good," and good in the sense of beneficial and healthy, so that an alternative would be "Do not let what is harmful win; instead, overpower what is harmful with what is healthy."

Similarly, Romans 12.17 - with its contrast of κακός and κάλος - would imply:

Do not render what is bad with what is bad; rather, show concern for what all see is good.

μηδενὶ κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἀποδιδόντες, προνοοῦμενοι καλὰ ἐνώπιον πάντων ἀνθρώπων·

Understood thus, the impression is not of 'fire and brimstone' preaching but of something rather gentle, something much more human and appealing and understanding of human nature; something evident, for example, in the well-known passage (Romans 13.10) ἡ ἀγάπη τῷ πλησίον κακὸν οὐκ ἐργάζεται· πλήρωμα οὖν νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη: love brings no harm to the neighbour; love is the completion of the law.

Furthermore, it is this love which is healthy and good; which can 'overpower what is harmful', what is bad.

What these examples reveal - and many other examples from Christian scripture could be adduced - is not abstract, impersonal, theological concepts of 'good' and 'evil' but rather something personal that individuals can relate to and understand, and it is tempting therefore to suggest that it was later, and theological, interpretations and interpolations which led to a harsh dichotomy,

an apocalyptic eschatology, a 'war' between an abstract 'good' and 'evil', and that with such interpretations and interpolations - much in evidence in the persecution of alleged heretics - the simple gospel message of the health of love was somehow lost for a while, to be, later on, re-expressed by people such as William Penn, who wrote, in his *Some Fruits of Solitude*, "Let us then try what love can do."

Notes

[1] *Blue Reflected Starlight*. 2012

[2] qv. *A Slowful Learning, Perhaps*. 2012

[3] Septuaginta - Vetus Testamentum. c. 250 BCE.

[4] qv. the Chimaera (vv. 319ff), described as having three heads, one of which - ἢ δ' ὄφις - was a serpent, a dragon: ὄμιθεν δὲ δράκων.

[5] The current consensus is that LXX was written around 250 BCE, give or take a few decades. This is the Hellenistic era of Euclid and Archimedes; a period when Homer was still recited, and the classic tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and others, some two or more centuries before, were still understood and appreciated, just as the language of Shakespeare - and his plays - are understood and appreciated today. This appreciation of classical Greek literature continued into the Roman era and beyond, with the cultured Cicero, for example, often explaining classical Greek terms for his Latin readers, and with Marcus Aurelius - Roman Emperor a century after the time of Jesus of Nazareth - writing his 'meditations', Τὰ εἰς ἑαυτὸν - in the same (possibly Attic derived) κοινή Greek as that of LXX and the New Testament.

It is therefore seems likely that the scribes of LXX - and possibly those of the New Testament - were also familiar with the earlier classical literature.

[6] The date of the Hebrew scriptures has been much discussed. The earliest fragments of extant texts of both LXX and the Hebrew scriptures currently known suggest that LXX is slightly (but not much) older than the written text of the Hebrew scriptures of which papyrus fragments survive. However, according to Jewish aural tradition the scrolls of the Torah were first written c. 1000 BCE and thus would predate LXX by many centuries.

Part Two

Good and Evil - A Muslim Perspective

The classical and the early Christian sense of a human, and a natural, and not an abstract, dogmatical, good and bad, briefly outlined in part one, is also found in Islam: in the Quran, in the Sunnah, and in Shariah. For the sense of 'the bad' - الْخَبِيثُ - is of what is rotten, unhealthy, dirty, unclean, defective; with the sense of 'the good', of 'good things' - الطَّيِّبَاتِ - being pleasing, pure, healthy, natural, beautiful, noble.

Consider, for example, Surah 5, Ayah 100 of the Quran:

قُلْ لَا يَسْتَوِي الْخَبِيثُ وَالطَّيِّبُ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ كَثْرَةُ
الْخَبِيثِ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَتَأُولَىٰ أَلَلْبَبِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

A fallible 'interpretation of meaning' [1] is:

"The dirty and the clean are not alike even though, being ubiquitous, what is dirty may entice [أَعْجَبَكَ] you." [2]

In Surah 61, Ayah 12, 'good' - طَيِّبَةً - is what is beautiful, pleasant:

يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَيُدْخِلْكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ وَمَسَاكِنَ طَيِّبَةً فِي جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ
الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٢﴾

" [Allah] will forgive your transgressions [ذُنُوبَكُمْ] and guide you to Jannah wherein are rivers, cascading down, and those beautiful dwellings set within perpetually-flowering gardens. And this is the success that matters." [Interpretation of meaning]

Consider also Surah 2, Ayah 267:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّا
 أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ۖ وَلَا تَيَمَّمُوا الْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ وَلَسْتُمْ
 بِآخِذِيهِ إِلَّا أَنْ تُغْمِضُوا فِيهِ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ ﴿٢١٧﴾

"From what We give you from the earth and from the good things you have earned - disburse; but do not look toward [تَيَمَّمُوا] disbursing those defective things, which you would never take [for yourself] unless your eyes were closed." [Interpretation of meaning]

As with the New Testament, what these examples reveal - and many other examples could be adduced - is not abstract concepts of 'good' and 'evil' but rather something that is understandable by individuals and related to themselves and the world around them [3].

Jurisprudence and Society

Islam and Christianity have both developed traditions relating to the scope, detail, intent, and the implementation, of the laws necessitated by a society [4] - a jurisprudence - as well as traditions, or doctrines, concerning the nature of the authority that has or asserts it has the power to enforce such laws, and which laws often seek to criminalize 'the bad' and thus offer an interpretation of 'the good' and 'the bad'.

The traditional Christian view, evident in the Catholic tradition, is one of not only canon law but of the exercise of spiritual influence, direct and indirect, over civil authority to the extent, for example, that the Code of Justinian of 529-534 CE begins with *In Nomine Domini Nostri Jesu Christi* and (i) enshrined in law the authority of the Church, (ii) enshrined in law the requirement that all persons subject to the jurisdiction of the code be Christian, and thus that society be a Christian one; and (iii) detailed in law what constituted heresy.

For Muslims, Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) - the textual sources of which are the Quran and Sunnah - is a legal and an ethical guide to what is good and what is bad; that is, to what is halal (beneficial) and what is haram (harmful) from the perspective of the only success that, for a Muslim, matters: the success of being guided by Allah to dwell in the perpetually-flowering Gardens of Paradise, wherein are rivers, cascading down.

Being a legal as well as an ethical guide, fiqh deals not only with religious worship but also with civil, business, and domestic, matters such as

transactions, ownership, funds, and inheritance, and thus provides a framework for a society whose aim is to assist Muslims who live together in a particular area to know and follow the precepts and the way of life revealed by Muhammad: to do and inspire what is good, and avoid and dissuade others from doing what is bad, تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ (Amr bil Maroof wa Nahi anil Munkar) [5].

However, it seems to me that the problem with jurisprudence, Muslim and Christian, is and was our fallible, human, understanding of the revelation, of the original message; a problem classically understood in Islam by the distinction made by Muslim scholars between fiqh - our fallible understanding and attempts at interpretation - and Shariah, the divine and perfect guidance given by Allah, based as fiqh (classical Islamic jurisprudence) is on the principles of acceptance of diversity (of scholarly opinion), on custom [6], and on reasoned deductions by individuals that are stated to be fallible and thus not immutable. A distinction that allows for reasoned change, accepts the necessity of diverse opinions, the necessity of individual independent scholarly judgement in trials, arbitrations, and determining penalties, and manifests both the non-hierarchical nature of the religion of Islam and the original understanding of the good and the bad.

In modern times, in the Muslim world, this necessary distinction between fiqh and Shariah, this allowance for reasoned change based on diverse scholarly opinion, and the necessity of individual independent scholarly judgement in trials, arbitrations, and determining penalties, often seems to be overlooked when attempts are made by governments in Muslim lands to introduce 'Shariah law' with the result that inflexible penal codes and immutable penalties are introduced backed by the claim, contrary to fiqh, that such governments have a mandate to impose and enforce such dogmatical interpretations as are an inevitable part of such government-sponsored codified law.

Even in the past this distinction between fiqh and Shariah, and the need for an acceptance of a diversity of scholarly and reasoned opinion, was often neglected, especially by powerful rulers or ruling cliques, leading to societies which were Muslim in name only where 'the good' came to be more the embodiment of the will or the desire or the need of the powerful, the privileged, than it was of the original religious revelation, and where 'the law' became inflexible, impersonal, and often corrupt, with regular conflict between the powerful, the privileged within a society and/or between societies, and which conflicts were sometimes justified by appeals to a particular religious interpretation. Similarly with Christianity, as shown by the tumultuous conflicts - religious and civil, and causing immense suffering - within the West since the time of Justinian.

Thus does the original meaning - the message - of the revelation seem to become somewhat lost; the message, in the case of Christianity, of love and

humility, of redemption through suffering (crucifixus), of Ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ [7]; the message, in the case of Islam, of an individual reliance only on Allah, of Adab [8], of respect for diversity and custom.

Which leads to the question as to whether a jurisprudence based on a spiritual revelation works, given the nature of such a religion and the fact that it seems that our paradoxical human nature and our societies were not effectively changed, and have not been effectively changed, by such jurisprudence, or at least not changed for long. Do these religions - does religion, spirituality, in general - require, demand, that the believers reform, or try to reform, the world? If so, is that contrary to such personal, human, notions of the good and the bad that have been described above? [9] Is two thousand years - in the case of Christianity - a sufficient time to judge such change, such societies, such jurisprudence? Is one and a half thousand years - in the case of Islam - a sufficient time to judge such change, such societies, such jurisprudence?

The problem seems to be that for revelatory religions such as Islam and Christianity the priority is salvation of the individual and thus the distinction made between this, our mortal, life and the next; a priority and a distinction that has, for centuries, been used to explain, and often justify - by individuals, governments, factions, and authorities - harsh deeds and practices, and harsh punishments and policies. Thus, what has tended to occur is that such salvation has become a 'just cause', used for century after century to justify or to try and justify (i) the persecution, torture, and killing of those deemed to be heretics, (ii) wars (bellum iustum), conflicts, and violent religious schisms; and (iii) the harsh treatment of 'non-believers'. All in the name of, for example, 'saving souls', and/or based on the belief, the interpretation, that this is what God has commanded; for such suffering and horrors that are caused or occur in this life are really of lesser importance than being admitted into Heaven. Hence the concepts of martyrdom and of us bearing our misfortunes, our pain, our suffering, the horrors inflicted by others and on others, because of the hope, the promise, the reward, of an everlasting life in eternal bliss.

The Modern State

Such an understanding - such questions and such answers regarding religion and religious jurisprudence - are not new, and led, centuries ago, to the idea of the secular State, to the theory of governance termed liberal democracy, and to a new or at least a revised jurisprudence [10]. That is, to such sentiments as are expressed in the 1776 Declaration of Independence:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted

among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."

The focus is not on salvation, not on Heaven or Jannah, but on Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. A focus, a governance, a jurisprudence, and a sentiment, that have certainly changed the West, and some other parts of the world, for the better. As I have mentioned elsewhere:

"The simple truth of the present and so evident to me now - in respect of the societies of the West, and especially of societies such as those currently existing in America and Britain - is that for all their problems and all their flaws they seem to be much better than those elsewhere, and certainly better than what existed in the past. That is, that there is, within them, a certain tolerance; a certain respect for the individual; a certain duty of care; and certainly still a freedom of life, of expression, as well as a standard of living which, for perhaps the majority, is better than elsewhere in the world and most certainly better than existed there and elsewhere in the past.

In addition, there are within their structures - such as their police forces, their governments, their social and governmental institutions - people of good will, of humanity, of fairness, who strive to do what is good, right. Indeed, far more good people in such places than bad people, so that a certain balance, the balance of goodness, is maintained even though occasionally (but not for long) that balance may seem to waver somewhat.

Furthermore, many or most of the flaws, the problems, within such societies are recognized and openly discussed, with a multitude of people of good will, of humanity, of fairness, dedicating themselves to helping those affected by such flaws, such problems. In addition, there are many others trying to improve those societies, and to trying find or implement solutions to such problems, in tolerant ways which do not cause conflict or involve the harshness, the violence, the hatred, of extremism." [11]

Interestingly, many of the 'multitude of people of good will, of humanity, of fairness' dedicated to helping those within such now secular societies, and many of those trying to improve those societies, are people of faith: Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist... Which perhaps explains, or partly explains, why Christianity and, to a lesser extent, Islam have begun, by the necessity of interaction and by social practicalities, to adapt to the changes that the modern State - with its liberal democracy and modern jurisprudence - has wrought over

the past two centuries; changes manifest, for example, not only in an increased standard of living for many (especially in the lands of the West) but also in attitudes, perception, and expectation, especially in relation to human rights. A change that has begun to lead many Christians, and some Muslims, to re-discover the simple message of their respective - and in many ways quite similar - revelations; a change that has led others to reject the more harsh interpretations of their faith and seek reform within their faith (Christian, Jewish, and Muslim); and a change which is leading others to question whether such messages of revelation are even compatible with the rights, the life, the liberty, and the happiness, of certain people, such as those whose love is for someone of the same gender.

Good and Evil - The Perspective of Pathei-Mathos

The pathei-mathos of individuals over thousands of years, often described in literature, poetry, memoirs, aural stories, and often expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, has resulted in an accumulation of insights; what we might with some justification describe as a culture, which, while often redolent of the spiritual, is not religious. That is, not doctrinal, not codified, not organized, and not presenting or manifesting a theology. A culture that is supra-national, containing as it does, among many other treasures, the observations of Lao Tzu, Siddhartha Gautama, Ovid, and Mohandas K. Gandhi; the thoughts of Aeschylus, Sappho, and Sophocles; the writings of Marcus Aurelius and Jane Austen; the allegory, the mystery, of Jesus of Nazareth; and, importantly, the experiences - written, recorded, and aural - of those who over the centuries have endured suffering, conflict, disaster, tragedy, and war, and who were forever changed by the experience.

As often in respect of a culture, as with a religion or a spiritual Way of Life, individuals may favour some insights over others, and may and probably will differ over how certain insights should be understood or interpreted. As for me, I find in this vast cultural treasure three important things.

First, an understanding of the impermanence of temporal things; of how abstract ideations - given some practical form and maintained via striving human beings - over decades and centuries always by their nature wreck havoc and cause or contribute to suffering often despite the decent intentions of those who brought them into being and maintain or maintained them; and of how all such forms, in the perspective of millennia, 'hath but a short time to live'.

Second, that even the modern State with its liberal democracy and its jurisprudence and its benefits and positive change, is not only impermanent but also, for some, a cause of suffering, of havoc, and that the benefits and the positive change do not necessarily offset such suffering, such havoc, as are caused, as have been caused, and as may continue to be caused; and that it is

for each one of us to decide how to, or whether to, engage with such an impermanent form, by and for example following the moral advice given some two millennia ago - Ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ - and/or by perhaps trying to improve those societies, "in tolerant ways which do not cause conflict or involve the harshness, the violence, the hatred, of extremism."

Third, that there is in this culture of pathei-mathos a particular ethos: the tone of harmony, ἁρμονίη; of a natural balance, or rather of how certain human actions are hubris - ὕβρις - and not only disrupt this needful harmony but also cause or contribute to suffering. Of the importance, and perhaps the primacy, of human love; of how Eris is the child of Polemos and Hubris, and of how a lovelorn Polemos follows Hubris around, never requited. Of how the truths of religions and spiritual ways are, in their genesis, basically simple, always numinous, and most probably the same: guides to living in such a way that we can rediscover the natural balance, appreciate the numinous, and avoid hubris.

All of which lead to an understanding of (i) how good and bad are not 'out there' and cannot be manifest or assumed to be manifest in some form, by some ideation, or in 'them' (the others), without causing or contributing to or being the genesis of suffering, but instead are within us as individuals, a part of our nature, our character, our φύσις, and often divergently expressed; and (ii) of how, in my view at least, personal honour and not a codified law, not a jurisprudence, is the best, the most excellent, way to define and manifest this 'good', with honour understood, as in my philosophy of pathei-mathos [12], as an instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous. An honourable person is thus someone of manners, fairness, reasoned judgement, and valour; with honour being a means to live, to behave, in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις; in order try and avoid causing suffering, and in order to rediscover, to acquire, ἁρμονίη, that natural balance that presences the numinous (sans denotatum and sans dogma) and thus reveals what is important about life and about being human.

For, in effect, the truths concerning honour and dishonour, and of our propensity for both honour and dishonour, are the essence of what we can learn from the supra-national, the living, and the thousands of years old, human culture of pathei-mathos.

Notes

[1] The fallible interpretations of meaning that are given here are mine.

[2] In respect of لَا تُعْجِبْكَ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَأَوْلَادُهُمْ - do not let أَعْجَبَكَ , qv. Surah 9, Ayah 85

their wealth and their children enchant you. That is, do not be impressed by their wealth and marvel at their (apparently fine) offspring.

[3] It is to be expected that some, or many, will find this conclusion of mine regarding good and evil in Christian scripture and/or in Islam a controversial one, as no doubt some will query my (fallible) interpretation of the texts, and which interpretations often avoid conventional readings, for three reasons.

First, to hopefully give some readers a sense - an intimation - of the vibrancy, the immediacy, that I find in the texts that I have endeavoured to translate/interpret here, and endeavoured in the past to translate/interpret elsewhere.

Second, as I noted in *Explanation Of Humility and The Need for Tolerance* with respect to the Quran and الرُّعْب :

My, admittedly fallible, view now - after some years of reflexion and study - is that, in an English interpretation of the meaning of a work as revered, and misunderstood, as the Quran, English words in common usage must be carefully chosen, with many common words avoided, and that it would sometimes be better to choose an unusual or even archaic word in order to try and convey something of the sense of the Arabic. Thus, with a careful interpretation common misunderstandings of the text - by non-Muslims unversed in Arabic - can possibly be avoided, especially if - as might be the case with unusual words - the reader has to pause to consider the meaning or make the effort to find the meaning, if only in a glossary appended to the interpretation. A pause and/or an effort that is suited to reading a work revered by millions of people around the world.

Hence why in the matter of Ayah 151 of Surah Al 'Imran, my interpretation of meaning, employing just such an unusual English word with a literary provenance, was:

Into the hearts of they who disbelieve We shall hurl redurre because they, without any authority revealed about such things, associate others with Allah; and for their home: The Fire, that harrowing resting place of the unjust.

Third, to perhaps inspire some to scholarly consider, again, both the text themselves and the accepted interpretation(s) given that in my view translation/interpretation of texts to English from an ancient (no longer spoken) language or from a text revered in the way the Quran is (i) not 'an exact science' but more akin to an art to be approached with (a) an artistic appreciation of what was (in the case of ancient texts) a living vibrant language and in the case of the Quran is a poetic and numinous language, (b) with a certain humility, and (c) with a lack of preconceptions about the accepted 'meaning' of certain words and which accepted meanings are often only the

attempts of others in the past to approximate an assumed meaning, and (ii) that the rich diversity, vibrancy, and flexibility of the English language has, in my view, been much underused, and an underuse that has sometimes led to bland interpretations of texts.

[4] Society is understood here, as elsewhere in my philosophy of *pathei-mathos*, as a collection of individuals who live in a particular area and who are subject to the same laws (or customs) - whether written or aural - and the same institutions of authority, however that authority has been obtained and is manifest.

Jurisprudence is understood here as describing a systematic (often codified) system of law - written or aural, and whether practical, implemented, or theorized - and the scope, nature, and intent of those laws. The *Jus Papirianum* attributed to Sextus Papirius and the Code of Justinian are thus examples of jurisprudence.

[5] Surah 3, Ayah 110.

[6] One of the five principle maxims of Islamic jurisprudence (which five principles are regarded as expressing the essence of *fiqh*) is *لعادة محكمة*. That is, that the customs of a society or culture are important and a factor to be considered if they do not conflict with the guidance of Quran and Sunnah.

[7] Matthew 22:21. Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God, the things that are God's.

[8] The importance of Muslim Adab - the manners, the morals, the culture, of Muslims - in defining and understanding Islam is something that many non-Muslims, especially those critical of Islam, are either ignorant of or dismiss.

An appreciation of Adab can be gleaned from reading Bukhari's book *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad* and also An-Nawawi's collection *Forty Ahadith*.

[9] qv. Part Three.

[10] Important parts of this jurisprudence concern international law and laws relating to human rights.

[11] *Notes on The Politics and Ideology of Hate* (2012)

[12] qv. *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos* and *Recuyle of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*.

Part Three

Religion, Law, and The Reformation of Individuals

The overview in parts one and two of how, in my view, good and evil are understood in the culture of pathei-mathos and by early Christianity and Islam presented several musings, based as that overview was and those musing are on my experiences, study, and reflexion, over some forty years. One of my musings was that, in the case of Islam and Christianity - two of the most influential spiritual ways of life in the last two millennia - the understanding of good and evil was not originally of some dogmatical and theological abstraction divorced from human life, but a more directly personal one related to the behaviour of individuals, with the promise that good behaviour - as outlined in the gospels and in the Quran and Sunnah - would most probably be rewarded with a place in Heaven or Paradise, and that the powerful and the leaders of governments are accountable to God [1].

In the case of the culture of pathei-mathos, it not only provides, as does the modern State, a perspective (and a teleology) unrelated to the judgement of a supreme deity and the promise of an after-life, but also points us toward answers rather different from those provided by proponents of the State, of liberal democracy, and of a jurisprudence concerned with international law and codifying and criminalizing what politicians, and/or some political theory, ideology, dogma, or agenda, deem to be bad. For what that culture provides is an understanding of how all forms - be they considered political [2], or codified ideologically [3] or in the form of a dogmatic hierarchical religion - have caused suffering, or do cause suffering sooner or later, because they are judgemental, supra-personal; and that such suffering is unjustified because it is individual human beings and indeed the other life with which we share this planet who and which are important; and that to alleviate and to prevent and remove the causes of suffering is necessary because a manifestation of what is good; that is, a manifestation of reasoned, balanced, compassionate, personal judgement, and of that learning, that knowledge, the insights, that personal experience of conflict, war, disaster, tragedy, havoc, violence, hatred, and pain, have taught and revealed to individuals for some three thousand years.

Thus it is that this culture contains the judgement, the insights, and the experience, of people as diverse in their origins, their life, and in some of their views, as Lao Tzu, Sappho, van Gogh, Solzhenitsyn, and Mohandas K. Gandhi. Sappho, for instance, moved by personal love, wrote over two and half thousand years ago that:

For some - it is horsemen; for others - it is infantry;
For some others - it is ships which are, on this black earth,

Visibly constant in their beauty. But for me,
It is that which you desire.

To all, it is easy to make this completely understood
For Helen - she who greatly surpassed other mortals in beauty -
Left her most noble man and sailed forth to Troy
Forgetting her beloved parents and her daughter
Because [the goddess] led her away [...]

Which makes me to see again Anactoria now far distant:
For I would rather behold her pleasing, graceful movement
And the radiant splendour of her face
Than your Lydian chariots and foot-soldiers in full armour... [4]

While Gandhi, motivated by a desire for communal change and a vision of the future, more recently wrote that civilization, correctly understood, does not mean and does not require cities and centralized government and vast industries - and thus a modern State - but rather means and requires a certain personal moral conduct, a "mastery over our mind and our passions" [5], non-violence, the simplicity of village life [6], and communities voluntarily cooperating together in pursuit of collective, and personal, development.

Which two examples illustrate what are, perhaps, the two main answers that the culture of pathei-mathos offers and has so far offered to the question, posed in the Introduction of this essay, of what, if anything, can or perhaps should (i) replace the answers of religions for those who do not or cannot accept such religious answers and the theological perspective and guidance so offered, and/or (ii) replace the answers offered by the jurisprudence of nation-States and the political theories of governance of such States for those who adjudge that the suffering such States cause is, on balance, unacceptable [7]. These two answers - founded on or inspired by the insight of a personal rather than an impersonal, dogmatical, good and bad - are the internal one of a personal life, focused on personal love (and/or on Art, music, and so on), and the external one of seeking change by means such as the non-violence of passive resistance [8] and through personal example.

How to choose? What criteria, moral or otherwise, to use to judge these two answers, and the other answers that over millennia and by pathei-mathos, have been lived and/or proposed? The criterion of the reformation - the development, the change - of the individual? If so, a change from what to where? Or, perhaps, the criterion should be personal honour? Indeed, should there be, or can there even be, some suprapersonal judgemental criteria that others may employ?

Given the nature of pathei-mathos [9], and the nature of a criterion, I incline toward the view that there is no criteria beyond the very individual, the reasoned, the personal, non-transferable, and fallible, judgement which derives

from our own pathei-mathos, our own empathy, our own experience, our own life, and our own understanding of the causes of suffering.

Good, Evil, and The Criteria of Progress

To formulate some standard or rule or some test to try to evaluate alternatives and make choices in such matters is to make presumptions about what constitutes progress; about what constitutes a 'higher' level - or a more advanced stage - and what constitutes a 'lower' level or stage. That is, to not only make a moral judgement connected to what is considered to be 'good' and 'evil' - right and wrong, correct and incorrect - but also to apply that judgement to others and to 'things'. To judge them, and/or the actions of others, by whether they are on a par with, or are moving toward or away from, that 'right' and that 'wrong'.

This is, in my view, a veering toward hubris, away from the natural balance, and thus away from that acknowledgement of our fallibility, of our uncertainty of knowing, that is the personal virtue of humility. For the essence of the culture of pathei-mathos, and the genesis, the ethos, of all religious revelations and spiritual ways before or until they become dogmatical [10], seems to be that we can only, without hubris, without prejudice, judge and reform ourselves.

For what the culture of pathei-mathos reveals is that we human beings, are - personally - both the cause and the cure of suffering; and that our choice is whether or not we live, or try to live, in a manner which does not intentionally contribute to or which is not the genesis of new suffering. The choice, in effect, to choose the way of harmony - the natural balance - in preference to hubris. But how, if we choose the way of harmony, are we to live? Are we to try and judge the lives and works of those who in the past have so chosen, or seem to us to have so chosen, or whose life and works seems to manifest a certain harmony or a particular numinous understanding which resonates with us? Are we then to try and judge and compare the passive resistance of Gandhi to the life and works of William Penn to the poetry of Sappho to the life and work of van Gogh to the influence of Lao Tzu or Jesus of Nazareth. Who are we to do this, and why? Does non-violent activism toward and in the name of 'progress', and/or a message of spiritual reformation and redemption, have - or should have - a higher value than poetry or Art or music or a life lovingly devoted to a partner or to cultivating Wu-Wei?

Or do we see the empathic, the human, the personal, scale of things, and our own human limitations, and accept that we do not need to so judge and so choose because we incline toward the view that all we can hope to do without veering toward hubris - toward upsetting the natural balance of Life, and thus causing more suffering - is to gently and with humility to try and personally

alleviate some suffering somewhere in our own small way by, for instance, being compassionate and honourable in the immediacy of the living moment? With thus little or no concern for, or presumptions about, what others believe constitutes some-thing termed progress, and with little or no concern either about the promise, the reward, of an afterlife or about some suprapersonal human manufactured form, such as a State, that in some shape or other exists during our own brief mortal life? If so, then what - if anything - is the meaning, the purpose, of our so brief human living?

Notes

[1] "For what can a Man give in Exchange for his Life, as well as Soul? And though the chiefest in Government are seldom personally exposed, yet it is a Duty incumbent upon them to be tender of the Lives of their People; since without all Doubt, they are accountable to God for the Blood that is spilt in their Service. So that besides the Loss of so many Lives, of importance to any Government, both for Labour and Propagation, the Cries of so many Widows, Parents and Fatherless are prevented, that cannot be very pleasant in the Ears of any Government, and is the Natural Consequence of War in all Government." William Penn. *An Essay towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe*. 1693 CE

[2] By the term politics is meant: (i) The theory and practice of governance, with governance itself founded on two fundamental assumptions; that of some minority - a government (elected or unelected), some military authority, some oligarchy, some ruling elite, some tyrannos, or some leader - having or assuming authority (and thus power and influence) over others, and with that authority being exercised over a specific geographic area or territory; (ii) The activities of those individuals or groups whose aim or whose intent is to obtain and exercise some authority or some control over - or to influence - a society or sections of a society by means which are organized and directed toward changing/reforming that society or sections of a society, either in accordance with a particular ideology or not.

[3] By the term ideology is meant a coherent, organized, and distinctive set of beliefs and/or ideas or ideals, and which beliefs and/or ideas and/or ideals pertain to governance, and/or to society, and/or to matters of a philosophical or a spiritual nature.

[4] From fragment 16 (7th century BCE), the full text of which, from P. Oxy. 1231 and 2166, is, with square brackets indicating conjectures and missing text:

οἱ μὲν ἱππῶν στρότον οἱ δὲ πέσδων,
οἱ δὲ νᾶων φαῖσ' ἐπ[ι] γᾶν μέλαι[ν]αν
ἔ]μμεναι κάλλιστον, ἔγω δὲ κῆν' ὄτ-
τω τις ἔραται·
πά]λγχυ δ' εὖμαρες σύνετον πόησαι

πάντι τ[ο]ῦτ', ἃ γὰρ πόλυ περσκέθοισα
 κάλλος [ἀνθ]ρώπων Ἑλένα [τὸ]ν ἄνδρα
 τὸν [ἄρ]ιστον
 καλλ[ίποι]σ' ἔβα 'ς Τροίαν πλέοι[σα
 κωῦδ[ε πα]ῖδος οὐδὲ φίλων το[κ]ήων
 πά[μπαν] ἐμνάσθη, ἀλλὰ παράγαγ' αὐταν
 []σαν
 [
 []αμπτον γὰρ [
 [
 []...κούφως τ[]οη.[.]ν
 [
 ..]με νῦν Ἀνακτορί[ας ὀ]νέμναι-
 σ' οὐ []παρεοίσας,
 τᾷς <κ>ε βολλοίμαν ἔρατόν τε βᾶμα
 κάμαρυχμα λάμπρον ἴδην προσώπω
 ἢ τὰ Λύδων ἄρματα κᾶν ὄπλοισι
 [πεσδομ]άχεντας.

[5] *Hind Swaraj*, part 13. 1909 CE

[6] Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, October 5, 1945 CE

[7] The argument here is along the following lines. That nation-States accept both the primacy of a codified law based on the maintenance of internal order according to that law, and the need to ensure the security, the interests, and the preservation, of the nation-State, both of which often necessitate or have necessitated the following: (i) the killing of and/or the use of violence against human beings in their own lands, and/or elsewhere by means of war or otherwise; (ii) the imprisonment/persecution of human beings both for deeds/dissent deemed illegal and for 'crimes against the State'; (iii) actions which cause pain and suffering and hardship to others, such as internal economic policies and/or external economic/trade sanctions; (iv) the commercial exploitation of the resources of this planet and of the other life with which we share this planet.

[8] "Passive resistance is a method of securing rights by personal suffering, it is the reverse of resistance by arms. When I refuse to do a thing that is repugnant to my conscience, I use soul-force [...] Passive resistance, that is, soul-force, is matchless. It is superior to the force of arms." Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, part 17. 1909 CE

Concerning governments, he wrote, also in *Hind Swaraj*, that: "They do not say: 'You must do such and such a thing,' but they say: 'if you do not do it, we will punish you'."

[9] qv. my *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary*.

[10] As William Penn wrote in his tract *The Great Case of Liberty of Conscience Once More Briefly Debated and Defended*, published in 1670 CE:

"They overturn the Christian Religion: 1. In the Nature of it, which is Meekness; 2. In the Practice of it, which is Suffering."

Part Four

Ontology and Denotatum

To find answers to questions such as (i) how to live in a manner which does not intentionally contribute to or which is not the genesis of new suffering, and (ii) is there a meaning to our existence beyond the answers of God and 'the pursuit of liberty and happiness' requires reformulating the questions based on the ontological presumptions that underlie them. That is, we need to understand ourselves, our nature, and to pose and answer questions regarding being, beings, and the relationship between beings.

Conventional religions - such as Christianity and Islam - begin with a supreme being and a revelation, the promise, of an afterlife following a judgement, by the supreme being, of we humans as individuals. That is, there is guidance given as to what is good and bad and as to one's expected behaviour, as well as individuals who can commit transgressions - who can 'sin' - or who, by following the correct guidance, can progress toward salvation. The ontology here is of a transcendent, immortal, God, or Allah, and of separate mortal beings who possess the potential - for example, an immortal soul - to gain an existence beyond the death of their corporeal body. The immortal being has the ability (the power) to punish, or to reward, the mortal beings, and is stated to be a real being with an existence independent of us.

In respect of The State, the ontology is one of an entity - The State, the nation-State, the government - and of individuals ('citizens') who are less powerful than this entity, with this entity, however named, having the ability (the power) to punish, or to reward, the citizens. There is guidance given, by powerful entity, in the form of laws - of what is bad and good and one's expected behaviour - and the promise of such things as 'Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness' and reward of, a possible progress toward (in this life), security, health, and (possibly) wealth or at least a reasonable standard of living. Here, the powerful entity is a human ideation, of varied and variable specification, and which specifications have been manufactured - brought into being - by humans at various times during the past three hundred years and more.

In respect of the culture of pathei-mathos, I find within it an alternative to these two influential, but in many ways quite similar, ontologies with their powerful entities, their guidance, their punishments and rewards, and the progression of individuals toward some-thing which the powerful entity asserts or promises it can provide.

This alternative is the ontology of us - we human beings - as a transient affective and effective connexion to other living beings [1], an emanation of the flux of Life, of ψυχή [2]. That is, of the separation-of-otherness - of I and of 'them', the others - being the result of a causal-only perception, and of denotatum: of our propensity to give names to, or to describe by means of terms, that which we observe to be or that which we assume to be is different to and separate from us, whereas, as empathy reveals, 'we' are part of, an aspect, of 'them' since 'they' are also finite, transient, emanations of ψυχή.

There is no abstract 'good' and 'evil' here; no division or cleaving asunder of φύσις (physis). There is only us in harmony, in balance, with our nature, our φύσις, or us not in harmony with our nature as an affecting and effecting, finite, transient, mortal, aspect of Life. If we are harmony - in balance with Life, with other life - we do not cause or contribute to or are not the genesis of suffering: we do not affect Life in a harmful way, and as I have intimated elsewhere [3] love, compassion, humility, empathy, and honour, are a possible means whereby we, in harmony with our φύσις, can avoid harming Life and its emanations, be such life our fellow human beings or the other life with which we share this planet.

In effect, this is the ontology of the illusion of self and of the unity, sans denotatum, of all living beings; of how we - presenced as human beings - can and do affect, and have affected, other life including other humans, often in ways we are not aware of; and of how our perception of I and of 'them' (the separation-of-otherness) has often led to us affecting other life in a harmful way, thus causing or contributing to or being the genesis of suffering, for that other life and often for ourselves. The ontology where there is no distinction, in being, between us - the emanations - and what emanates; there is only the appearance of difference due to our use of a causal-only perception and of denotatum. That is, we are ψυχή as ψυχή is both within us and us. We are the flux, the changing, of Life; changing as it changes.

There is therefore no suprapersonal supreme being who punishes and rewards; no requirement to actively agitate for or against the State; no afterlife separate from us because what exists after us is, partly, us transformed in being and, partly, what we aid or harm by virtue of the fact that we are an affective and effective connexion - a part of - Life. Furthermore, there is no need to strive to progress toward a some-thing because we already are that some-thing; that is, we already are what we are meant to be, except we often - or mostly - do not know this, or do not know what we are doing charmed as we seem to be by the

charisma of words, by denotatum. As Heraclitus expressed it:

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος αἰεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ
πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ
πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν εἰκόσσι, πειρώμενοι καὶ
ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῖμαι κατὰ φύσιν
διαίρεων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅπως ἔχει· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους
λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὖδοντες
ἐπιλανθάνονται

Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done. [4]

The Simple Way of Harmony

This alternative ontology, derived from the culture of pathei-mathos, suggests that the answer to the question regarding the meaning of our existence is simply to be that which we are. To be in balance, in harmony, with Life; the balance that is love, compassion, humility, empathy, honour, tolerance, kindness, and wu-wei [5].

This, by its nature, is a personal answer and a personal choice; an alternative way that compliments and is respectful of other answers, other choices, and of other ways of dealing with issues such as the suffering that afflicts others, the harm that humans do so often inflict and have for so long inflicted upon others. The personal non-judgemental way, of presumption of innocence [6] and of wu-wei, balanced by, if required, a personal valourous, an honourable, intervention in a personal situation in the immediacy of the moment [7].

There is, in this alternative, no guidance required; and no-thing - such as an afterlife, or enlightenment, or liberty or happiness - to be attained. No need for dogma or too many words; no need for comparisons; no 'just cause' to excuse our behaviour. No mechanisms and no techniques to enable us to progress toward some-thing because there is no need or requirement to progress toward what is not there to be attained. There is only a personal living in such a way that we try to be compassionate, empathic, loving, honourable, kind, tolerant, gentle, and humble. And this is essentially the wisdom, the insight, the way of living - sans denotatum - that thousands upon thousands of people over millennia have contributed to the culture of pathei-mathos, as well as the essence of the message which many if not all spiritual ways and religions, in their genesis, perhaps sought to reveal: the message of the health of love and of our need, as fallible beings often inclined toward the unbalance of hubris, for humility.

Notes

[1] An affective connexion is an operative one, which therefore can affect or influence what it is connected to, and specifically in a non-causal and thus synchronistic manner; that is, without necessarily having a prior cause. An effective connexion is one of an effect; that is, is the result of some-thing else or causes some-thing else as result of that or some other prior cause.

[2] Life *qua* being. qv. my *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary*, and *Conspectus of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*. (2012)

[3] qv. *Recuyle of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*, and *Conspectus of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*. (2012)

[4] Myatt. *Some Notes on Heraclitus Fragment 1*. (2013)

[5] Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in my philosophy of pathei-mathos to refer to a personal 'letting-be' - a non-interference - deriving from humility and from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, their φύσις, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive - that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous.

In respect of non-interference and hubriatic striving, refer to my 2012 essay, *Some Personal Musings On Empathy - In relation to the philosophy of πάθει μάθος*

[6] As mentioned in my philosophy of pathei-mathos, innocence is regarded as an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us and beyond the purvue of our empathy, are therefore unjudged us by and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence of others - until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise - is the fair, the reasoned, thing to do.

[7] In respect of such valourous intervention in personal situations, the following quotation is from my *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary*.

"The personal virtue of honour, and the cultivation of wu-wei, are - together - a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἁρμονίη. For personal honour is essentially a presencing, a grounding, of ψυχή - of Life, of our φύσις - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη. This balancing of compassion - of the need not to cause suffering - by σωφρονεῖν and δίκη is perhaps most obvious on that particular occasion when it may be judged necessary to cause suffering to another human being. That is, in honourable self-defence. For it is natural - part of our reasoned, fair, just, human nature - to defend ourselves when attacked and (in the immediacy of the personal moment) to valorously, with chivalry, act in defence of someone close-by who is unfairly attacked or dishonourably threatened or is being bullied by others [...]

This use of force is, importantly, crucially, restricted - by the individual nature of our judgement, and by the individual nature of our authority - to such personal situations of immediate self-defence and of valorous defence of others, and cannot be extended beyond that, for to so extend it, or attempt to extend it beyond the immediacy of the personal moment of an existing physical threat, is an arrogant presumption - an act of ὕβρις - which negates the fair, the human, presumption of innocence of those we do not personally know, we have no empathic knowledge of, and who present no direct, immediate, personal, threat to us or to others nearby us. Such personal self-defence and such valorous defence of another in a personal situation are in effect a means to restore the natural balance which the unfair, the dishonourable, behaviour of others upsets. That is, such defence fairly, justly, and naturally in the immediacy of the moment corrects their error of ὕβρις resulting from their bad (their rotten) φύσις; a rotten character evident in their lack of the virtue, the skill, of σωφρονεῖν. For had they possessed that virtue, and if their character was not bad, they would not have undertaken such a dishonourable attack."

Part Five

A Very Personal Conclusion

Twenty years ago, someone whom I loved who loved me died, too young and having harmed no one. Died, leaving me bereft, if only for a while. For too soon my return to those hubriatic, selfish, suffering-causing, and extremist, ways of my pasts. As if, despite the grief, the pain of loss, I personally had learned nothing, except in such moments of such remembering that did not, unfortunately, impact too much upon my practicalities of life; at least until another bereavement, thirteen years later, came to shock, shake, betake me far from my arrogant presumptions about myself, about life, to thus lead, to so slowly lead, to me on a clear cold day yet again interiorly dwelling on what, if anything, is our human purpose of being here and why such bereavements, such

early deaths, just seem so unjust, unfair.

For they - as so many - having harmed no one, died, while I - as so many - lived on to continue causing mayhem, chaos, suffering, and grief, no God it seemed to stay us or to slay us for our miscreant mischief. That, to me, seems to be no deity of empathy and compassion; only one explanation to maybe betake our grief, our tears, our fears, away.

I admit I could be wrong, but - having perhaps at least in some ways, and partially, understood the errors of both my selfish and my extremist suffering-causing pasts - I still cannot accept that such a compassionate, empathic, deity would, could, sanction such a taking of such innocence and allow such infliction of suffering to continue. For that makes no sense to me, given how I now do not believe there is another life awaiting us where we, *judicium divinum*, are rewarded or condemned. I find no comfort there; no satisfying explanation for the suffering that afflicts so many now as in the past: as if that, such suffering, as was written once, many times, is some sort of *casus belli* for our life, to be endured until such time as such a deity deems fit to end it.

Man, that is born of a woman, hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down, like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay. In the midst of life we are in death. Of whom may we seek for succour, but of thee, O Lord...

Must we therefore be resigned to suffering, to misery, to injustices, to the iniquity, to the continuing iniquity, of selfish, hubriatic, individuals who bully, rape, scheme, subjugate, manipulate, injure, maim, and kill? Reassured by *judicium divinum* or - perhaps - hoping, trusting, in the pending justice of some judge, some government, or some State?

Is it wrong for me to still feel the need for someone, some many, somewhere, to somehow in some way forestall, prevent, such deeds by such persons as may unjustly harm some others so that there is no waiting for the divine justice of a deity; no waiting for some Court somewhere to - possibly, and sometimes - requite a grievous wrong. No waiting for that promised idealistic idyllic future society when we humans - having somehow (perhaps miraculously) been changed in nature *en masse* - have ceased to so grievously, harmfully, selfishly, inflict ourselves on others.

My own and only fallible answer to the question of how to deal with the suffering that blights this world therefore seems to be the answer of a personal honour. That is, for each of us to gently try to carry that necessary harmony, that balance, of *δίκη*, wordlessly within; to thus restrain ourselves from causing harm while being able, prepared, in the immediacy of the moment, to personally, physically, restrain - prevent - others when we chance upon such harm being done. This, to me, is Life in its wholesome natural fullness - as lived,

presenced, by the brief, mortal, consciously aware, emanations we are; mortal emanations capable of restraint, reason, culture, and reforming change; of learning from our pathei-mathos and that of others. My personal answer to personal questions, perplexion, and to grief and doubt. The answer which is to live in hope - even need - of a personal loyal love; to live with empathy, gentleness, humility, compassion, and yet with strength enough to do what should be done when, within the purvue of our personal space, we meet with one or many causing suffering and harm, no thought then for the fragility of our own mortal life or even for personal consequences beyond the ἀρμονίη we, in such honourable moments, are.

III

Blue Reflected Starlight

As it departed toward the vastness of interstellar space, the Voyager 1 interplanetary spacecraft in 1990_(ce) transmitted an image of Earth from a distance of over four billion miles; the most distant image of Earth we human beings have ever seen. The Earth, our home, was a bluish dot; a mere Cosmic speck among the indefinity, visible only because of reflected starlight and - in the solar panorama imaged by Voyager on that February day - of no observed importance. One speck in one galaxy in a vast Cosmos of billions upon billions of galaxies, and one speck that would most probably appear, to a non-terran, less interesting than the rings of Saturn, just visible from such a distance.

Yet we human beings, en masse, continue to live in a manner which not only belies our Cosmic insignificance but which militates against the empathy, the humility, that such a Cosmic perspective can and does engender. Thus do we individually, as well as collectively, have pride in our lives, our deeds, our 'accomplishments', just as we continue to exploit not only other human beings but the Earth itself: and exploit for pleasure, or profit, or from some desire or because of some cause or some faith or some ideology or some ideation we believe in or support. Either believing or asserting, in our hubris, that we 'know' - that we 'understand' - what we are doing, or reckless of consequences because unable or unwilling to control our desires; unable or unwilling to control ourselves or our addiction to some cause or some faith or some ideology or some ideation.

Thus does the suffering we here inflict on other life - human and otherwise - continue. Thus does our human-wrought destruction continue, as if we are in thrall consciously or otherwise to the ideation that our planet, and its life including other humans, are some kind of 'resource', a means to supply our needs or a way to satiate our desires. So easy, so very easy, to injure, hate, and kill. So easy, so very easy, to satiate the desire to be in control. So very easy to place ourselves first; even easier to have our feelings, our desires, subsume, overcome, whatever consideration we might give, or previously had given, to others and to other life. So easy, so very easy, to make excuses - consciously or otherwise - to ourselves, and to others, for what we have done or what we are about to do; for always there is the excuse of self-interest or self-preservation, or the excuse of desires or some cause or some faith or some ideology or some ideation. So easy, so very easy, to spew forth words.

It is as if we terrans, en masse, have forgotten, keep forgetting, or have never discovered the wisdom that what involves too many words - and especially what involves or requires speeches, rhetoric, propaganda, dogma - is what obscures empathy and thus the numinosity that empathy reveals; the numinosity presented to us by the pathei-mathos of our human past; manifest to us - and living now - in the way of living of those whose personal pathei-mathos - whose

personal experience of suffering, death, destruction, hate, violence, of too many killings - has forever changed them. The numinous revelation of kindness, of humility, of gentleness, of love, of compassion; of being able to restrain, control, ourselves; of being able to comprehend our small, insignificant, place in the indefinity of the Cosmos, bringing as this comprehension does an understanding of the importance, the numinosity, that is a shared and loyal love between two people: and revealing as this does the Cosmic unimportance of such wars and conflicts and such brutality as have blighted our terran history.

As I know from my outré experience of life - especially my forty years of extremism, hubris, and selfishness; my terms of imprisonment, my experience with gangs, with people of bad intentions and with those of good intentions - it really is as if we terran men have, en masse, learnt nothing from the past four or five thousand years. For the uncomfortable truth is that we, we men, are and have been the ones causing, needing, participating in, those wars and conflicts. We - not women - are the cause of most of the suffering, death, destruction, hate, violence, brutality, and killing, that has occurred and which is still occurring, thousand year upon thousand year; just as we are the ones who seek to be - or who often need to be - prideful and 'in control'; and the ones who through greed or alleged need or because of some ideation have sought to exploit not only other human beings but the Earth itself. We are also masters of deception; of the lie. Cunning with our excuses, cunning in persuasion, and skilled at inciting hatred and violence. And yet we men have also shown ourselves to be, over thousands of years, valourous; capable of noble, selfless, deeds. Capable of doing what is fair and restraining ourselves from doing what is unethical. Capable of a great and a gentle love.

This paradox continues to perplex me. And I have no answers as to how we might change, reform, this paradoxical *φύσις* of ours, and so - perhaps - balance the suffering-causing masculous with the empathic muliebral and yet somehow in some way retain that which is the genesis of the valourous. And if we cannot do this, if we cannot somehow reform ourselves, can we terrans as a species survive, and do we deserve to?

Are we, we men here on this planet, capable of restraining and reforming ourselves, en masse, such that we allow ourselves, and are given, no excuses of whatever kind from whatever source for our thousand year upon thousand year of violence against women? Are we capable of such a reformation of our kind that such reprehensible violence against women by cowardly men becomes only historical fact?

Are we, here on this planet, capable of restraining and reforming ourselves, en masse, such that we allow ourselves no excuses of whatever kind from whatever source for wars, armed conflicts, brutality against perceived or stated 'enemies', and murderous intervention? Such a reformation of ourselves that wars, armed conflicts, such brutality, and such interventions, become only historical fact?

Or are we fated, under Sun, to squabble and bicker and hate and kill and destroy and exploit this planet and its life until we, a failed species, leave only dead detritic traces of our hubris?

Or will we, or some of us, betake ourselves away to colonize faraway non-terran places, taking with us our unreformed paradoxical *φύσις* to perchance again despoil, destroy, as some of our kind once betook themselves away to forever change parts of this speck of blue reflected starlight which gave us this fortunity of Life?

Yet again I admit I have no answers.

DWM
2012

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IV

Fifty Years Of Diverse Peregrinations

In fifty years of diverse peregrinations - which included forty years of practical involvement with various religions and spiritual ways, practical involvement with extremisms both political and religious, and some seven years of intense interior reflexion occasioned by a personal tragedy - I have come to appreciate and to admire what the various religions and the diverse spiritual ways have given to us over some three thousand years.

Thus have I sensed that our world is, and has been, a better place because of them and that we, as a sentient species, are en masse better because of them. Thus it is that I personally - even though I have developed my own non-religious weltanschauung - have a great respect for religions such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism; for spiritual ways such as Buddhism, Taoism; for older paganisms such as (i) θεοί and Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες, and (ii) άγνωστος θεός [1], and for the slowly evolving more recent paganisms evident for instance in a spiritual concern for the welfare of our planet and for

the suffering we have for so long inflicted on other humans and on the other life with which we share this planet.

Unsurprisingly, therefore, I disagree with those who, often intemperate in words or deeds - or both - disrespectfully fail to appreciate such religions and spiritual ways and the treasure, the culture, the *pathei-mathos*, that they offer, concentrating as such intemperate people so often do on what they perceive to be or feel to be are the flaws, the mistakes, of such religions and such spiritual ways while so often ignoring (as such people tend to do) their own personal flaws, their own mistakes, as well as the reality that it is we humans beings - with our *ὑβρις*, with our lack of humility, our lack of appreciation for the numinous, and with our intolerance and our often arrogant and harsh interpretations of such religions - who have been the cause and who continue to be the cause of such suffering as has blighted and as still blights this world.

As Heraclitus mentioned over two thousand years ago:

ὑβριν χρὴ σβεννύναι μᾶλλον ἢ πυρκαϊήν [2]

Better to deal with your hubris before you confront that fire

As recounted of Jesus of Nazareth over two thousand years ago:

ὥς δὲ ἐπέμενον ἐρωτῶντες αὐτόν, ἀνέκυσεν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὁ ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν πρῶτος ἐπ' αὐτήν βαλέτω λίθον. [3]

So, as they continued to ask [for an answer] he straightened himself, saying to them: Let he who has never made a mistake [*Αναμαρτητος*] throw the first stone at her.

One of the greatest gifts such religions and spiritual ways offer seems to me to be the gift of humility: the insight that we human beings are fallible and transient, and that there is some-thing 'out there' which is numinous, sacred, more vast and more powerful than us whether we call this some-thing God, or Allah, or *θεοί* or Nature, or *δίκη* or *Wyrd*, or Karma or *ψυχή* or simply the acausal. The insight that to disregard this some-thing, to disrespect what-is numinous, is unwise - *ὑβρις* - and perpetuates suffering or is the genesis of new suffering and which new suffering may well continue long after we, who brought it into being and who gave it life, are dead.

This insight of humility is evident, for instance and for me, in the sacred music of the Christian church; from the simplicity - the numinous purity - of plainchant to the polyphony of Byrd, Palestrina, and Vittoria to the counterpoint of JS Bach. For I find in this music an expression both of *κάλος* and of the numinous *mysterium* that is at the heart of Christianity, manifest as this *mysterium* is, for Christianity, in the allegory of the life, the betrayal, the crucifixion, of Jesus of

Nazareth and by a belief in redemption through both love and suffering. And this is essentially the same, albeit unallegorical and often wordless, numinous mysterium which we personally feel or we know or are touched by through that sadness born of our own pathos; by our acknowledgement of our mistakes, by our personal experience of suffering and grief, and by our heartfelt longing for, our hope for, the beautiful, for the redemption of innocence, for peace and love, manifest for example not only in the Christian allegory of Heaven, in the Muslim Jannah, in the Jewish Shamayim, but also in a very personal often private longing and hope for a better world and which longing and hope we so tearfully know is so often broken or forgotten or thrust aside by both our egoistical self and by other human beings: because of their, because of our, weakness, our failure to be the person we feel or we know we might be or perhaps could have been, born as such knowing and such feelings so often are in the inner intimacy that follows a personal grief or being a witness to or an accomplice in some act or acts of harshness and suffering.

This inner intimacy with the stark reality of our own being and with the world of suffering is what has caused so many people over thousands of years to try and not only reform themselves but also to try, in whatever way, to alleviate or try to alleviate some of the suffering of others, an effort and a reform so often aided by religion [4] and thus a tribute to those positive qualities, those personal virtues, which religions have so often revealed or reminded us of. Which is why - as I mentioned recently to another correspondent [5] - I incline toward the view that on balance the good that religions such as Christianity have done over millennia outweighs the suffering that has been caused by those who adhered to or who believed in some harsh interpretation of that religion.

There has thus developed within me these past seven years an understanding of my past hubris, my past multitudinous mistakes, and of how a lack of humility on my part - my extremism, my certainty of knowing about myself, my certainty of knowing about some cause or ideology or harsh interpretation of some religion I accepted and adhered to - was probably one of the most significant factors in that hubris and those suffering-causing mistakes. Which personal understanding, together with a decades-long experience of others such as I, led me to hypothesize that one of the fundamental causes of extremism is a masculine certainty of knowing and that, therefore, religions and spiritual ways are and can be - when not interpreted in a harsh, hubristic, way but rather via that personal humility and that appreciation of the numinous I believe are intrinsic to them - affective and effective answers to such extremism and to the harm that extremists cause.

In essence, therefore, my philosophy of pathos - my much revised 'numinous way' - is my own spiritual answer, born of fifty years of diverse peregrinations; my personal answer and response to the certitude of knowing, the harshness, that all extremisms (political, religious, and social) manifest, as well as also - perhaps, hopefully - being (as a spiritual way) in some small manner, and now sans a personal belief in *judicium divinum*, some expiation for

all the suffering that I over decades caused or contributed to.

The numinous, the beautiful - the divine - remain, to remind us. As someone so beautifully expressed it:

Wer, wenn ich schrie, hörte mich denn aus der Engel
Ordnungen? und gesetzt selbst, es nähme
einer mich plötzlich ans Herz: ich verginge von seinem
stärkeren Dasein. Denn das Schöne ist nichts
als des Schrecklichen Anfang, den wir noch grade ertragen,
und wir bewundern es so, weil es gelassen verschmäht,
uns zu zerstören. Ein jeder Engel ist schrecklich. [6]

DWM
2012

Notes

[1] qv. Pausanias. Ἑλλάδος περιήγησις 1.1.4 -

ἐνταῦθα καὶ Σκιράδος Ἀθηνᾶς ναός ἐστι καὶ Διὸς ἀπωτέρω, βωμοὶ δὲ
θεῶν τε ὀνομαζομένων Ἀγνώστων καὶ ἡρώων καὶ παίδων τῶν Θησέως
καὶ Φαληροῦ

Also here is a shrine [ναός] to Athena Skirados and, further afield,
one to Zeus, and others to [the] un-named unknown gods, to the
heroes, as well as to those children of Theseus and Phalerus

[2] Fragment 43

[3] John, 8.7

[4] For example, I well remember, decades ago, in the first month or so of my training to be a nurse doing some research into the history of nursing as preparation for my turn in giving a talk and presentation to our class as part of our nursing course; and finding just how entwined religion and the origins of organized nursing were, from the fourth century (CE) Roman lady Fabiola to the monastic infirmaries of medieval Europe to the al-Nuri al-Kabir bimaristan in Damascus [qv. Ahmad Isa: *Tarikh al-Bimaristanat fi al-Islam* [History of Hospitals in Islam]. Damascus, 1939] to the Hospitallers of St John to Florence Nightingale and beyond.

I also remember the hundreds of people met over some forty years whose faith inspired or aided them to endeavour, in social or political or legal or personal

ways, to alleviate some of the suffering of others, and who each, in their own way - and whether Christian, Muslim, Jew, Hindu, or Buddhist - helped make a positive difference.

[5] qv. *Just My Fallible Views, Again - Replies to Some Enquiries*. 2012

[6] Rilke, *Die erste Duineser Elegie*

Who, were I to sigh aloud, of those angelic beings might hear me?
And even if one of them deigned to take me to his heart I would dissolve
Into his very existence.
For beauty is nothing if not the genesis of that numen
Which we can only just survive
And which we so admire because it can so calmly disdain to betake us.
Every angel is numinous

Appendix

Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos Vocabulary, Definitions, and Explanations

Abstraction

An abstraction is a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed.

Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future.

All abstractions involve a causal perception, based as they are on the presumption of a linear cause-and-effect (and/or a dialectic) and on a posited or an assumed category or classification which differs in some way from some other assumed or posited categories/classifications, past, present or future. When applied to or used to describe/classify/distinguish/motivate living beings, abstractions involve a causal separation-of-otherness; and when worth/value/identity (and exclusion/inclusion) is or are assigned to such a causal separation-of-otherness then there is or there arises hubris.

Abstractions are often assumed to provide some 'knowledge' or some 'understanding' of some-thing assigned to or described by a particular abstraction. For example, in respect of the abstraction of 'race' applied to human beings, and which categorization of human beings describes a median set of values said or assumed to exist 'now' or in some recent historical past.

According to the philosophy of pathei-mathos, this presumption of knowledge and understanding by the application of abstractions to beings - living and otherwise - is false, for abstractions are considered as a primary means by which the nature of Being and beings are and have been concealed, requiring as abstractions do the positing and the continuation of abstractive opposites in relation to Being and the separation of beings from Being by the process of ideation and opposites.

Acausal

The acausal is not a generalization - a concept - deriving from a collocation of assumed, imagined, or causally observed Phainómenon, but instead is that wordless, conceptless, a-temporal, knowing which empathy reveals and which a personal *πάθει μάθος* and an appreciation of the numinous often inclines us toward. That is, the acausal is a direct and personal (individual) revealing of beings and Being which does not depend on denoting or naming.

What is so revealed is the a-causal nature of some beings, the connexion which exists between living beings, and how living beings are emanations of *ψυχή*.

Thus speculations and postulations regarding the acausal only serve to obscure the nature of the acausal or distance us from that revealing of the acausal that empathy and *πάθει μάθος* and an appreciation of the numinous provide.

ἀρετή

Arête is the prized Hellenic virtue which can roughly be translated by the English word 'excellence' but which also implies what is naturally distinguishable - what is pre-eminent - because it reveals or shows certain valued qualities such as beauty, honour, valour, harmony.

Aristotelian Essentials

The essentials which Aristotle enumerated are: (i) Reality (existence) exists independently of us and our consciousness, and thus independent of our senses; (ii) our limited understanding of this independent 'external world' depends for the most part upon our senses, our faculties - that is, on what we can see, hear or touch; on what we can observe or come to know via our senses; (iii) logical argument, or reason, is perhaps the most important means to knowledge and understanding of and about this 'external world'; (iv) the cosmos (existence) is, of itself, a reasoned order subject to rational laws.

Experimental science seeks to explain the natural world - the phenomenal world - by means of direct, personal observation of it, and by making deductions, and formulating hypothesis, based on such direct observation.

The philosophy of *pathei-mathos* adds the faculty of empathy - and the knowing so provided by empathy - to these essentials. Part of the knowing that empathy reveals, or can reveal, concerns the nature of Being, of beings, and of Time.

ἁρμονία

ἁρμονία (harmony) is or can be manifest/discovered by an individual cultivating *wu-wei* and *σωφρονεῖν* (a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement).

Compassion

The English word compassion dates from around 1340 CE and the word in its original sense (and as used in this work) means *benignity*, which word derives from the Latin *benignitatem*, the sense imputed being of a kind, compassionate, well-mannered character, disposition, or deed. Benignity came into English usage around the same time as compassion; for example, the word occurs in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* [ii. 483] written around 1374 CE.

Hence, compassion is understood as meaning being kindly disposed toward and/or feeling a sympathy with someone (or some living being) affected by pain/suffering/grief or who is enduring vicissitudes.

The word compassion itself is derived from *com*, meaning together-with, combined with *pati*, meaning to-suffer/to-endure and derived from the classical Latin *passiō*. Thus useful synonyms for compassion, in this original sense, are *compassivity* and *benignity*.

Cosmic Perspective

The Cosmic Perspective refers to our place in the Cosmos, to the fact that we human beings are simply one fragile fallible mortal biological life-form on one planet orbiting one star in one galaxy in a Cosmos of billions of galaxies. Thus in terms of this perspective all our theories, our ideas, our beliefs, our abstractions are merely the opinionated product of our limited fallible Earth-bound so-called 'intelligence', an 'intelligence', an understanding, we foolishly, arrogantly, pridefully have a tendency to believe in and exalt as if we are somehow 'the centre of the Universe' and cosmically important.

The Cosmic Perspective inclines us - or can incline us - toward wu-wei, toward avoiding the error of hubris, toward humility, and thus toward an appreciation of the numinous.

δαίμων

A δαίμων is not one of the pantheon of major Greek gods - θεοί - but rather a lesser type of divinity who might be assigned by those gods to bring good fortune or misfortune to human beings and/or watch over certain human beings and especially particular numinous (sacred) places.

Descriptor

A descriptor is a word, a term, used to describe some-thing which exists and which is personally observed, or is discovered, by means of our senses (including the faculty of empathy).

A descriptor differs from an ideation, category, or abstraction, in that a descriptor describes what-is as 'it' is observed, according to its physis (its nature) whereas an abstraction, for example, denotes what is presumed/assumed/idealized, past or present or future. A descriptor relies on, is derived from, describes, individual knowing and individual judgement; an abstraction relies on something abstract, impersonal, such as some opinion/knowing/judgement of others or some assumptions, theory, or hypothesis made by others.

An example of a descriptor is the term 'violent' [using physical force sufficient to cause bodily harm or injury to a person or persons] to describe the observed behaviour of an individual. Another example would be the term 'extremist' to describe - to denote - a person who treats or who has been observed to treat others harshly/violently in pursuit of some supra-personal objective of a political or of a religious nature.

δίκη

Depending on context, δίκη could be the judgement of an individual (or Judgement personified), or the natural and the necessary balance, or the correct/customary/ancestral way, or what is expected due to custom, or what is considered correct and natural, and so on.

A personified Judgement - the Δίκη of Hesiod - is the goddess of the natural balance, evident in the ancestral customs, the ways, the way of life, the ethos, of a community, whose judgement, δίκη, is "in accord with", has the nature or the character of, what tends to restore such balance after some deed or deeds by an individual or individuals have upset or disrupted that balance. This sense of δίκη as one's ancestral customs is evident, for example, in Homer (Odyssey, III, 244).

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, the term Δίκη - spelt thus in a modern way with a capital Δ - is sometimes used to intimate a new, a particular and numinous, philosophical principle, and differentiate Δίκη from the more general δίκη. As a numinous principle, or axiom, Δίκη thus suggests what lies beyond and what was the genesis of δίκη personified as the goddess, Judgement - the goddess of natural balance, of the ancestral way and ancestral customs.

Empathy

Etymologically, this fairly recent English word, used to translate the German Einfühlung, derives, via the late Latin *sympathia*, from the Greek συμπάθεια - συμπαθής - and is thus formed from the prefix σύν (sym) together with παθ- [root of πάθος] meaning *enduring/suffering*, feeling: πάσχειν, to endure/suffer.

As used and defined by the philosophy of pathei-mathos, empathy - ἐμπάθεια - is a natural human faculty: that is, a noble intuition about (a revealing of) another human being or another living being. When empathy is developed and used, as envisaged by that way of life, then it is a specific and extended type of συμπάθεια. That is, it is a type of and a means to knowing and understanding another human being and/or other living beings - and thus differs in nature from compassion.

Empathic knowing is different from, but supplementary and complimentary to, that knowing which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

Empathy reveals or can reveal the nature (the physis) - sans abstractions/ideations/words - of Being, of beings, and of Time. This revealing is of the the a-causal nature of Being, and of how beings have their genesis in the separation-of-otherness; and thus how we human beings are but causal, mortal, fallible, microcosmic emanations of ψυχή.

Enantiodromia

The unusual compound Greek word ἐναντιοδρομίας occurs in a summary of the philosophy of Heraclitus by Diogenes Laërtius.

Enantiodromia is the term used, in the philosophy of pathei-mathos, to describe the revealing, the process, of perceiving, feeling, knowing, beyond causal appearance and the separation-of-otherness, and thus when what has become separated - or has been incorrectly perceived as separated - returns to the wholeness, the unity, from whence it came forth. When, that is, beings are understood in their correct relation to Being, beyond the causal abstraction of different/conflicting ideated opposites, and when as a result, a reformation of the individual, occurs. A relation, an appreciation of the numinous, that empathy and pathei-mathos provide, and which relation and which appreciation the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals over millennia have made us aware of or tried to inform us or teach us about.

An important and a necessary part of enantiodromia involves a discovery, a knowing, an acceptance, and - as prelude - an interior balancing within individuals, of what has hitherto been perceived and designated as the apparent opposites described by terms (descriptors) such as 'muliebral' and 'masculous'.

The balance attained by - which is - enantiodromia is that of simply feeling, accepting, discovering, the empathic, the human, the personal, scale of things and thus understanding our own fallibility-of-knowing, our limitations as a human being

ἔρις

Strife; discord; disruption; a quarrel between friends or kin. As in the Odyssey:

ἧ τ' ἔριν Ἀτρεΐδῃσι μετ' ἀμφοτέροισιν ἔθηκε.

Who placed strife between those two sons of Atreus

Odyssey, 3, 136

According to the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, ἔρις was caused by, or was a consequence of, the marriage between a personified πόλεμος (as the δαίμων of kindred strife) and a personified ὕβρις (as the δαίμων of arrogant pride) with Polemos rather forlornly following Hubris around rather than vice versa. Eris is thus the child of Polemos and Hubris.

Extremism

By *extreme* is meant *to be harsh*, so that an *extremist* is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious nature. Here, *harsh* is: rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic.

Hence *extremism* is considered to be: (a) the result of such harshness, and (b) the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists. In addition, a fanatic is considered to be someone with a surfeit of zeal or whose enthusiasm for some objective, or for some cause, is intemperate.

In the terms of the philosophy/way of pathei-mathos, an extremist is someone who commits the error of hubris; and error which enantiodromia - following from πάθει μάθος - can sometimes correct or forestall. The genesis of extremism - be such extremism personal, or described as political or religious - is when the separation-of-otherness is used as a means of personal and collective identity and pride, with some 'others' - or 'the others' - assigned to a category considered less worthy than the category we assign ourselves and 'our kind/type' to.

Extremist ideologies manifest an unbalanced, an excessive, masculous nature.

εὐταξία

The quality, the virtue, of self-restraint, of a balanced, well-mannered conduct especially under adversity or duress, of which Cicero wrote:

Haec autem scientia continentur ea, quam Graeci εὐταξίαν nominant, non hanc, quam interpretamur modestiam, quo in verbo modus inest, sed illa est εὐταξία, in qua intellegitur ordinis conservatio

Those two qualities are evident in that way described by the Greeks as εὐταξίαν although what is meant by εὐταξία is not what we mean by the moderation of the moderate, but rather what we consider is restrained behaviour...

De Officiis, Liber Primus, 142

Honour

The English word honour dates from around 1200 CE, deriving from the Latin *honorem* (meaning refined, grace, beauty) via the Old French (and thence Anglo-Norman) *onor/onur*. As used by The Way of Pathei-Mathos, honour means an instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous. An honourable person is thus someone of manners, fairness, natural dignity, and valour.

In respect of early usage of the term, two quotes may be of interest. The first, from c. 1393 CE, is taken from a poem, in Middle English, by John Gower:

And riht in such a maner wise
Sche bad thei scholde hire don servise,
So that Achilles underfongeth
As to a yong ladi belongeth
Honour, servise and reverence.

John Gower, *Confessio Amantis*. Liber Quintus vv. 2997-3001 [Macaulay, G.C., ed. The Works of John Gower. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1901]

The second is from several centuries later:

" Honour - as something distinct from mere probity, and which supposes in gentlemen a stronger abhorrence of perfidy, falsehood, or cowardice, and a more elevated and delicate sense of the dignity of virtue, than are usually found in vulgar minds."

George Lyttelton. *History of the Life of Henry the Second*. London, Printed for J. Dodsley. M DCC LXXV II [1777] (A new ed., cor.) vol 3, p.178

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, the personal virtue of honour is considered to be a presencing, a grounding, an expression, of *ψυχή* - of Life, of our *φύσις* - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by *σωφρονεῖν* and in accord with *δίκη*. That is, as a means to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of *ὑβρις*, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, *ἀρμονίη*.

Humility

Humility is used, in a spiritual context, to refer to that gentleness, that modest demeanour, that understanding, which derives from an appreciation of the numinous and also from one's own admitted uncertainty of knowing and one's acknowledgement of past mistakes. An uncertainty of knowing, an acknowledgement of mistakes, that often derive from *πάθει μάθος*.

Humility is thus the natural human balance that offsets the unbalance of hubris (*ὑβρις*) - the balance that offsets the unbalance of pride and arrogance, and the balance that offsets the unbalance of that certainty of knowing which is one basis for extremism, for extremist beliefs, for fanaticism and intolerance. That is, humility is a manifestation of the natural balance of Life; a restoration of *ἀρμονίη*, of *δίκη*, of *σωφρονεῖν* - of those qualities and virtues - that hubris and extremism, that *ἔρις* and *πόλεμος*, undermine, distance us from, and replace.

Ideation

To posit or to construct an ideated form - an assumed perfect (ideal) form or category or abstraction - of some-thing, based on the belief or the assumption that what is observed by the senses, or revealed by observation, is either an 'imperfect copy' or an approximation of that thing, which the additional assumption that such an ideated form contains or in some way expresses (or can express) 'the essence' or 'the ethos' of that thing and of similar things.

Ideation also implies that the ideated form is or can be or should be contrasted with what it considered or assumed to be its 'opposite'.

Immediacy-of-the-Moment

The term the 'immediacy-of-the-moment' describes both (i) the nature and the extent of the acausal knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos provide, and (ii) the nature and extent of the morality of the philosophy of pathei-mathos.

Empathy, for example, being a natural and an individual faculty, is limited in range and application, just as our faculties of sight and hearing are limited in range and application. These limits extend to only what is direct, immediate, and involve personal interactions with other humans or with other living beings. There is therefore, for the philosophy of pathei-mathos, an 'empathic scale of things' and an acceptance of our limitations of personal knowing and personal understanding. An acceptance of (i) the unwisdom, the hubris, of arrogantly making assumptions about who and what are beyond the range of our empathy and outside of our personal experience/beyond the scope of our pathei-mathos.

Morality, for the philosophy of pathei-mathos, is a result of individuals using the faculty of empathy; a consequence of the insight and the understanding (the acausal knowing) that empathy provides for individuals in the immediacy-of-the-moment. Thus, morality is considered to reside not in some abstract theory or some moralistic schemata presented in some written text which individuals have to accept and try and conform or aspire to, but rather in personal virtues - such as such as compassion and fairness, and *εὐταξία* - that arise or which can arise naturally through empathy, *πάθει μάθος*, and thus from an awareness and appreciation of the numinous.

Innocence

Innocence is regarded as an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us, are therefore unjudged us by and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence of others - until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise - is the fair, the reasoned, the numinous, the human, thing to do.

Empathy and *πάθει μάθος* incline us toward treating other human beings as we ourselves would wish to be treated; that is they incline us toward fairness, toward self-restraint, toward being well-mannered, and toward an appreciation and understanding of innocence.

Masculous

Masculous is a term, a descriptor, used to refer to certain traits, abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with men, such as competitiveness, aggression, a

certain harshness, the desire to organize/control, and a desire for adventure and/or for conflict/war/violence/competition over and above personal love and culture. Extremist ideologies manifest an unbalanced, an excessive, masculine nature.

Masculine is from the Latin *masculus* and occurs, for example, in some seventeenth century works such as one by William Struther: "This is not only the language of Canaan, but also the masculine Schibboleth." *True Happiness, or, King Davids Choice: Begunne In Sermons, And Now Digested Into A Treatise*. Edinburgh, 1633

Muliebral

The term muliebral derives from the classical Latin word *muliebris*, and in the context the philosophy of Pathei-Mathos refers to those positive traits, abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with women, such as empathy, sensitivity, gentleness, compassion, and a desire to love and be loved over and above a desire for conflict/adventure/war.

Numinous

The numinous is what manifests or can manifest or remind us of (what can reveal) the natural balance of *ψυχή*; a balance which *ὑβρις* upsets. This natural balance - our being as human beings - is or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful. In a practical way, it is what we regard or come to appreciate as 'sacred' and dignified; what expresses our developed humanity and thus places us, as individuals, in our correct relation to *ψυχή*, and which relation is that we are but one mortal emanation of *ψυχή*.

Pathei-Mathos

The Greek term *πάθει μάθος* derives from The Agamemnon of Aeschylus (written c. 458 BCE), and can be interpreted, or translated, as meaning *learning from adversary*, or *wisdom arises from (personal) suffering*; or *personal experience is the genesis of true learning*.

When understood in its Aeschylean context, it implies that for we human beings pathei-mathos possesses a numinous, a living, authority. That is, the understanding that arises from one's own personal experience - from formative experiences that involve some hardship, some grief, some personal suffering - is often or could be more valuable to us (more alive, more relevant, more meaningful) than any doctrine, than any religious faith, than any words/advice one might hear from someone else or read in some book.

Thus, pathei-mathos, like empathy, offers we human beings a certain conscious understanding, a knowing; and, when combined, pathei-mathos and empathy are or can be a guide to wisdom, to a particular conscious knowledge concerning our own nature (our physis), our relation to Nature, and our relation to other human beings, leading to an appreciation of the numinous and an appreciation of virtues such as humility and εὐταξία.

Politics

By the term politics is meant both of the following, according to context. (i) The theory and practice of governance, with governance itself founded on two fundamental assumptions; that of some minority - a government (elected or unelected), some military authority, some oligarchy, some ruling elite, some tyrannos, or some leader - having or assuming authority (and thus power and influence) over others, and with that authority being exercised over a specific

geographic area or territory. (ii) The activities of those individuals or groups whose aim or whose intent is to obtain and exercise some authority or some control over - or to influence - a society or sections of a society by means which are organized and directed toward changing/reforming that society or sections of a society in accordance with a particular ideology.

Πόλεμος

Πόλεμος - Heraclitus fragment 80 - is not some abstract 'war' or strife or *kampf*, but rather that which is or becomes the genesis of beings from Being (the separation of beings from Being), and thus not only that which manifests as *δίκη* but also accompanies *ἔρις* because it is the nature of *Πόλεμος* that beings, born because of and by *ἔρις*, can be returned to Being, become bound together - be whole - again by *enantiodromia*.

According to the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, *ἔρις* was caused by, or was a consequence of, the marriage between a personified *πόλεμος* (as the *δαίμων* of kindred strife) and a personified *ὑβρις* (as the *δαίμων* of arrogant pride) with Polemos rather forlornly following Hubris around rather than vice versa. Thus Eris is the child of Polemos and Hubris.

Furthermore, Polemos was originally the *δαίμων* (not the god) of kindred strife, whether familial, of friends, or of one's *πόλις* (one's clan and their places of dwelling). Thus, to describe Polemos, as is sometimes done, as the god of war, is doubly incorrect.

Physis (φύσις)

φύσις suggests either (i) the Homeric usage of nature or character of a person, as for example in *Odyssey*, Book 10, vv. 302-3, and also in Herodotus (2.5.2):

Αἰγύπτου γὰρ φύσις ἐστὶ τῆς χώρας τοιήδε

or (ii) *Φύσις* (Physis) as in Heraclitus fragment 123 - that is, the natural nature of all beings, beyond their outer appearance, and which natural nature we, as human beings, have a natural [an unconscious] inclination to conceal; either because of *ὑβρις* or through an ignorance, an unknowing, of ourselves as an emanation of *ψυχή*.

In terms of the nature or the character of an individual:

σωφρονεῖν ἀρετὴ μέγιστη, καὶ σοφίη ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαίοντας

Most excellent is balanced reasoning, for that skill can tell inner character from outer.

Heraclitus fragment 112

Religion

By religion is meant organized worship, devotion, and faith, where there is: (i) a belief in some deity/deities, or in some supreme Being or in some supra-personal power who/which can reward or punish the individual, and (ii) a distinction made between the realm of the sacred/the-gods/God/the-revered and the realm of the ordinary or the human.

The term organized here implies an established institution, body or group - or a plurality of these - who or which has at least to some degree codified the faith and/or the acts of worship and devotion, and which is accepted as having some authority or has established some authority among the adherents. This codification can relate to accepting as authoritative certain writings and/or a certain book or books.

Separation-of-Otherness

The separation-of-otherness is a term used to describe the implied or assumed causal separateness of living beings, a part of which is the distinction we make (instinctive or otherwise) between our *self* and *the others*. Another part is assigning our self, and the-others, to (or describing them and us by) some category/categories, and to which category/categories we ascribe (or to which category/categories has/have been ascribed) certain qualities or attributes.

Given that a part of such ascription/denoting is an assumption or assumptions of worth/value /difference and of inclusion/exclusion, the separation-of-otherness is the genesis of hubris; causes and perpetuates conflict and suffering; and is a path away from *ἀρμονία, δίκη*, and thus from wisdom.

The separation-of-otherness conceals the nature of Beings and beings; a nature which empathy and *pathei-mathos* can reveal.

Society

By the term society is meant a collection of people who live in a specific geographic area or areas and whose association or interaction is mostly determined by a shared set of guidelines or principles or beliefs, irrespective of whether these are written or unwritten, and irrespective of whether such guidelines/principles/beliefs are willingly accepted or accepted on the basis of acquiescence. These shared guidelines or principles or beliefs often tend to form an ethos and a culture and become the basis for what is considered moral (and good) and thence become the inspiration for laws and/or constitutions.

As used here, the term refers to 'modern societies' (especially those of the modern West).

State

By the term The State is meant:

The concept of both (1) organizing and controlling - over a particular and large geographical area - land (and resources); and (2) organizing and controlling individuals over that same geographical particular and large geographical area by: (a) the use of physical force or the threat of force and/or by influencing or persuading or manipulating a sufficient number of people to accept some leader/cliue/minority/representatives as the legitimate authority; (b) by means of the central administration and centralization of resources (especially fiscal and military); and (c) by the mandatory taxation of personal income.

The Good

For the philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, 'the good' is considered to be what is fair; what alleviates or does not cause suffering; what is compassionate; what is honourable; what is reasoned and balanced. This knowing of the good arises from the (currently underused and undeveloped) natural human faculty of empathy, and which empathic knowing is different from, supplementary and complimentary to, that knowing which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

Time

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, Time is considered to be an expression of the nature - the *φύσις* - of beings, and thus, for living beings, is a variable emanation of *ψυχή*, differing from being to being, and representing how that living being can change (is a fluxion) or may change or has changed, which such change (such fluxions) being a-causal.

Time - as conventionally understood and as measured/represented by a terran-calendar with durations marked days, weeks, and years - is therefore regarded as an abstraction, and an abstraction which tends to conceal the nature of living beings.

ὕβρις

ὕβρις (hubris) is the error of personal insolence, of going beyond the proper limits set by: (a) reasoned (balanced) judgement - *σωφρονεῖν* - and by (b) an awareness, a personal knowing, of the numinous, and which knowing of the numinous can arise from empathy and *πάθει μάθος*.

Hubris upsets the natural balance - is contrary to *ἀρμονίη* [harmony] - and often results from a person or persons striving for or clinging to some causal abstraction.

According to The Way of Pathei-Mathos, *ὕβρις* disrupts - and conceals - our appreciation of what is numinous and thus of what/whom we should respect, classically understood as *ψυχή* and *θεοί* and *Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες* and *δαιμόνων* and those sacred places guarded or watched over by *δαιμόνων*.

Way

The philosophy of pathei-mathos makes a distinction between a religion and a spiritual Way of Life. One of the differences being that a religion requires and manifests a codified ritual and doctrine and a certain expectation of conformity in terms of doctrine and ritual, as well as a certain organization beyond the local community level resulting in particular individuals assuming or being appointed to positions of authority in matters relating to that religion. In contrast, Ways are more diverse and more an expression of a spiritual ethos, of a customary, and often localized, way of doing certain spiritual things, with there generally being little or no organization beyond the community level and no individuals assuming - or being appointed by some organization - to positions of authority in matters relating to that ethos.

Religions thus tend to develop an organized regulatory and supra-local hierarchy which oversees and appoints those, such as priests or religious teachers, regarded as proficient in spiritual matters and in matters of doctrine and ritual, whereas adherents of Ways tend to

locally and informally and communally, and out of respect and a personal knowing, accept certain individuals as having a detailed knowledge and an understanding of the ethos and the practices of that Way.

Many spiritual Ways have evolved into religions.

Wisdom

Wisdom is both the ability of reasoned - a balanced - judgement, *σωφρονεῖν*, a discernment; and a particular conscious knowledge concerning our own nature, and our relation to Nature, to other life and other human beings: *rerum divinarum et humanarum*. Part of this knowledge is of how we human beings are often balanced between honour and dishonour; balanced between *ὑβρις* and *ἀρετή*; between our animalistic desires, our passions, and our human ability to be noble, to morally develop ourselves; a balance manifest in our known ability to be able to control, to restrain, ourselves, and thus find and follow a middle way, of *ἀρμονίη*.

Wu-wei

Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in The Way of Pathei-Mathos/The Numinous Way to refer to a personal 'letting-be' deriving from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, their *φύσις*, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive - that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous.

In practice, the knowledge, the understanding, the intuition, the insight that is wu-wei is a knowledge, an understanding, that can be acquired from empathy, *πάθει μάθος*, and by a knowing of and an appreciation of the numinous. This knowledge and understanding is of wholeness, and that life, things/beings, change, flow, exist, in certain natural ways which we human beings cannot change however hard we might try; that such a hardness of human trying, a belief in such hardness, is unwise, un-natural, upsets the natural balance and can cause misfortune/suffering for us and/or for others, now or in the future. Thus success lies in discovering the inner nature (the *physis*) of things/beings/ourselves and gently, naturally, slowly, working with this inner nature, not striving against it.

ψυχή

Life *qua* being. Our being as a living existent is considered an emanation of *ψυχή*. Thus *ψυχή* is what 'animates' us and what gives us our nature, *φύσις*, as human beings. Our nature is that of a mortal fallible being veering between *σωφρονεῖν* (thoughtful reasoning, and thus fairness) and *ὑβρις*.

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Exegesis and Translation Some Personal Reflexions

Part One

Since I first studied the Greek text of the Septuagint as a Christian monk, more than thirty five years ago, I have often reflected on matters pertaining to exegesis and translation. Four issues in particular have interested me during those decades.

1. How revealed religions, such as Christianity and Islam, and how certain spiritual ways [1], such as Buddhism and even Hinduism [2], are reliant on or have developed to become reliant upon certain texts, and how such dependant texts either by their nature require interpretation [3] or (more often) how interpretation is considered as necessary in order for the religion or spiritual way to gain support, influence, and adherents.

2. How many of those of faith - especially in revealed religions and almost certainly the majority of the faithful - have to rely on, and often quote, the translations of others; even if such people of faith are engaged in proselytizing.

3. How certain English words, used to interpret a particular Hebrew or Greek or Arabic word, suggest, represent, or have acquired, a particular meaning to English readers/listeners but which particular meaning may not necessary accurately reflect the meaning of the non-English word as that

non-English word was possibly understood at the time it was included in a particular text.

4. How there seems to be, in revealed religions and most conventional spiritual ways, a rejection of *pathei-mathos* in favour of the wisdom said to be contained in the texts and thus in the teachings of the founder(s) of the religion/spiritual way, and - in the case of revealed religions - in the writings/edicts of those who have been vested with or who have acquired a certain religious authority, and - also in the case of revealed religions - how such *pathei-mathos*, to be accepted at all, has to be judged by criteria developed from such texts and/or developed from interpretations of such texts.

Interpretation and The Question of Sin

It is my view that in translations into English it is often best to avoid words that impose or seem to impose a meaning on an ancient text especially if the sense that an English word now imputes is the result of centuries of assumptions or opinions or influences and thus has acquired a modern meaning somewhat at variance with the culture, the milieu, of the time when the text that is being translated was written. Especially so in the matter of religious or spiritual texts where so many people rely or seem to rely on the translations, the interpretations, of others and where certain interpretations seem to have become fixed. [4]

Thus, it may be helpful if one can suggest, however controversial they may seem in their time, reasoned alternatives for certain words important for a specific and a general understanding of a particular text, and helpful because such alternatives might enable a new appreciation of such a text, as if for instance one is reading it for the first time with the joy of discovery.

One of the prevalent English words used in translations of the New Testament, and one of the words now commonly associated with revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam, is sin. A word which now imputes and for centuries has imputed a particular and at times somewhat strident if not harsh moral attitude, with sinners starkly contrasted with the righteous, the saved, and with sin, what is evil, what is perverse, to be shunned and shudderingly avoided.

One of the oldest usages of the word sin - so far discovered - is in the c. 880 CE translation of the c. 525 CE text *Consolatio Philosophiae*, a translation attributed to King Ælfred. Here, the Old English spelling of *syn* is used:

Þæt is swiðe dyslic & swiðe micel syn þæt mon þæs wenan scyle
be Gode

come þonne he, gif hit swa wære. Ac þ is swiðe dyslic 7
swiðe micel syn þ mon þæs wenan scyle be Gode, oððe eft

The context of the original Latin of Boethius [5] is cogitare, in relation to a dialogue about goodness and God, so that the sense of the Latin is that it is incorrect - an error, wrong - to postulate/claim/believe certain things about God. There is thus here, in Boethius, as in early English texts such as Beowulf [6], the sense of doing what was wrong, of committing an error, of making a mistake, of being at fault; at most of overstepping the bounds, of transgressing limits imposed by others, and thus being 'guilty' of such an infraction, a sense which the suggested etymology of the word syn implies: from the Latin sons, sontis.

Thus, this early usage of the English word syn seems to impart a sense somewhat different from what we now associate with the word sin, which is why in my translation of John, 8.7 [7] I eschewed that much overused and pejorative word in order to try and convey something of the numinous original:

So, as they continued to ask [for an answer] he straightened himself, saying to them: Let he who has never made a mistake [Αναμαρτητος] throw the first stone at her.

ὥς δὲ ἐπέμενον ἐρωτῶντες αὐτόν, ἀνέκυψεν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὁ ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν πρῶτος ἐπ' αὐτὴν βαλέτω λίθον.

Jesus here is not, in my view, sermonizing about sin, as a puritan preacher might, and as if he is morally superior to and has judged the sinners. Instead, he is rather gently and as a human pointing out an obvious truth about our human nature; explaining, in v.11, that he has not judged her conduct:

ἡ δὲ εἶπεν· οὐδεὶς, κύριε. εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· οὐδὲ ἐγὼ σε κατακρίνω· πορεύου, ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε

[And] she answered, No one, my Lord. Whereupon Jesus replied Neither do I judge [κατακρίνω] you, therefore go, and avoid errors such as those. [8]

Such a translation avoids the rather contradictory nature of most other translations which have Jesus clearly stating that he also does not judge her but then have him go on to say that she should 'sin no more' with the obvious implication that he has indeed judged her in that in his judgement she had

indeed sinned before.

Understood and appreciated thus, sans the now culturally-biased word sin, these passages from the gospel according to John - together with passages such as Luke 19.10 and Romans 13.10 [9] - perhaps usefully summarize the evangel of Jesus of Nazareth; the (in my view) rather human message of avoiding judging others because we ourselves are prone to error, the message of love, and the message of redemption (forgiveness) for those who in the past have made mistakes but who have thereafter tried to avoid making such mistakes again, those hitherto perhaps damaged or lost.

In respect of ἀμαρτάνω [10] consider, for example, Matthew 18.21:

Τότε προσελθὼν ὁ Πέτρος εἶπεν [αὐτῷ] Κύριε, ποσάκις ἀμαρτήσῃ εἰς ἐμὲ ὁ ἀδελφός μου καὶ ἀφήσω αὐτόν; ἕως ἑπτάκις

Peter then approached [προσέρχομαι] him saying My Lord, how often [ποσάκις] may my brother fail [ἀμαρτάνω] me and be ignored [ἀφίημι]? Up to seven times?

Which is somewhat different from the usual "how many times shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him."

Ontology, Exegesis, and Pathei-Mathos

All religions and spiritual ways, because they are spiritual/metaphysical, either posit, or are interpreted as positing, an ontology. That is, they all offer an explanation, or an analysis, of the nature of our being as humans and of the nature of, and our relation to, Being, whether Being is understood as God/Allah/gods/Nature/Fate or in terms of axioms such as karma and nirvana. There thus exists, or there develops, an explanation or explanations concerning the meaning and the purpose of our mortal lives; of how that purpose may be attained; and thus of what wisdom is and why there is and continues to be suffering.

However, as I mentioned in *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God*, citing several examples, the original message of a revelation or of a spiritual way often seems to become obscured or somehow gets lost over centuries. A loss or obscurity partly due to the reliance on revealed or given texts; partly due to divergent interpretations of such texts, with some interpretations accepted or rejected by those assuming or vested with a religious authority; and partly due to a reliance, by many of the faithful, on translations of such texts.

Furthermore, the interpretation of such religious texts - and/or the emergence or the writing of new texts concerning a particular spiritual way - has often led to schism or schisms, and to harsh interpretations of religions; schisms and a harshness that have sometimes led to sects, to violence between believers and sects, to accusations of heresy, and to the persecution of those said to be heretics. All of which have thus caused or been the genesis of suffering.

Thus, in respect of Christianity,

"...it is tempting therefore to suggest that it was later, and theological, interpretations and interpolations which led to a harsh dichotomy, an apocalyptic eschatology, a 'war' between an abstract 'good' and 'evil', and that with such interpretations and interpolations - much in evidence in the persecution of alleged heretics - the simple gospel message of the health of love was somehow lost for a while, to be, later on, re-expressed by people such as William Penn, who wrote, in his *Some Fruits of Solitude*, "Let us then try what love can do." [11]

In effect, the humility that I have found by experience that all or most religions and spiritual ways manifest - and an essential part of their revelation, their message, their presencing of the numinous - is obscured or ignored in favour of arrogant human presumptions and assumptions and a personal pride: that 'we' know better, or believe we know better; that 'we' have somehow found or been given the 'right' answer(s) or the 'right' interpretation(s), and that therefore 'the others' are wrong, and 'we' are better or more 'pure'/devout than them. And so on.

Yet there is, it seems to me, after many years of reflexion, something else which accounts for why this loss of a necessary humility occurs, other than the aforementioned reliance on revealed or given texts, the divergent interpretations of such texts, and the reliance, by many of the faithful, on translations of such texts. This is the reality of religions and many spiritual ways either rejecting pathei-mathos as a source of wisdom or favouring specific texts and their interpretation(s) over and above the pathei-mathos of individuals.

For pathei-mathos - the personal learning from grief, suffering, pain, adversity, and experience - directly connects us to and thus enables us to personally experience and appreciate the numinous, sans words, ideations, ideology, theology, and dogma. An experience and an appreciation outwardly and inwardly manifest in a personal humility; in the knowledge of ourselves

as but one fallible, mortal, fragile, human emanation of and connexion to Being; and in an empathic understanding of how all religions and spiritual ways, in their genesis and in their original emanations, express - or try to express - the same wisdom: manifest in an appreciation of the numinous, and in our human necessity for the natural balance that is humility and a very personal honour. And, because of this spiritual and religious equivalence, it does not matter if the individual of pathei-mathos, having so touched and felt the numinous, develops their own weltanschauung or none, or leaves or finds an existing spiritual or religious one, although it is and often has been such pathei-mathos which reveals to individuals, or which enables them to rediscover, the essence of a particular religion or a particular spiritual way: that simple and similar numinous essence which schisms, harsh interpretations, dogma, and ideology, have so often and for so long obscured.

For what pathei-mathos reveals does matter, beyond such outward and such supra-personal manifestations, are the personal, the individual, virtues of love, empathy, gentleness, and compassion.

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Part Two

Translation and Al-Quran

The problem of sometimes projecting modern interpretations onto ancient texts by the injudicious use, in a translation, of a particular English word is especially relevant in the matter of the Quran, for it seems to be increasingly common for someone reliant on translations - on the interpretations of meaning given by others - to misunderstand the text of the Quran and then, from that misunderstanding, not only form a misconceived (and sometimes prejudiced) opinion about the Quran in particular and Islam in general but also to give voice to such an opinion.

For example, an ayah [verse] often (mis)quoted is Ayah 151 of Surah Al 'Imran, which is usually interpreted as "Soon shall we cast terror into the hearts of the unbelievers."

However, the word 'terror' is an inappropriate interpretation for several reasons. The Arabic of Ayah 151 of Surah Al 'Imran is:

سَنُلْقِي فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الرُّعْبَ بِمَا أَشْرَكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَمَأْوَاهُمُ
النَّارُ وَيُسْ مَتَوَى الظَّالِمِينَ

[Transliteration: sanulqi fee qulubi allazeena kafaroo l-ruba bima ashraaku
bil-lahi ma lam yunazzil bihi sultanana wamawhumu l-naru wabisa mathwa
l-zalimeena]

Does الرُّعْبُ imply 'terror' as the aforementioned interpretation suggests, along with all that the modern English word terror now implies, as in the difficult to define term terrorism? No, it does not; rather, the Arabic implies *the fear/the dread* and 'the astonishment/awe' - that is, that human feeling inspired by apprehending or experiencing some-thing supernaturally or extraordinarily powerful and numinous; for example, an Ayah (Sign) of Allah, Al-Khaliq, Al-Azim, Al-Jalil. The kind of fear/trembling/awe/astonishment felt, for instance and importantly, by the Apostles when, as recounted in Luke 24.37, they witnessed Jesus alive after the crucifixion.

That is, I suggest that what is referred to in Ayah 151 of Surah Al 'Imran - as in the other four Ayat where الرُّعْبُ / رُعْبًا occur - is similar to the 'suffusion with fear' and the 'being scared' that occurs and has occurred, as recounted in both Christian scripture and the Quran, when a mortal is (a) confronted by God/Allah or some-thing divine/numinous/awe-inspiring, and/or (b) has such fear, and such a being scared, thrust into their hearts by God/Allah, as a Sign, a warning, or as mention of their fate.

In respect of Luke 24.37, for instance, the Greek text is:

πτοηθέντες δὲ καὶ ἔμφοβοι γενόμενοι ἐδόκουν πνεῦμα θεωρεῖν

The term ἔμφοβος means 'suffused with/by phobos' - held/gripped by fear; timorous - and occurs in Sirach 19.24 and Luke 24.5, the latter of which is very interesting: ἐμφόβων δὲ γενομένων αὐτῶν καὶ κλινουσῶν τὰ πρόσωπα εἰς τὴν γῆν εἶπαν πρὸς αὐτάς τί ζητεῖτε τὸν ζῶντα μετὰ τῶν νεκρῶν. That is, suffused with phobos, they assumed a posture of submission/reverence /respect by bowing their heads; in effect prostrating themselves in the presence of some-thing divine/numinous/awe-inspiring. Since πνεῦμα - pneuma - implies apparition or ghost, and πτοηθέντες suggests they were 'scared' (cf. Odyssey 22.298 - τῶν δὲ φρένες ἐπτοίγηεν) then Luke 24.37 could be translated as "But they, suffused with fear and scared, felt that they saw an apparition." [1]

My, admittedly fallible, view now - after some years of reflexion and study - is that, in an English interpretation of the meaning of a work as revered, and misunderstood, as the Quran, English words in common usage must be carefully chosen, with many common words avoided, and that it would sometimes be better to choose an unusual or even archaic word in order to try and convey something of the sense of the Arabic. Thus, with a careful interpretation common misunderstandings of the text - by non-Muslims unversed in Arabic - can possibly be avoided, especially if - as might be the case with unusual words - the reader has to pause to consider the meaning or make the effort to find the meaning, if only in a glossary appended to the interpretation. A pause and/or an effort that is suited to reading a work revered by millions of people around the world.

In the matter of Ayah 151 of Surah Al 'Imran, a possible interpretation of meaning therefore is:

Into the hearts of they who disbelieve We shall hurl redurre
because they, without any authority revealed about such things,
associate others with Allah; and for their home: The Fire, that
harrowing resting place of the unjust.

Here, I have used the unusual English word redurre, with a meaning of 'awe combined with a trembling fear'. A word suggested by its occurrence in religious works by Richard Rolle and John Gower, and also by texts such as *Morte Arthure* [2] and which word therefore places this Ayah from the Quran into the correct context, which is that of a religious revelation, a spiritual message, comparable to that of Christianity, and of the particular ontology that Islam offers as answers to questions concerning the meaning and the purpose of our mortal lives; of how that purpose may be attained; and thus of what wisdom is. Answers which have nothing whatsoever to do with 'terrorism', or even with 'terror' as that word is now commonly understood.

The Art of Translation, and A Question About Time

One question of possibly projecting modern interpretations onto ancient texts by the injudicious use of a particular English word, occurred to me some twenty years ago during my translation of the *Oedipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles, and concerned the Greek word χρόνος. This is almost always translated as 'time', a word we now associate with a regular linearity - of past-present-future - measured in terms of the minutes, hours, and fixed days, of a reliable timepiece such as a watch or clock.

In the classical world of Homer and Sophocles, this type of reliable, linear,

regularity was almost unknown, with χρόνος thus sometimes denoting some ill-defined period - long or short - and with the passing of a year, for example, often determined by the changes of the seasons, and which seasons themselves were marked in their arrival by the appearance of certain constellations in the night sky, something beautifully expressed by Aeschylus at the beginning of the Agamemnon:

θεοὺς μὲν αἰτῶ τῶνδ' ἀπαλλαγὴν πόνων
φρουρᾶς ἑτείας μῆκος, ἣν κοιμώμενος
στέγαις Ἀτρειδῶν ἄγκαθεν, κυνὸς δίκην,
ἄστρον κάτοιδα νυκτέρων ὁμήγυριν,
καὶ τοὺς φέροντας χειῖμα καὶ θέρος βροτοῖς
λαμπροὺς δυνάστας, ἐμπρέποντας αἰθέρι
ἀστέρας, ὅταν φθίνωσιν, ἀντολὰς τε τῶν.
καὶ νῦν φυλάσσω λαμπάδος τό σύμβολον,
αὐγὴν πυρὸς φέρουσαν ἐκ Τροίας φάτιν
ἀλώσιμόν τε βάζειν: ὧδε γὰρ κρατεῖ
γυναικὸς ἀνδρόβουλον ἐλπίζον κέαρ.

Again I have asked the gods to deliver me from this toil,
This vigil a year in length, where I repose
On Atreidae's roof on my arms, as is the custom with dogs
Looking toward the nightly assembly of constellations
And they who bring to mortals the storm-season and the summer:
Those radiant sovereigns, distinguished in the heavens
As stars when they come forth or pass away.
And still I keep watch for the sign of the beacon,
The light of the fire which will bring report of Troy,
Announcing it is captured.
For such is the command
And expectation of that woman with a man's resolve.

However, in Oedipus Tyrannus, Sophocles has the memorable phrase καὶ μ' ἥμαρ ἤδη ξυμμετρούμενον χρόνῳ, indicating something not only about χρόνος but also about the classical world and (importantly) about the character of Oedipus. The phrase is therefore worth quoting in context:

ὦ παῖδες οἰκτροί, γνωτὰ κοῦκ ἄγνωτά μοι
προσήλθεθ' ἰμείροντες: εὖ γὰρ οἶδ' ὅτι
νοσεῖτε πάντες, καὶ νοσοῦντες, ὥς ἐγὼ
οὐκ ἔστιν ὑμῶν ὅστις ἐξ ἴσου νοσεῖ.

τὸ μὲν γὰρ ὑμῶν ἄλγος εἰς ἔν' ἔρχεται
μόνον καθ' αὐτὸν κούδέν' ἄλλον, ἡ δ' ἐμὴ
ψυχὴ πόλιν τε κάμει καὶ σ' ὁμοῦ στένει.
ὥστ' οὐχ ὕπνω γ' εὐδοντά μ' ἐξεγείρετε,
ἀλλ' ἵστε πολλὰ μὲν με δακρύσαντα δῆ,
πολλὰς δ' ὁδοὺς ἐλθόντα φροντίδος πλάνοις:
ἦν δ' εὖ σκοπῶν ἠῦρискον ἴασιν μόνην,
ταύτην ἔπραξα: παῖδα γὰρ Μενοικέως
Κρέοντ', ἐμαυτοῦ γαμβρόν, ἐς τὰ Πυθικὰ
ἔπεμψα Φοίβου δώμαθ', ὡς πύθοιθ' ὅ τι
δρῶν ἢ τί φωνῶν τήνδε ῥυσαίμην πόλιν.
καὶ μ' ἤμαρ ἤδη ζυμμετρούμενον χρόνῳ 73
λυπεῖ τί πράσσει: τοῦ γὰρ εἰκότος πέρα
ἄπεστι πλείω τοῦ καθήκοντος χρόνου.
ὅταν δ' ἵκηται, τηνικαῦτ' ἐγὼ κακὸς
μὴ δρῶν ἂν εἶην πάνθ' ὅσ' ἂν δηλοῖ θεός.

You, my children, who lament - I know, for I am not without knowledge,
Of the desire which brings you here. For well do I see
All your sufferings - and though you suffer, it is I
And not one of you that suffers the most.
For your pain comes to each of you
By itself, with nothing else, while my psyche
Mourns for myself, for you and the clan.
You have not awakened me from a resting sleep
For indeed you should know of my many tears
And the many paths of reflection I have wandered upon and tried.
And, as I pondered, I found one cure
Which I therefore took. The son of Menoeceus,
Creon - he who is my kin by marriage - I have sent to that Pythian dwelling
Of Phoebus to learn how I
By word or deed can give deliverance to the clan.
But I have already measured the duration
And am concerned: for where is he? He is longer than expected
For his absence is, in duration, greater than is necessary.
Yet when he does arrive, it would dishonourable
For me not to act upon all that the gods makes clear.

vv.58-77

To translate χρόνος in v.73 abstractly as 'time' is therefore to overlook not only the context - of a world where the seasons were often determined by observation of the night sky - but also the significance of what Oedipus says. For he has, out of his urgent concern for both his people and himself - out of fear of the wrake of the gods - gone to the trouble to determine how long

Creon's journey should take and to measure/calculate/record, or to have someone do this for him, precisely how long Creon has been away.

A pedantic point, possibly; but one which perhaps illustrates the engaging art of translation and the possibilities of interpretation, and of misinterpretation, that exist.

David Myatt
2013

Notes

[1] As outlined in Appendix II (Glossary of Terms and Greek Words) of *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. ISBN 978-1484096642 (2013) I make a distinction between a religion and a spiritual Way of Life.

One of the differences being that a religion requires and manifests a codified ritual and doctrine and a certain expectation of conformity in terms of doctrine and ritual, as well as a certain organization beyond the local community level resulting in particular individuals assuming or being appointed to positions of authority in matters relating to that religion. In contrast, Ways are more diverse and more an expression of a spiritual ethos, of a customary, and often localized, way of doing certain spiritual things, with there generally being little or no organization beyond the community level and no individuals assuming - or being appointed by some organization - to positions of authority in matters relating to that ethos.

Religions thus tend to develop an organized regulatory and supra-local hierarchy which oversees and appoints those, such as priests or religious teachers, regarded as proficient in spiritual matters and in matters of doctrine and ritual, whereas adherents of Ways tend to locally and informally and communally, and out of respect and a personal knowing, accept certain individuals as having a detailed knowledge and an understanding of the ethos and the practices of that Way.

Many spiritual Ways have evolved into religions.

[2] In Buddhism, the primary texts are regarded as: (i) for Theravada Buddhism, the collections referred to as *Tipitaka/Tripitaka*; (ii) for Mahāyāna Buddhism, the Tipitaka (in some cases, depending on interpretation) and the various *Sutras*, including the collection often referred to as The Perfection of Wisdom; (iii) for Tibetan Buddhism, the various Tantric texts, plus some of the Tipitaka (in some cases, depending on interpretation) and some the Mahāyāna sutras (in some cases, depending on interpretation).

In Hinduism, there is the *Bhagavad Gītā* and the literature of the *Vedas*.

[3] By *interpretation* here is meant (i) commentaries (academic, theological, and otherwise); (ii) explanations (critical, and otherwise); (iii) translations; and – most importantly – (iv) a seeking of the meaning of (a) both the text (in whole and in parts) and (b) of the words and terms used.

[4] One misused English word is 'terror', often used to translate الرُّعْبَ in Ayah 151 of Surah Al 'Imran. See Part Two, below *Translation and Al-Quran*.

[5] Quare quod a summo bono diversum est sui natura, id summum bonum non est; quod nefas est de eo cogitare, quo nihil constat esse praestantius. *Consolatio Philosophiae*, Liber Tertius, pr. x

[6] Beowulf, 2470f, where the spelling synn is used:

eaferum læfde, swa deð eadig mon,
lond ond leodbyrig, þa he of life gewat.
þa wæs synn ond sacu Sweona ond Geata
ofer wid wæter, wroht gemæne,
herenið hearda, syððan Hreðel swealt

[7] qv. Myatt, *Fifty Years of Diverse Peregrinations*. 2013

[8] The conventional interpretation of ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε is "from now on sin no more".

[9] Luke 19.10:

ἦλθεν γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ζητῆσαι καὶ σῶσαι τὸ ἀπολωλός

The arrivance [ἔρχομαι] of the Son of Man was to seek and to save what was lost

However, a more interesting interpretation is:

The arrivance of the Son of Man was to seek and to repair [σώζω]
what had been damaged [ἀπόλλυμι]

and which interpretation is suggested by (i) the sense of σώζω: keep safe, preserve, maintain - whence repair, and (ii) the sense of ἀπόλλυμι: destroy, ruin, kill, demolish, and - metaphorically - damaged, lost, and die.

Romans 13.10:

ἡ ἀγάπη τῷ πλησίον κακὸν οὐκ ἐργάζεται· πλήρωμα οὖν νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη

love brings no harm to the neighbour; love is the completion of the law

[11] ἀμαρτάνω implies a failure, mistake, an error, deprivation, loss, to miss/fail. qv (i) Sophocles, Oedipus Tyrannus:

ὅταν ταχύς τις οὐπιβουλεύων λάθρα
χωρῇ, ταχὺν δεῖ κάμει βουλεύειν πάλιν:
εἰ δ' ἡσυχάζων προσμενῶ, τὰ τοῦδε μὲν
πεπραγμέν' ἔσται, τάμὰ δ' ἡμαρτημένα 621

But when there is a plot against me which is swiftly and furtively
Moving forward, then I must be swift in opposing that plot
Since if I remain at rest, then indeed
What is about to be done, will be - because of my mistake.

and (ii) Aeschylus, Agamemnon:

ὀφλὼν γὰρ ἀρπαγῆς τε καὶ κλοπῆς δίκην
τοῦ ῥυσίου θ' ἡμαρτε καὶ πανώλεθρον 535
αὐτόχθονον πατρῶον ἔθρισεν δόμον.

The penalty for the pillage and theft was fair -
He lost his booty and completely ruined
His own land with his father's family cut down

[11] Myatt. *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God*. 2013

[12] On a pedantic note, I understand δοκέω as meaning here not the

conventional unemotional 'suppose/thought' nor (worse) 'opinion' but rather as 'felt' in the sense of experiencing (as they do) an intense and personal feeling. Hence my rendering that they "felt that they saw..."

[13] John Gower, *Confessio Amantis* [written 1390 ce]

That thogh thi love more drawe
And peise in the balance more,
Thou miht noght axe ayein therfore
Of duete, bot al of grace.
For love is lord in every place,
Ther mai no lawe him justefie
Be reddour ne be compaignie,
That he ne wole after his wille
Whom that him liketh spede or spille

(Book 5, v. 4558) *The Complete Works of John Gower*.
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899-1902

Morte Arthure [written c. 1400 ce]

That thow ne schall rowte ne ryste vndyr the heuene ryche, þofe
thow for reddour of Rome ryne to þe erthe [108-109]

cc David Myatt 2013

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All translations: DW Myatt

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Illumination from the MS Anicii Manlii Torqvati Severini Boetii,
De Consolatione Philosophiae cvm Commento,
dated c. 1385 ce, in Glasgow University library: MS Hunter 374 fol.4r

In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church

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Prefatory Note

Collected here are three essays written in 2018 and 2019 which present my personal views regarding Catholicism and in particular regarding what has been termed the "culture of abuse", cultura del abuso. The internet links in the footnotes were valid as of January 2019.

David Myatt
February 2019

In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church

Part One

Listening to *Messe De La Nativité: Gaudeamus Hodie; Puer Natus Est Nobis* - performed by Ensemble Gilles Binchois - I am so reminded how the Roman Catholic Church inspired such numinosity, such beauty, century following century. For it is as if such music presenced the Divine to thus remind us, we fallible error-prone mortals, of another realm beyond the material and beyond our own mortal desires.

Such presencing of the Divine - such a numinous reminder of our fallibility, century following century, as for example in *Kyrie Orbis Factor* as performed by Ensemble Organum - seems to have become somewhat lost in all the recent Media propaganda about how some Catholic priests and monks have allowed their personal desires to overwhelm such a presencing of the numinous and which presencing of the divine is and was manifest in compassion, empathy, and a personal humility.

Lost, in all the Media propaganda, because I from personal experience know that such incidents are perpetrated by a minority of individuals and that the vast majority of Catholic priests and monks are good individuals who strive, who often struggle, each in their own way and according to their physis, to manifest the virtues of compassion, empathy, and humility. That so many writers and readers of such Media propaganda in this our modern world seem to commit the fallacy of *a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter* no longer, unfortunately, surprises me.

In respect of personal experience I have to admit that I was somewhat dismayed by a recent report issued by a government sponsored Inquiry Panel. For I personally had known two of the individuals mentioned in that report, knowing from personal experience in a certain monastery that they, and the few others like them over the years, were the exception out of dozens and dozens of other monks and priests there. I was also somewhat dismayed by what I felt was the personal opinion of the authors of that report - stated in their "Conclusions" - that those involved in placing their personal desires before compassion, empathy, and humility, are "likely to be considerably greater than numbers cited in the convictions" since no evidence was presented to substantiate such an opinion. Another example of individuals committing the fallacy of *a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter*? Probably.

But why does someone who has developed a somewhat paganus weltanschauung – the mystical individualistic numinous way of pathemathos – now defend a supra-personal organization such as the Roman Catholic Church? Because I from personal experience appreciate that for all its many faults – recent and otherwise – and despite my disagreement regarding some of its teachings it still on balance does, at least in my fallible opinion, presence – as it has for centuries presenced – aspects of the numinous and which presencing has over centuries, again in my fallible opinion, had a beneficial affect on many human beings.

As I wrote some years ago in respect of visiting my father's grave in Africa:

"Once I happened to be travelling to an area which colonial and imperialist Europeans formerly described as part of 'darkest Africa'. Part of this travel involved a really long journey on unpaved roads by bus from an urban area. You know the type of thing – an unreliable weekly or sporadic service in some old vehicle used by villagers to take themselves (and often their produce and sometimes their livestock) to and from an urban market and urban-dwelling relatives. On this service, to a remote area, it [seemed to be] the custom – before the journey could begin – for someone to stand at the front and say a Christian prayer with every passenger willingly joining in.

It was quite touching. As was the fact that, at the village where I stayed (with a local family) near that grave, everyone went to Church on a Sunday, wearing the best clothes they could, and there was a real sense (at least to me) of how their faith helped them and gave them some guidance for the better, for it was as if they, poor as they were, were in some way living, or were perhaps partly an embodiment of, the ethos expressed by the Sermon of the Mount, and although I no longer shared their Christian faith, I admired them and respected their belief and understood what that faith seemed to have given them.

Who was – who am – I to try and preach to them, to judge them and that faith? I was – I am – just one fallible human being who believes he may have some personal and fallible answers to certain questions; just one person among billions aware of his past arrogance and his suffering-causing mistakes." [1]

Is to not judge others without a personal knowing of them, to not commit fallacies such as *a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter*, and to allow for personal expiation, perhaps to presence the numinous in at least one small and quite individual way? Personally, I am inclined to believe it is.

Pietatis fons immense, ἐλέησον
Noxas omnes nostras pelle, ἐλέησον [2]

2.x.18

ooo

[1] <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2012/10/30/just-my-fallible-views-again/>

[2] "Immeasurable origin of piety, have mercy. Banish all our faults, have mercy." Kyrie Orbis Factor.

Although the Greek phrase Κύριε ἐλέησον is considered to be a Christian doxology, deriving from the Old Testament, it is possible that it was a common phrase in Greco-Roman culture, with origins dating back to the classical period, for it occurs in the Discourses of Epictetus – Book II, vii, 13 – in relation to a discussion about divination,

καὶ τὸν θεὸν ἐπικαλούμενοι δεόμεθα αὐτοῦ κύριε ἐλέησον

and in our invocations to the theos our bidding is: Master, have mercy.

ooooooo

Part Two

Expiation And Penance

Two of the guiding practical principles of living as a Roman Catholic seem to me, on the basis of personal experience and fallible understanding, to be expiation and penance, related as they are to what was termed the Sacrament of Confession – now re-named the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation – and thence related to one of the founding principles of the Roman Catholic Church: that an ordained Priest has the religious

authority [1] to give absolution for the "sins" [2] a person has committed, and the authority to specify what penance is required for expiation, but which absolution is dependant on the person making a full and truthful confession and being repentant.

Such personal confession, penance, and expiation, are evidential of how a practising Catholic interacts with the Divine and is thus personally reminded of what is spiritual, eternal, numinous, and beyond the causal everyday world. As I wrote in my essay *Numinous Expiation*,

"One of the many problems regarding both The Numinous Way and my own past which troubles me – and has troubled me for a while – is how can a person make reparation for suffering caused, inflicted, and/or dishonourable deeds done [...]

One of the many benefits of an organized theistic religion, such as Christianity or Islam or Judaism, is that mechanisms of personal expiation exist whereby such feelings can be placed in context and expiated by appeals to the supreme deity. In Judaism, there is Teshuvah culminating in Yom Kippur, the day of expiation/reconciliation. In Catholicism, there is the sacrament of confession and penance. In Islam, there is personal dua to, and reliance on, Allah Ar-Rahman, Ar-Raheem, As-Salaam.

Even pagan religions and ways had mechanisms of personal expiation for wrong deeds done, often in the form of propitiation; the offering of a sacrifice, perhaps, or compensation by the giving or the leaving of a valuable gift or votive offering at some numinous – some sacred and venerated – place or site." [3]

This personal – and via the Confessional, this priestly – connexion to the Divine, with the attendant penitence, penance, personal expiation, seems to me to have been somewhat neglected when non-Catholics, and even some Catholics criticize the Roman Catholic Church for their past response to those accused of placing their personal (often sexual) desires before compassion, empathy, and humility.

That is, such criticism is secular; based on what is temporal, causal, such as some secular law or some personal emotive reaction, with the spiritual – the eternal – dimension to mortal life unconsidered. Which spiritual dimension is for Catholics based on allowing for personal expiation by spiritual means such as confession, penitence, and penance.

This allowance for such personal expiation by such spiritual means is what, according to my fallible understanding, informed the treatment by the Catholic hierarchy of many of those accused of placing their personal desires before obedience to their God.

For judgement according to such a spiritual dimension was, rightly or wrongly, often considered more important than secular recompense and secular punishment. Understood thus, there were no – to use a vernacular term – "cover-ups", just the application of certain spiritual considerations, considerations which are the foundations of the Catholic faith based as such considerations are on the belief in the Eternal Life – in Heaven or in Hell – which awaits all mortals, one portal to such an Eternal Life in Heaven being, according to Catholic faith, the sacrament of confession.

Another aspect of this Catholic priority of the spiritual over the secular is the sanctity (the seal) of the confessional and which sanctity is adjudged to be more important than secular laws relating, for example, to disclosure of or information regarding actions deemed to be criminal.

As for my personal opinions on the matter, I have none, for who am I – with my decades of hubris, my knowledge of my plenitude of mistakes – to judge others, to judge anyone? I have tried to rationally understand both the secular and the spiritual dimensions involved, having personal experience of both, and as so often these days remain somewhat perplexed by our human nature and by the need so many humans, myself included, still have for a belief in a spiritual dimension whereby we can connect ourselves to the numinous, to the Divine – however the Divine is presented to and in us – enabling us to perhaps find some peace, some happiness, some solace, some answers, among the turmoil, the suffering, the chngement, of the secular world.

My portal to the spiritual remains 'the way of pathei-mathos', the way of striving to cultivate, striving to live by, the virtues of humility, empathy, compassion, honour, non-interference, and self-restraint. A very individual way devoid of mythoi and anthropomorphic deities.

Perhaps it would be easier to believe in God, to accept again the Catholic expiation of the sacraments of Confession and the Mass. It would perhaps be even easier to accept some tangible votive wordless means in the form of offering some paganus propitiation, some libation, some talismata left, at some numinous paganus site.

But as Aeschylus so well-expressed it,

ἔστι δ' ὅπη νῦν
ἔστι: τελεῖται δ' ἐς τὸ πεπρωμένον:
οὔθ' ὑποκαίων οὔθ' ὑπολείβων
οὔτε δακρύων ἀπύρων ἱερῶν
ὀργὰς ἀτενεῖς παραθέλξει [4]

What is now, came to be
As it came to be. And its ending has been ordained.
No concealed laments, no concealed libations,
No unburnt offering
Can charm away that firm resolve.

Which type of sentiment I feel philosophers such as Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius also sought to express.

4.x.18

ooo

[1] Qv. John 20:22-23,

λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἃν τινων ἀφῆτε τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἀφέωνται
αὐτοῖς ἃν τινων κρατῆτε κεκράτηνται

Receive Halig Spiritus: if you release anyone from their errors,
they are released; if you hold onto them, they are held onto.

In regard to the term Spiritus, in my commentary on John 1:31 I wrote:

τὸ πνεῦμα. Almost without exception, since Wycliffe's Bible the Greek here has been translated as "the spirit", although the ASV [the Anglo-Saxon Version] has gast (gast of heofenum), whence the later English word 'ghost'. However, given what the terms 'spirit' and 'ghost' – both in common usage, and as a result of over a thousand years of Christian exegesis – now impute, it is apposite to offer an alternative and one which is germane to the milieu of the Gospels or which at least suggests something of the numinosity presenced, in this instance, via the Gospel of John.

Given that the transliteration *pneuma* – with its modern association with terms such as *pneumatic* – does not unequivocally suggest the numinous, I have chosen *spiritus*, as referenced in respect of *gast* in Wright's *Anglo-Saxon And Old English Vocabularies*.

In regard to the translation *Halig Spiritus*, in my commentary on John 5:33 I wrote:

I have here used the Old English word *Halig* – as for example found in the version of John 17.11 in the Lindisfarne Gospel, 'Du halig fæder' – to translate ἅγιος rather than the later word 'holy' derived as that is from *halig* and used as it was by Wycliffe in his 1389 translation of this phrase, "in the Hooly Gost", which itself echoes the ASV, "on Halgum Gaste."

The unique phrase *in Halig Spiritus* – in place of the conventional 'with the Holy Spirit' – may thus express something of the numinosity, and the newness, of the original Gospel, especially as the word 'holy' has been much overused, imputes particular meanings from over a thousand years of exegesis, and, latterly in common parlance, has become somewhat trivialized.

[2] As I have noted in several essays, and in my translation of the Gospel of John, I prefer to translate the Greek term ἁμαρτία not by the conventional 'sin' but rather by 'error' or 'mistake'. As I wrote in the essay *Exegesis and Translation*,

One of the prevalent English words used in translations of the New Testament, and one of the words now commonly associated with revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam, is *sin*. A word which now imputes and for centuries has imputed a particular and at times somewhat strident if not harsh moral attitude, with sinners starkly contrasted with the righteous, the saved, and with *sin*, what is evil, what is perverse, to be shunned and shudderingly avoided.

One of the oldest usages of the word *sin* – so far discovered – is in the c. 880 CE translation of the c. 525 CE text *Consolatio Philosophiae*, a translation attributed to King Ælfred. Here, the Old English spelling of *syn* is used:

Ʒæt is swiðe dyslic & swiðe micel syn Ʒæt mon Ʒæs
wenan scyle be Gode

The context of the original Latin of Boethius is cogitare, in relation to a dialogue about goodness and God, so that the sense of the Latin is that it is incorrect – an error, wrong – to postulate/claim/believe certain things about God. There is thus here, in Boethius, as in early English texts such as Beowulf, the sense of doing what was wrong, of committing an error, of making a mistake, of being at fault; at most of overstepping the bounds, of transgressing limits imposed by others, and thus being 'guilty' of such an infraction, a sense which the suggested etymology of the word syn implies: from the Latin sons, sontis.

Thus, this early usage of the English word syn seems to impart a sense somewhat different from what we now associate with the word sin, which is why in my translation of John, 8.7 I eschewed that much overused and pejorative word in order to try and convey something of the numinous original:

So, as they continued to ask [for an answer] he straightened himself, saying to them: "Let he who has never made a mistake [Αναμαρτητος] throw the first stone at her."

ὥς δὲ ἐπέμενον ἐρωτῶντες αὐτόν, ἀνέκυψεν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὁ ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν πρῶτος ἐπ' αὐτὴν βαλέτω λίθον.

Jesus here is not, in my view, sermonizing about sin, as a puritan preacher might, and as if he is morally superior to and has judged the sinners. Instead, he is rather gently and as a human pointing out an obvious truth about our human nature; explaining, in v.11, that he has not judged her conduct:

ἡ δὲ εἶπεν· οὐδεὶς, κύριε. εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· οὐδὲ ἐγὼ σε κατακρίνω· πορεύου, ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε

[And] she answered, No one, my Lord. Whereupon Jesus replied "Neither do I judge [κατακρίνω] you, therefore go, and avoid errors such as those."

The essay is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2013/04/26/exegesis-and-translation/> and was included as an Appendix to my *Mercvrii Trismegisti Pymander* (ISBN 978-1495470684)

[3] The essay is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/numinous-expiation/>

[4] Agamemnon, 67-71

Two Metaphysical Contradictions Of The Modern West

The letter written by Pope Francis, dated 1° de enero de 2019 and sent to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, seems to me to encapsulate two of the metaphysical contradictions of the modern Western world in regard to the numinous and the profane.

For in the letter Pope Francis, commenting on what the Media has described as "the scandal of clerical abuse" within the Roman Catholic Church, wrote that

La credibilidad de la Iglesia se ha visto fuertemente cuestionada y debilitada por estos pecados y crímenes, pero especialmente por la voluntad de querer disimularlos y esconderlos. [1]

and also used Biblical quotations in support of his arguments.

The use of the phrase pecados y crímenes - sins and crimes - seems to indicate an acceptance of the metaphysical equality of Church and State: of a sin, as defined by the teachings of the Church, and of a crime as defined in laws made by some State [2].

Sins And Crimes: Sacred And Secular

Pope Francis provides the context for one metaphysical contradiction, for in respect of the response he believes is required regarding such "sins and crimes" he writes

Hoy se nos pide una nueva presencia en el mundo conforme a la Cruz de Cristo, que se cristalice en servicio a los hombres y mujeres de nuestro tiempo [3]

That is, there should be a change, a new presencing, and one that serves the people now; the people of our epoch, of our age, of the 'times' in which we now live.

This is the epoch in which the Media, using such expressions as a "culture of abuse" - *cultura del abuso* - can question the credibility of the Roman Catholic Church, and by repetition of particular instances of abuse and the reporting of other ones, demand not only a response from the hierarchy of the Church but a response that conforms to the popular, or to the Media created, expectations of the epoch. Which expectations are that secular justice - as understood and as implemented by the State - has a higher priority than *judicium divinum*, the divine justice of God or of the gods.

Which divine justice was, at least according to my fallible understanding and as I noted in part two of my *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*, "often considered more important than secular recompense and secular punishment" especially as personal confession to a Priest, personal penitence, and undertaking the penance prescribed were, in the Roman Catholic Church, a connexion to the Divine. Hence why many of those who, via the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, confessed to abuse were not "publicly named and shamed" by the Catholic hierarchy, were not brought to the attention of State authorities, but instead given penance and, in some instances, quietly moved and expected to begin a new penitential life in the service of God.

That Pope Francis uses the expression *cultura del abuso* and writes that *la credibilidad de la Iglesia se ha visto fuertemente cuestionada y debilitada por estos pecados y crímenes* suggests to me at least two things. First, that the move toward the change he suggests is in part at least placatory, in conformity with our epoch with its powerful secular Media and its powerful modern secular States; and second that the religious, the numinous, the spiritual, balance presenced for millennia by aspects of the Roman Catholic Church [4] - the devotion to the sacred over and above the secular - is continuing to be lost within the Roman Catholic Church, with *judicium divinum* and the secular justice of some State now apparently considered by the Pope as metaphysically equal. Hence why in a speech to the Roman Curia in December 2018 he said that those who abused children should "hand themselves over to human justice." [5]

A Revealed Religion

The second metaphysical contradiction, between the sacred and the profane in the modern world, which the Papal letter reveals is the unsurprising and traditional use of Biblical quotations in support of, and to frame, the presented suggestions and argument.

This reliance on written texts and reliance on their exegesis and thus on the varied interpretations that result [6] is an implicit part of all revealed religions from Judaism, to Christianity, to Islam. Since these interpretations can vary and have varied over the centuries the result is schism, reformation and counter-reformation, leading as these did in the past to such things as the suppression of the monasteries, the theft of monastic lands and wealth, and the persecution and martyrdom of Catholics, by a tyrannos named Henry; and leading as they have in more modern times, to the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, and to the proliferation of Christian sects and denominations who have diverse views about such matters as same-gender love and abortion.

Such reliance on such texts, such varying interpretations, are as I have noted elsewhere the fundamental weakness of revealed religions [7] with, in my fallible view, the sacred - the numinous - unable to fully be presenced by such religions.

Thus it does not surprise me that the Roman Catholic Church apparently now considers *judicium divinum* and the secular justice of some State as metaphysically equal since the conflict between varying interpretations, the apparent desire for placatory reforms - of being "a new presence in the world" - as a consequence of Media attention, and the increasing move away "in this epoch" from a belief in the superiority of *judicium divinum* (the primacy of the sacred) are necessary consequences of the dialectic of exegesis.

Which is one reason why my personal spiritual belief is now not that of Catholicism even though I sense that Catholicism does still presence some aspects of the numinous.

Instead, I incline toward an apprehension of the divine, the sacred, which is *paganus* and thus individual, undogmatic, and empathic, since my *paganus* metaphysics is that of

(i) an (often wordless) awareness of ourselves as a fallible mortal, as a microcosmic connexion to other mortals, to other life, to Nature, and to the Cosmos beyond our world, and (ii) a new civitas, and one not based on some abstractive law but on a spiritual and interior (and thus not political) understanding and appreciation of our own Ancestral Culture and that of others; on our 'civic' duty to personally presence καλὸς κάγαθός and thus to act and to live in a noble way. For the virtues of personal honour and manners, with their responsibilities, presence the fairness, the avoidance of hubris, the natural harmonious balance, the gender equality, the awareness and appreciation of the divine, that is the numinous. [8]

7.i.19

Extract from a reply to someone
who enquired about a Papal Letter in relation to my text
In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church

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[1] "The credibility of the Church has been seriously questioned and undermined by these sins and crimes but especially by a desire to hide or to disguise them."

The official Vatican translation is "The Church's credibility has been seriously undercut and diminished by these sins and crimes, but even more by the efforts made to deny or conceal them."

[2] By the term State is meant the concept of both (i) organizing and controlling – over a particular and large geographical area – land (and resources); and (ii) organizing and controlling individuals over that same geographical particular and large geographical area.

[3] "Today, what is asked of us is to be a new presence in the world that, in conformity with the Cross of Christ, is made clear in service to the men and women of our epoch."

The official Vatican translation is "What is being asked of us today is a new presence in the world, conformed to the cross of Christ, one that

takes concrete shape in service to the men and women of our time."

[4] As I noted in part one of my *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*,

"Listening to Messe De La Nativité: Gaudeamus Hodie; Puer Natus Est Nobis performed by Ensemble Gilles Binchois - I am so reminded how the Roman Catholic Church inspired such numinosity, such beauty, century following century. For it is as if such music presenced the Divine to thus remind us, we fallible error-prone mortals, of another realm beyond the material and beyond our own mortal desires."

[5] Catholic News Agency, December 21, 2018.

[6] Qv. my *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*, and *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*.

[7] Qv. (i) *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God*; (ii) *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*; (iii) *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*.

[8] *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*.

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All translations by DW Myatt

Corpus Hermeticum

Eight Tractates

I, III, IV, VI, VIII, XI, XII, XIII

Translation and Commentary

David Myatt

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Bibliography

Preface

This work collects together my translations of and commentaries on the eight tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum which were published separately between 2013 and 2017. From the fourteen Greek tractates that have been traditionally referred to as the Corpus Hermeticum, I chose the eight (the ogdoad) whose texts I considered were the most metaphysical and mystical and thus which can provide an understanding of what came to be termed hermeticism.

In the case of the Corpus Hermeticum, the task of translating ancient Greek into English is complicated by the terminology used in the text. Words such as λόγος, νοῦς, πνεῦμα, δημιουργόν, φῶς, ψυχή (καὶ τὰ λοιπά), all require careful consideration if the text is to be understood in relation to the cultural milieu existing at the time of its composition; a milieu where a Hellenistic paganism, of various types and hues, thrived alongside the still relatively new religion of Christianity.

All too often, such Greek words are translated by an English word which has, over centuries, acquired a meaning which is not or which may not be relevant to that milieu, resulting in a 'retrospective reinterpretation' of the text. One thinks here of (i) θεός translated as god or as God, and of λόγος translated as 'word' (or Word) which thus suffuse, or can suffuse, the text with the meanings that nearly two thousand years of Christian exegesis have ascribed to those terms; of (ii) νοῦς translated as either "intellect" or as "mind", neither of which is satisfactory especially given what both of those English words have come to denote, philosophically and otherwise, in the centuries since the Greek tractates were written. In an effort to avoid such retrospective reinterpretation here, and the preconceptions thus imposed upon the text, I have sometimes used transliterations, sometimes used a relatively obscure English word, and sometimes used a new term.

However, given that the goal of the translator is to provide for the general reader an intelligible interpretation of the text, to utilize transliterations for every problematic word would fail to accomplish that goal. Which is why the translator has to use their judgement and why every translation is 'a fallible interpretation of meaning'.

The methodology of using some transliterations, some relatively obscure

English words, and some new term or expression (such as noetic sapientia) results in a certain technical - an 'esoteric' - vocabulary which requires or may require contextual, usually metaphysical, interpretation. Often, the interpretation is provided by reference to the matters discussed in the particular tractate; sometimes by reference to other tractates; and sometimes by considering Ancient Greek, and Greco-Roman, philosophy and mysticism. Occasionally, however, the interpretation is to leave some transliteration - such as physis, φύσις - as a basic term of the particular hermetic weltanschauung described in a particular tractate and, as such, as a term which has no satisfactory English equivalent, metaphysical or otherwise, and therefore to assimilate it into the English language. All of which make these translations rather different from other English versions, past and present, with these translations hopefully enabling the reader to approach and to appreciate the hermetic texts sans preconceptions, modern and otherwise, and thus provide an intimation of how such texts might have been understood by those who read them, or heard them read, in the milieu of their composition.

One of the intentions of these translations of mine of various tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum is provide an alternative approach to such ancient texts and hopefully enable the reader without a knowledge of Greek (and of the minutiae of over a century of scholarly analysis of the Greek text) to appreciate the texts anew and understand why they have - in the original Greek - been regarded as important documents in respect of particular, ancient, weltanschauungen that have, over the centuries, proved most influential and which can still be of interest to those interested in certain metaphysical speculations and certain esoteric matters.

Why an alternative approach to such ancient texts? Because current, and past interpretations - based on using terms such as God, Mind, and Soul - make them appear to be proto-Christian or imbued with an early Christian weltanschauung or express certain philosophical and moralistic abstractions. Also, because I incline toward the view that such texts, in the matter of cosmogony and metaphysics, are more influenced by the classical Greek and the Hellenistic ethos than by any other, and thus in many ways are representative of that ethos as it was being developed, or as it was known, at the time texts such as those in the Corpus Hermeticum were written. An ethos, a cosmogony and a metaphysics, exemplified - to give just a few examples - by terms such as ἀρρενόηλυσ (Poemander), by the shapeshifting of Poemander (τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἡλλάγη τῇ ἰδέᾳ), by mention of a septenary system (Poemander, Tractate XI), by the 'voyages of the psyche' (Tractate XI: 20) and by terms such as ἱερός Λόγος (Tractate III) and which term dates back to the time of Hesiod [1].

In respect, for example, of the ἱερός Λόγος tractate, my view is that it is the story of genesis according to an ancient pagan, and esoteric, weltanschauung; a text in all probability older than the other texts in the Corpus Hermeticum and certainly older, as an aural tradition, than the story given in the Biblical

Genesis; and a text which the author of the Poemandres tractate might well have been familiar with, as a reading of both texts indicates.

As an example of my alternative approach (and perhaps the most controversial example) is my interpretation of ἀγαθός as honour/nobility /honesty, τὸ ἀγαθόν as the honourable/the noble/nobility, and thus as embodied in noble, trustworthy, honest, individuals, and which interpretation I am inclined to view as an expression of both the classical Greek and the Greco-Roman (Hellenic) ethos, including the ethos of Greco-Roman mysticism, just as the expression τί ἐστὶν ἀλήθεια, attributed to a certain Roman, is an expression of that ethos; whereas ἀγαθός as some disputable 'abstract', impersonal or philosophical 'good' does not in my view exemplify that ethos and the milieu in which it flourished. Furthermore, given how such a disputable 'abstract', moral, good has been generally understood for the last millennia (partly due to the influence of Christianity, partly due to post-Renaissance philosophy, and partly due to Western jurisprudence) then it seems desirable to avoid using the term 'good' in translations of such ancient texts - as also elsewhere, in other metaphysical tractates of the Hellenic era - since 'good' now has certain post-Hellenic connotations which can distance us from what such ancient tractates may well have expressed. [2]

In respect of the texts, I incline toward the view that they generally represent the personal weltanschauung of their authors germane to their time. That is, that rather than being representative of some axiomatical pre-existing philosophy or of some religious school of thought, they reproduce the insight and the understanding of individuals regarding particular metaphysical matters; an insight and an understanding no doubt somewhat redolent of, and influenced by, and sometimes perhaps paraphrasing, some such existing philosophies and/or some such schools of thought; and an insight which often differs from tractate to tractate.

Regarding my translation, some may well consider the words of Diogenes Laertius - *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 3.1 (64) - in relation to Plato, quite apposite:

χρῆται δὲ ὁ Πλάτων ἐνίοτε αὐτῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ κακοῦ: ἔστι δ' ὅτε καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ μικροῦ. πολλάκις δὲ καὶ διαφέρουσιν ὀνόμασιν ἐπὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ σημαυνομένου χρῆται.

For I have sometimes translated the same Greek word in two different ways in order to try and elucidate the meaning of the text [exempli gratia: ἀπερίοριστον, as undefinable and unmeasurable] just as I have idiosyncratically translated certain Greek words [exempli gratia: ἅγιος, as numinous], differences and idiosyncrasies I have endeavoured to explain in my commentary.

The Greek text used is that of A.D. Nock & A-J. Festugiere, *Corpus*

Hermeticum, Third Edition, 1972. Occasionally I have followed the reading of the MSS or the emendations of others rather than Nock's text with such variations noted in my commentary. Text enclosed in angled brackets < > indicates a conjectural editorial addition, and <...> indicates a lacuna.

David Myatt
2017

[1] a) ἔστι λόγος περὶ αὐτοῦ ἱρὸς λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 48, s3. (b) ἔστι ἱρὸς περὶ αὐτοῦ λόγος λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 62, s2. (c) ἔστι δὲ περὶ αὐτῶν ἱρὸς λόγος λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 81, s2.

[2] I have endeavoured to explain such interpretations in various essays, including (i) *Some Examples Regarding Translation and Questions of Interpretation*, (ii) *Concerning ἀγαθός and νοῦς in the Corpus Hermeticum*; and (iii) *Cicero On Summum Bonum*.

Ποιμάνδρης

Pœmandres

Tractate I

Introduction

The Greek text of the tractate often referred to as the Pœmandres/Pymander part of the Corpus Hermeticum was first published by Turnebus in Paris in 1554 and of the origin of the knowledge expounded in the text, the author declares at v.2 that

εἰμὶ ὁ Ποιμάνδρης ὁ τῆς αὐθεντίας νοῦς οἶδα δὲ βούλει καὶ σύνειμί σοι
πανταχοῦ

Which implies - qv. my translation, and notes and commentary on the text - that what Pœmandres is about to reveal is an authentic perceivation, and this supernatural being [or archetype] knows what is desired/wanted because, like the guardian daemons of classical and Hellenic culture, Pœmandres is close by.

What is revealed is a summary of that weltanschauung that has been termed hermetic philosophy; a summary widely regarded as an important hermetic text and as dating from the second or the third century CE; and a summary which contains many interesting notions and allusions, such as logos, physis/Physis, the septenary system, the gospel of John, the feminine character of Physis/Nature, the doxology Agios o Theos, and θεός as being both male and female in one person - that is, either *ἀνδρόγυνος* or (more controversially) bisexual.

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Translation

[1] Once, while concentrating on and pondering what is real, my intuitions freely flowed, and, my alertness dulled as from an excess of wearisome bodily toil or too much eating, it seemed as if a huge being - too large to measure -

chanced by calling out my name and asking what it was I wanted to see and hear about and learn and have knowledge of.

[2] Who are you, I asked.

I am Pœmandres, the perceivration of authority, knowing your desires and eachwhere with you.

[3] I answered that I seek to learn what is real, to apprehend the physis of beings, and to have knowledge of theos. That is what I want to hear.

So he said to me, remember all those things you wanted to learn, for I shall instruct you.

[4] So saying, his form altered whereupon I at once sensed everything; an indefinity of inner sight, with everything suffused in phaos - bright and clear - so that from this seeing, a desire. But all too soon there came down upon it a heavy darkness - stygian, strange - and slithering <as a serpent> until that darkness changed in physis: flowing, of an untellable disorder, with smoke as from a fire and an indescribable sound followed by some aphonous noise as if phaos was calling out.

[5] And then, from the phaos, a numinous logos came upon that physis with pure Fire going forth to the height of that physis; easily and effective and efficient. Since Air is agile, it followed the pneuma, up and above Earth and Water and as far as Fire, to be as if it were hanging from that, there.

Earth and Water remained, coagulating together such that <Earth> could not be seen apart from Water until they were stirred by the sound of the pneumal logos that came down upon them.

[6] Pœmandres asked, had I apprehended the sense of that inner seeing? And I said I shall have knowledge of it.

I am, he said, that phaos; perceivration, your theos, and prior to the flowing physis brought forth from darkness. [And] the phaomal logos, from perceivration, is the child of theos.

So I said for him to continue.

Then know that within you - who hears and sees - is logos kyrios, although perceivration is theos the father. They are not separated, one from the other, because their union is Life.

Thank you, I said.

Then discover phaos and become familiar with it.

[7] So saying, he stared at me for so long a duration that I shivered because of the way he looked. But, as he tilted his head back, I, observing, discovered the phaos of unmeasurable forces and an undefinable cosmic order coming-into-being. While the fire, embraced by a strong force, was subdued and kept in stasis.

Such I observed and discovered because of those words of Pœmandres. But, since I was vexed, he spoke to me again. From your seeing, an awareness of the quidditas of semblance; of the primal before the origin without an end.

This was what Pœmandres said to me, then.

[8] So I asked from what place, then, the parsements of physis?

To which he answered, from the deliberations of theos, who, having comprehended the logos and having seen the beauty of the cosmic order, re-presented it, and so became a cosmic order from their own parsements and by the birth of Psyche.

[9] Theos, the perceivation, male-and-female, being Life and phaos, whose logos brought forth another perceivation, an artisan, who - theos of Fire and pneuma - fashioned seven viziers to surround the perceptible cosmic order in spheres and whose administration is described as fate.

[10] Directly, from the downward parsements, the logos of theos bounded to the fine artisements of Physis and joined with the perceivation of that artisan, for it was of the same essence. Thus the descending parsements of Physis were left, devoid of logos, to be only substance.

[11] The perceivation of that artisan, in combination with logos, surrounded the spheres, spinning them around, a twizzling of artisements of some indefinite origin and some undeterminable end, finishing where they began. Turning around and around as perceivation decreed, the spheres produced, from those descending parsements, beings devoid of logos, for they were not given logos, while Air produced what flew, and Water what swam. Divided, one from the other, were Earth and Water, as perceivation had decreed, with Earth delivering from within herself beings four-footed and crawling, and animals savage and benign.

[12] Perceivation, as Life and phaos, father of all, brought forth in his own likeness a most beautiful mortal who, being his child, he loved. And theos, who loved his own image, bequeathed to him all his works of Art.

[13] Thus, having discovered what that artisan with that father's assistance had wrought, he too determined on such artisements, which the father agreed to. Ingressing to the artisan's realm, with full authority, he appreciated his

brother's artisements, and they - loving him - each shared with him their own function.

Having fully learned their essence, and having partaken of their physis, he was determined to burst out past the limit of those spheres to discover the one who imposed their strength upon the Fire.

[14] With full authority over the ordered cosmos of humans and of beings devoid of logos, he burst through the strength of the spheres to thus reveal to those of downward physis the beautiful image of theos.

When she beheld such unceasing beauty - he who possessed all the vigour of the viziers and was the image of theos - she lovingly smiled, for it was as if in that Water she had seen the semblance of that mortal's beautiful image and, on Earth, his shadow. And as he himself beheld in that Water her image, so similar to his own, he desired her and wanted to be with her.

Then, his want and his vigour realized, and he within that image devoid of logos, Physis grasped he whom she loved to entwine herself around him so that, as lovers, they were intimately joined together.

[15] Which is why, distinct among all other beings on Earth, mortals are jumelle; deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal. Yet, although deathless and possessing full authority, the human is still subject to wyrd. Hence, although over the harmonious structure, when within become the slave. Male-and-female since of a male-and-female father, and wakeful since of a wakeful one. <...>

[16] <...> my perceivation, for I also love the logos. Then Pœmandres said, this is a mysterium esoteric even to this day. For Physis, having intimately joined with the human, produced a most wondrous wonder possessed of the physis of the harmonious seven I mentioned before, of Fire and pneuma. Physis did not tarry, giving birth to seven male-and-female humans with the physis of those viziers, and ætherean.

Pœmandres, I said, a great eagerness has now arrived in me so that I yearn to hear more. Do not go away.

Then, Pœmandres replied, be silent for this primary explanation is not yet complete.

I shall, I said, therefore, be silent.

[17] To continue, those seven came into being in this way. Earth was muliebral, Water was lustful, and Fire maturing. From Æther, the pneuma, and with Physis bringing forth human-shaped bodies. Of Life and phaos, the human came to be of psyche and perceivation; from Life - psyche; from phaos - perceivation; and with everything in the observable cosmic order cyclic until its completion.

[18] Now listen to the rest of the explanation you asked to hear. When the cycle was fulfilled, the connexions between all things were, by the deliberations of theos, unfastened. Living beings - all male-and-female then - were, including humans, rent asunder thus bringing into being portions that were masculous with the others muliebral. Directly, then, theos spoke a numinous logos: propagate by propagation and spawn by spawning, all you creations and artisements, and let the perceiver have the knowledge of being deathless and of Eros as responsible for death.

[19] Having so spoken, foreknowing - through wyrd and that harmonious structure - produced the coagulations and founded the generations with all beings spawning according to their kind. And they of self-knowledge attained a particular benefit while they who, misled by Eros, love the body, roamed around in the dark, to thus, perceptively, be afflicted by death.

[20] But why, I asked, do the unknowing err so much that they are robbed of immortality.

You seem, he said, not to have understood what you heard, for did I not tell you to discover things?

I said I do recall and am discovering, for which I am obliged.

Then tell me, if you have discovered, why death is expected for those in death.

Because originally the body began with that stygian darkness, from whence the flowing physis which formed the body within the perceptible cosmic order which nourishes death.

[21] Your apprehension is correct. Yet why, according to the logos of theos, does the one of self-discovery progress within themselves?

To which I replied, phaos and Life formed the father of all beings, from whence that human came into being.

You express yourself well. For phaos and Life are the theos and the father from whence the human came into being. Therefore if you learn to be of Life and phaos - and that you perchance are of them - then you progress to return to Life. Thus spoke Pøemandres.

Can you - who are my perceiviation - therefore tell me how I may progress to Life? For does not theos say that the human of perceiviation should have self-knowledge?

[22] And do not all humans posses perceiviation?

Again you express yourself well. I, perceivration, attend to those of respectful deeds, the honourable, the refined, the compassionate, those aware of the numinous; to whom my being is a help so that they soon acquire knowledge of the whole and are affectionately gracious toward the father, fondly celebrating in song his position.

Before they hand over their body to its death they loathe the influencing impressions, for they know their vigour. That is, I - perceivration - do not allow what the vigour of the body embraces to be achieved. For, as guardian, I close the entrance to the bad and the dishonourably vigorous, preventing their procrastinations.

[23] I keep myself distant from the unreasonable, the rotten, the malicious, the jealous, the greedy, the bloodthirsty, the hubriatic, instead, giving them up to the avenging daemon, who assigns to them the sharpness of fire, who visibly assails them, and who equips them for more lawlessness so that they happen upon even more vengeance. For they cannot control their excessive yearnings, are always in the darkness - which tests them - and thus increase that fire even more.

[24] You, perceivration, have instructed me well about all those things I sought. But could you tell me how the Anados will occur?

To which Pœmandres replied, first, the dissolution of the physical body allows that body to be transformed with the semblance it had disappearing and its now non-functioning ethos handed over to the daimon, with the body's perceptions returning to their origin, then becoming separated with their purpose, transplanted, and with desire and eagerness journeying toward the physis devoid of logos.

[25] Thus does the mortal hasten through the harmonious structure, offering up, in the first realm, that vigour which grows and which fades, and - in the second one - those dishonourable machinations, no longer functioning. In the third, that eagerness which deceives, no longer functioning; in the fourth, the arrogance of command, no longer insatiable; in the fifth, profane insolence and reckless haste; in the sixth, the bad inclinations occasioned by riches, no longer functioning; and in the seventh realm, the lies that lie in wait.

[26] Thus, stripped of the activities of that structure, they enter into the ogdoadic physis, and, with those there, celebrate the father in song for they, together, rejoice at this arrival who, now akin to them, hears those forces beyond the ogdoadic physis celebrating theos in melodious song. Then, in order, they move toward the father to hand themselves over to those forces, and, becoming those forces, they become united with theos. For to so become of theos is the noble goal of those who seek to acquire knowledge.

Why, therefore, hesitate? Should it not be that, having received all these things,

you should become a guide to those who are suitable so that, because of you, descendants of mortals may - through theos - escape?

[27] Having so spoken to me, Pœmandres joined with those forces, while I, having given thanks to and expressed my gratitude toward the father of all beings, went forth strengthened and informed regarding the physis of everything and with an insight of great importance.

So it was that I began to tell mortals about how beautiful knowledge and an awareness of the numinous were. You earth-bound mortals, you who have embraced intoxicating liquor, sleepfulness, and are unknowing of theos: soberize, stop your drunkenness, for you are beguiled by irrational sleepfulness.

[28] Hearing this, they, with the same purpose, gathered round. And I said, you who are earth-bound, why do you embrace death when you have the means to partake of immortality? Change your ways, you who have accompanied deception and who have kinship with the unknowing ones. Leave the dark phaos, partake of immortality, move away from your destruction.

[29] Then some of them, having ridiculed, went away, embracing as they did the way of death; although some others, desirous of being informed, threw themselves down at my feet. I asked them to stand, and thus became a guide to those of my kind, informing them of the logoi - of the way and the means of rescue - and engendered in them the logoi of sapientia, with the celestial elixir to nurture them.

And with the arrival of evening with the rays of Helios beginning to completely wane, I bid they express their gratitude to theos, after which - with that expression of gratitude completed - they each retired to their own bed.

[30] Commemorating within myself the noble service of Pœmandres - replete with what I had desired - I was most pleased, for the sleep of the body engendered temperance of psyche, the closing of the eyes a genuine insight, with my silence pregnant with the noble, and the expression of the logos breeding nobility.

Such is what transpired for me, received from perceivization - that is, Pœmandres; for it was by being theos-inspired that I came upon this revealing. Therefore, from my psyche and with all my strength, I offer benedictions to theos, the father.

[31]

Agios o Theos, father of all beings.

Agios o Theos, whose purpose is accomplished by his own arts.

Agios o Theos, whose disposition is to be recognized and who is recognized by his own.

Agios es, you who by logos form all being.
Agios es, you who engender all physis as eikon.
Agios es, you whom the Physis did not morph.
Agios es, you who are mightier than all artifice.
Agios es, you who surpass all excellence.
Agios es, you who transcend all praise.

You - ineffable, inexpressible, to whom silence gives voice - receive these respectful wordful offerings from a psyche and a heart that reach out to you.

[32] I ask of you to grant that I am not foiled in acquiring knowledge germane to our essence; to invigorate me, so that - by that favour - I may bring illumination to the unknowing who, kindred of my kind, are your children.

Such I testify and believe; to advance to Life and phaos. For you, father, a benediction. Your mortal's purpose is to share in your numinosity, for which you have provided every means.

ooo

Notes and Commentary on the Text

The numbers refer to the sections of the Greek text, 1-32.

1.

what is real. Regarding τῶν ὄντων cf. Plato, Republic, Book 7 (532c) - πρὸς δὲ τὰ ἐν ὕδασι φαντάσματα θεῖα καὶ σκιάς τῶν ὄντων ἀλλ' οὐκ εἰδώλων σκιάς δι' ἑτέρου τοιούτου φωτὸς ὡς πρὸς ἥλιον κρίνειν ἀποσκιαζομένους - where the φάντασμα (the appearance) of some-thing natural (god-given), such as the σκιά (image) that is reflected by water, is stated to be real, and contrasted with what is not considered to be real (what is an unsubstantial image) such as that cast by a fire rather than by the Sun.

intuition. For διανοίας. As with νοῦς (see 2. below) a term which deserves some scrutiny. Conventionally, it is translated as 'thought', or 'thinking', as if in reference to some sort of idealized faculty we human beings are said to possess and which faculty deals with ideations and their collocations and is considered as necessary to, or the foundation of, understanding and reason.

More accurately, in a classical context, διανοίας is (i) 'intelligence' (or intuition) in the sense of understanding some-thing or someone (i.e. in being able to perceive some-thing correctly or to correctly understand - to know - a person), or (ii) 'intention'.

I have opted for 'intuition' as suggesting, and as manifesting, insight, often from

contemplation, as the etymology, from the Latin *intueri*, suggests. For the English word 'thought' now conveys modern meanings which, in my view, are not relevant here. And an 'intuition' that is related to, but somewhat different from, the perceivment that is νοῦς.

Alertness. αἴσθησις. Alertness here in the sense that the normal, alert, awareness of the physical senses is dulled by interior intuition, insight, or revelation. An appropriate alternative translation would thus be *awareness*, as in awareness of one's surroundings.

Huge. ὑπερμεγέθη - qv Plutarch *Romulus*, 16.5 ἐπὶ στρατοπέδου δρυὶν ἔτεμεν ὑπερμεγέθη - chopped down a huge tree there in that encampment.

Huge, and too large to measure by ordinary means. I do not see any need to exaggerate what is implied, as some other translations do.

Have knowledge of. In the tractate, γινῶναι is related to νοῦς and διανοίας as an expression of what is perceived, or one is aware of. Here, of what one discerns in the sense of distinguishing some-thing from something else and thus 'knowing' of and about that thing.

2.

Pœmandres. Ποιμάνδρης. The older interpretation of 'shepherd of men' is unacceptable because speculative; the speculation being that it derives from ποιμήν, which has a variety of meanings other than shepherd, for example, chief, and owner.

A more recent etymology involves some ancient Egyptian term associated with the god Re. However, this etymology, first proposed by Francis Griffith in the 1920's [qv. W. Scott and A. S. Ferguson: *Hermetica: the ancient Greek and Latin writings which contain religious or philosophical teachings ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924-1936] was based on a linguistic and stylistic analysis of Coptic sources dating well over a millennia after the god Re was worshipped in ancient Egypt.

Also, the book *From Poimandres to Jacob Bohme: Hermetism, Gnosis and the Christian Tradition*, edited by Roelof van den Broek and published in 2000 (Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica) which mentions this etymology by Griffiths and which is often cited as confirming this etymology, does not provide further context in the form of extant Egyptian hieroglyphic inscriptions or references to papyrus fragments from long before the Coptic period, but instead makes various conjectures, as for example in respect of an alternative Coptic form of the genitive n-re, and relies on other linguistic/stylistic analysis of much later texts.

Until a link can be established to such primary Egyptian sources, or to reliable

sources much earlier than such Coptic texts, I remain unconvinced in respect of the ancient Egyptian origins of the name Ποιμάνδρης, and therefore am inclined to leave it as a personal name, transliterated Poemandres.

perceivance. νοῦς. The conventional interpretation here is 'mind', as if in contrast to 'the body' and/or as if some fixed philosophical and abstract principle is meant or implied.

This conventional interpretation is in my view incorrect, being another example of not only retrospective reinterpretation but of using a word which has acquired, over the past thousand years or more, certain meanings which detract from an understanding of the original text. Retrospective reinterpretation because the assumption is that what is being described is an axiomatic, reasoned, philosophy centred on ideations such as Thought, Mind, and Logos, rather than what it is: an attempt to describe, in fallible words, a personal intuition about our existence, our human nature, and which intuition is said to emanate from a supernatural being named Poemandres.

In addition, one should ask what does a translation such as 'I am Poimandres, mind of sovereignty' [*vide* Copenhagen] actually mean? That there is a disembodied 'mind' which calls itself Poemandres? That this disembodied 'mind' is also some gargantuan supernatural shapeshifting being possessed of the faculty of human speech? That some-thing called 'sovereignty' has a mind?

I incline toward the view that the sense of the word νοῦς here, as often in classical literature, is perceivance; that is, a particular type of astute awareness, as of one's surroundings, of one's self, and as in understanding ('reading') a situation often in an instinctive way. Thus, what is not meant is some-thing termed 'mind' (or some faculty thereof), distinguished as this abstract 'thing' termed 'mind' has often been from another entity termed 'the body'.

Perceivance thus describes the ability to sense, to perceive, when something may be amiss; and hence also of the Greek word implying resolve, purpose, because one had decided on a particular course of action, or because one's awareness of a situation impels or directs one to a particular course of action. Hence why, in the Oedipus Tyrannus, Sophocles has Creon voice his understanding of the incipient hubris of Oedipus, of his pride without a purpose, of his apparent inability to understand, to correctly perceive, the situation:

εἴ τοι νομίζεις κτῆμα τὴν αὐθαδίαν
εἶναί τι τοῦ νοῦ χωρίς, οὐκ ὀρθῶς φρονεῖς.

If you believe that what is valuable is pride, by itself,
Without a purpose, then your judgement is not right.

Translating νοῦς as perceivance/perceivation thus places it into the correct context, given αὐθεντίας - authority. For "I am Pœmandres, the perceivation of authority" implies "What [knowledge] I reveal (or am about to reveal) is authentic," so that an alternative translation, in keeping with the hermeticism of the text, would be "I am Pœmandres, the authentic perceivation." [The English word authentic means 'of authority, authoritative' and is derived, via Latin, from the Greek αὐθεντία]

eachwhere. An unusual but expressive (c.15th century) English word, suited to such an esoteric text. The meaning here is that, like a guardian δαίμων of classical and Hellenic culture, Pœmandres is always close by: eachwhere with you.

3.

Apprehend. νοέω. To apprehend also in the sense of 'discover'. Again, I have tried to make a subtle distinction here, as there is in the text between the related νοῦς, γνῶναι, and διανοίας.

physis. A transliteration, to suggest something more than what 'nature' or 'character' - of a thing or person - denotes. That is, to know what is real and apprehend the physis of those real things - νοῆσαι τὴν τοῦ τῶν φύσιν; to discern the physis, the true nature, of beings. That is, to have an understanding of ontology; for physis is a revealing, a manifestation, of not only the true nature of beings but also of the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being.

γνῶναι τὸν θεόν. To have - to acquire - knowledge of θεός. Does θεός here mean God, a god, a deity, or the god? God, the supreme creator Being, the only real god, the father, as in Christianity? A deity, as in Hellenic and classical paganism? The god, as in an un-named deity - a god - who is above all other deities? Or possibly all of these? And if all, in equal measure, or otherwise?

The discourse of Pœmandres, as recounted in the tractate, suggests two things. First, that all are meant or suggested - for example, Τὸ φῶς ἐκεῖνο, ἔφη, ἐγὼ νοῦς ὁ σὸς θεός could be said of Pœmandres as a god, as a deity, as the god, and also possibly of God, although why God, the Father - as described in the Old and New Testaments - would call Himself Pœmandres, appear in such a vision, and declare what He declares about θεός being both male and female in one person, is interesting. Second, that the knowledge that is revealed is of a source, of a being, that encompasses, and explains, all three, and that it is this knowing of such a source, beyond those three conventional ones, that is the key to 'what is real' and to apprehending 'the physis of beings'.

Hence, it is better to transliterate θεός - or leave it as θεός - than to use god; and a mistake to use God, as some older translations do.

remember all those things you want to learn. Ἔχε νῶ: 'hold the awareness' [be aware] of what you said you wanted to learn - that is, 'remember' them; which is better, and more expressive, than the somewhat colloquial and modern 'keep in mind'.

4.

So saying, his form [ἰδέα] altered. For τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἠλλάγη τῇ ἰδέᾳ. Or - more expressively - 'he shapeshifted'. A common theme in Greek mythology and literature, as in the ancient Hymn to Demeter:

ὥς εἰποῦσα θεὰ μέγεθος καὶ εἶδος ἄμειψε γῆρας ἀπωσαμένη

Having so spoken, the goddess changed in height and cast off that aged appearance

[An] indefinity of inner sight [inner seeing]. ὁρᾷ θεᾶν ἀόριστον. The sense of ὁράω here is metaphorical, of an interior knowing or apprehension not occasioned by the faculty of sight; the inner knowing, for example, that the blind Tiresias has in respect of Oedipus in the *Oedipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles - his apprehension of what Oedipus has done and what he will do. Such an 'inner seeing' includes the Tiresian kind a prophetic knowing as well as the 'interior visions' of a mystic.

In respect of ἀόριστος, I have opted for indefinity, an unusual [read obscure] English word derived c.1600 from indefinite.

phaos. A transliteration of φῶς - using the the Homeric φάος. Since φάος metaphorically (qv. Iliad, Odyssey, Hesiod, etcetera) implies the being, the life, 'the spark', of mortals, and, generally, either (i) the illumination, the light, that arises because of the Sun and distinguishes the day from the night, or (ii) any brightness that provides illumination and thus enables things to be seen, I am inclined to avoid the vague English word 'light' which other translations use, and which English word now implies many things which the Greek does not or may not; as for instance in the matter of over a thousand years of New Testament exegesis, especially in reference to the gospel of John. A transliteration requires the reader to pause and consider what phaos may, or may not, mean, suggest, or imply; and hopefully thus conveys something about the original text.

Also, φῶς δὲ πάντα γεγεννημένα suggests '[with] everything *suffused in phaos*' and not 'everything *became* light' as if to imply that suddenly everything was transformed into 'light'.

clear and bright. εὐδιόν τε καὶ ἱλαρόν - if one accepts the emendation εὐδιόν [clear] then ἱλαρόν might suggest the metaphorical sense of 'bright' (rather

than the descriptive 'cheery') which fits well with the contrasting and following φοβερόν τε καὶ στυγνόν.

Downward. κατωφερές - cf. Appian, *The Civil Wars*, Book 4, chapter 13 - κατωφερές δ' ἐστὶ τὸ πεδίον.

stygian. For στυγνόν, for stygian is a word which in English imputes the sense of the original Greek, as both its common usage, and its literary usage (by Milton, Wordsworth, Ralph Waldo Emerson, et al) testify. Some-thing dark, gloomy, disliked, abhorred. One might, for example, write that "that river looks as stygian", and as unforgiving, as the water of Styx - ἀμείλικτον Στυγὸς ὕδωρ.

serpent. ὄφει is one of the emendations of Nock, for the meaning of the text here is difficult to discern. Given what follows - re the smoke and fire - it is tempting to agree with Reitzenstein that what may be meant is a not an ordinary serpent but a dragon, δράκοντι, qv. the Iliad (II, 308) and the seven-headed dragon of Revelation 12, 3-17.

flowing (as in fluidic). The sense of ὑγρός here, since what follows - ἀφάτως τεταραγμένην καὶ καπνὸν ἀποδιδοῦσαν - does not suggest either 'watery' or 'moist'. Cf. Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 314 - ταῦτ' ἄρ' ἐποιοῦν ὑγρᾶν Νεφελᾶν στρεπταιγλᾶν δάιον ὁρμάν - where clouds are described as flowing and in their flowing-moving obscure the brightness (of the day).

aphonous ... phaos calling out. I follow the MSS which have φωτὸς, which Nock emended to πυρός. While the emendation, given the foregoing mention of fire, makes some sense, it does render what follows, with the mention of φωτὸς, rather disjointed. However, if - as I suggested above - φῶς is not translated as 'light', but, as with physis and λόγος [qv. 5. below], is transliterated, then φωτὸς here is fine, for it is as if "phaos was calling out" in an aphonous - an un-human, animal-like, and thus wordless - way from beneath the covering of darkness that has descended down, and descended with an indescribable noise. And aphonous here because covered - smothered, obscured, muffled - by the indescribably noisy darkness. Which leads directly to the mention of φῶς and λόγος in the next part of the text; that is, to the ascension of φῶς and λόγος.

If one reads πυρός, then the interpretation would be that it is the fire which is calling out in an un-human, animal-like, and thus wordless way.

5.

Logos. λόγος. A transliteration, which as with my other transliterations, requires the reader to pause and reflect upon what the term may, or may not, mean, suggest, or imply. The common translation as 'Word' does not express or even suggest all the meanings (possible or suggested) of the Greek, especially as Word - as in Word of God - now imputes so much (in so many different often

doctrinal ways) after two thousand years of Christianity and thus tends to lead to a retrospective re-interpretation of the text.

Numinous. ἅγιος. Numinous is better - more accurate - than 'holy' or 'sacred', since these latter English words have been much overused in connexion with Christianity and are redolent with meanings supplied from over a thousand years of exegesis; meanings which may or may not be relevant here.

Correctly understood, numinous is the unity beyond our perception of its two apparent aspects; aspects expressed by the Greek usage of ἅγιος which could be understood in a good (light) way as 'sacred', revered, of astonishing beauty; and in a bad (dark) way as redolent of the gods/wyrd/the fates/morai in these sense of the retributive or (more often) their balancing power/powers and thus giving rise to mortal 'awe' since such a restoration of the natural balance often involved or required the death (and sometimes the 'sacrifice') of mortals. It is the numinous - in its apparent duality, and as a manifestation of a restoration of the natural, divine, balance - which is evident in much of Greek tragedy, from the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus (and the *Orestia* in general) to the *Antigone* and the *Oedipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles.

The two apparent aspects of the numinous are wonderfully expressed by Rilke:

Wer, wenn ich schrie, hörte mich denn aus der Engel
Ordnungen? und gesetzt selbst, es nähme
einer mich plötzlich ans Herz: ich verginge von seinem
stärkeren Dasein. Denn das Schöne ist nichts
als des Schrecklichen Anfang, den wir noch grade ertragen,
und wir bewundern es so, weil es gelassen verschmäht,
uns zu zerstören. Ein jeder Engel ist schrecklich.

Who, were I to sigh aloud, of those angelic beings might hear me?
And even if one of them deigned to take me to his heart I would dissolve
Into his very existence.
For beauty is nothing if not the genesis of that numen
Which we can only just survive
And which we so admire because it can so calmly disdain to betake us.
Every angel is numinous

wenn ich schrie. 'Were I to sigh aloud' is far more poetically expressive, and more in tune with the metaphysical tone of the poem and the stress on *schrie*, than the simple, bland, 'if I cried out'. A sighing aloud - not a shout or a scream - of the sometimes involuntary kind sometimes experienced by those engaged in contemplative prayer or in deep, personal, metaphysical musings.

der Engel Ordnungen. The poetic emphasis is on Engel, and the usual translation here of 'orders' - or something equally abstract and harsh (such as hierarchies) - does not in my view express the poetic beauty

(and the almost supernatural sense of strangeness) of the original; hence my suggestion 'angelic beings' - of such a species of beings, so different from we mortals, who by virtue of their numinosity have the ability to both awe us and overpower us.

came upon that physis. Came upon that which had the physis of darkness and then changed to become fluidic.

Fire. A capitalization, since 'fire' here is suggestive of something possibly elemental.

Air. A capitalization, as with Fire; ditto with the following Water and Earth.

A possible alternative here might be to use the Homeric meaning of ἀήρ - mist - since 'air' is just too general, does not describe what is happening, and thus is confusing.

pnuema. For πνεύματι/πνεῦμα. A transliteration, given that the English alternatives - such as 'spirit' or 'breath' - not only do not always describe what the Greek implies but also suggest things not always or not necessarily in keeping with the Hellenic nature of the text.

This particular transliteration has a long history in English, dating back to 1559 CE. In 1918, DeWitt Burton published a monograph - listing, with quotations, the various senses of πνεῦμα - entitled *Spirit, Soul, and Flesh: The Usage of Πνεῦμα, Ψυχή, and Σάρξ in Greek Writings and Translated Works from the Earliest Period to 225 AD* (University of Chicago Press, 1918)

I incline toward the view that πνεῦμα here - like λόγος - does not necessarily imply something theological (in the Christian sense or otherwise) but rather suggests an alternative, more personal, weltanschauung that, being a weltanschauung, is undoctinal and subtle, and which weltanschauung is redolent of Hellenic culture. Subtle and undoctinal in the way that early alchemical texts are subtle and undoctinal and try to express, or hint at (however obscurely to us, now), a weltanschauung, and one which is more paganus than Christian.

coagulating. For συμμεμιγμένα, which suggests something more elemental - more actively joined - than just 'mixed or mingled' together.

pneumal logos. πνευματικὸν λόγον. The term *pneumal logos* is interesting and intended to be suggestive and thus open to and requiring interpretation. In contrast, the usual translation is verbo spirituali (spiritual word), as if what is meant or implied is some-thing theological and clearly distinct from the corporeal, as Thomas Aquinas wrote in *Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate*: Ex quo patet quod nomen verbi magis proprie dicitur de verbo spirituali quam de

corporali. Sed omne illud quod magis proprie invenitur in spiritualibus quam in corporalibus, propriissime Deo competit. Ergo verbum propriissime in Deo dicitur. (*De veritate*, q. 4a. 1s. c2).

6.

apprehended the sense of that inner seeing. Given what follows, the English word 'sense' is perhaps appropriate here, rather than the inflexible word 'meaning'.

phaomal logos. φωτεινὸς λόγος. As with *pneumal logos*, this is suggestive, and open to interpretation.

child of theos. υἱὸς θεοῦ. The scriptural sense - 'son of god', for example Mark 15.39, Ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν - is usually assumed; a sense which follows the general usage of υἱὸς (son) as in Homer et al. But the later (c.2nd/3rd century CE) usage 'child' is possible here, a usage known from some papyri (qv. *Papiri Greci e Latini*, edited by Girolamo Vitelli). This also has the advantage of being gender neutral, for which see the note under ἀναγνωρίσας ἑαυτὸν in section 19.

logos kyrios. λόγος κυρίου (cf. *pneumal logos* and *phaomal logos*). Invariably translated as 'word of the lord', echoing the formula found in LXX (qv. for example Jeremiah 1.4 ἐγένετο λόγος κυρίου πρὸς με) although, as attested by many papyri, kyrios was also used in the Hellenic world as an epithet both of a deity and of a powerful potentate [hence 'logos kyrios' rather than 'kyrios logos'] implying respect and an acknowledgement of their authority and power.

7.

duration. For reasons I outlined in the *The Art of Translation, and A Question About Time* section of Appendix I, I prefer to translate χρόνος as duration (or something akin) and not as 'time'. Briefly explained, the English word 'time' now denotes what the term χρόνος did not.

tilted his head back. Perhaps suggestive of looking up toward the heavens, qv. the c. 2nd century CE writer Achilles Tatius (writing around the time the *Corpus Hermeticum* was written) who, in *Leucippe and Clitophon*, Book V, 3.3, wrote - ἀνανεύσας εἰς οὐρανὸν ὧ Ζεῦ, τί τοῦτο ἔφην φαίνεις ἡμῖν τέρας

unmeasurable. ἀπερίοριστον - beyond being countable, impossible to be counted; from ἀριθμητός - countable.

cosmic order. κόσμος. The word 'cosmos' by itself is probably insufficient here, for the Greek term κόσμος carries with it the suggestion that the cosmos is an ordered structure, an order evident in the observed regularity of heavenly bodies such as the moon, the constellations, and the planets.

undefinable. ἀπεριόριστον: A slightly different sense here to previously, and an interesting contrast with εὐπεριόριστον - well-defined - as used by Strabo when describing the process of measuring and defining, in geographical terms, a region of the Earth:

τὸ γὰρ σημειῶδες καὶ τὸ εὐπεριόριστον ἐκεῖθεν λαβεῖν ἔστιν, οὗ
χρεῖαν ἔχει ὁ γεωγράφος: εὐπεριόριστον δέ, ὅταν ἢ ποταμοῖς ἢ ὄρεσιν
ἢ θαλάττῃ δυνατὸν ᾖ (Geography, 2.1.30)

coming-into-being. γεγεννημένον. The meaning here is somewhat obscure. Is what is described a discovery of how the already existing and known cosmic order *came* into being, or the apprehension of a - or some sort of - cosmic order coming-into-being? Or does γεγεννημένον refer to phaos?

8.

quidditas of semblance. ἀρχέτυπον εἶδος. The transliteration 'archetype' here is, unfortunately, unsuitable, given what the term archetype now suggests and implies (vide Jungian psychology, for example) beyond what the Greek of the text means. Appropriate words or terms such as 'primal-pattern' or 'protoform' are awkward, clumsy. Hence quidditas (11th/12th century Latin), from whence came 'quiddity', a term originally from medieval scholasticism which was then used to mean the natural (primal) nature or form of some-thing, and thus hints at the original sense of ἀρχέτυπον. As used here, quidditas means exactly what ἀρχέτυπον does in the text, sans Jungian psychology; sans modern 'popular psychology'; sans expositions of hermetic/gnostic philosophy (or what is assumed to be a hermetic/gnostic philosophy) and sans expositions of Plato's philosophy.

The whole passage - τὸ ἀρχέτυπον εἶδος, τὸ προάρχον τῆς ἀρχῆς τῆς ἀπεράντου - is concerned with various shades of ἀρχή, and is rather obscure. ἀρχή as the origin - 'the beginning' - of beings and thus of their εἶδος (the ἀρχέτυπον), of their semblance, their type; and ἀρχή - the primal before (προάρχον) that beginning, of beings - as that origin (that beginning) which has no end, no known limits, ἀπεράντου.

parsements. For στοιχεῖον, and thus avoiding the word 'elements' whose meanings, being now many and varied, somewhat detract from the meaning of the text. By a parsement - an unusual variant of partiment (from the Latin partimentum) - is meant the fundamental (the basic, elemental, primal) components or principles of 'things' as understood or as posited in Hellenic times; and whether or not these are undescribed or described in terms of a particular philosophy or weltanschauung (for example, as Air, Fire, and so on).

deliberations of theos. βουλῆς θεοῦ. 'Deliberations' is the sense here; as in theos - whomsoever or whatever theos is - having pondered upon, or considered, a

particular matter or many matters. cf. Herodotus [Histories, 9.10] - ὁ μὲν σφί ταῦτα συνεβούλευε: οἱ δὲ φρενὶ λαβόντες τὸν λόγον αὐτίκα - where a similar following expression (λαβόντες τὸν λόγον) occurs.

Translations such as 'will/decreed of god' are, in my view, far too presumptive.

ἤτις λαβοῦσα τὸν λόγον. This is suggestive of theos having fully comprehended - completely understood - logos [qv. the passage from Herodotus, where the result of the deliberations was understood, approved of: 'taken to heart'], rather than of God 'taking in the Word' or 'receiving the Word'. A 'taking in' from whence to where? A 'receiving' from where?

re-presented. In the sense of a divine mimesis - *μίμησις* - which is the Greek word used here, and which mimesis is a important theme in ancient pagan culture, from Art to religion. It is tempting therefore to consider the suggestion that this mimesis by theos is akin to a masterful, a sublime, work of Art.

Psyche. For ψυχή, and leaving untranslated so as not to impose a particular meaning on the text. Whether what is meant is *anima mundi* - or some-thing else, such as the 'soul' of a human being - is therefore open to debate, although I have used a capital P to intimate that it is, in the text, an important, and primal, principle, and might imply here the original sense of 'spark' (or breath) of life; of that 'thing' [or being] which [or who] animates beings making them 'alive'.

9.

male-and-female. ἀρρενόθηλυσ. The theos - or deity/divinity/God - is both male and female, which can be interpreted as implying a bisexual nature, or androgyny, or hermaphroditism, or a being with the unique ability to both give birth and inseminate, or a being beyond all such mortal (causal) categories and assumptions.

whose logos brought forth another perceiviation. ἀπεκύησε λόγῳ ἕτερον Νοῦν δημιουργόν. An interesting phrase, possibly open to interpretation, for it might suggest 'whose utterance [who by speaking] brought forth...'

Consider, for example, Psalms 33.6:

τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ κυρίου οἱ οὐρανοὶ ἐστερεώθησαν καὶ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ
στόματος αὐτοῦ πᾶσα ἡ δύναμις αὐτῶν

בְּדִבְרֵי יְהוָה שָׁמַיִם נִעֲשׂוּ וּבְרִיּוֹתָיו כָּל־צָבָאָה

with the Greek of LXX, literally translated, meaning "By the logos of the master [κύριος] the heavens were established and, by the pneuma from his mouth, all

their influence" [δύναμις], with the Hebrew stating it is יהוה [Yhvh - Jehovah] who has established שמים [shamayim, the heavens] and His רוח [ruach, pneuma] their power.

Hence, Pœmandres might well be saying that is was by speaking, by the act of uttering or declaiming a logos, that this theos - whomsoever or whatever theos is - brought forth a[nother] perceiv[er]ation; that is, another way or means of apprehending - of knowing, understanding, and appreciating - the cosmic order.

artisan. δημιουργόν. It is tempting to transliterate - as demiourgos - so as not to impose a meaning on the text. Does the word here imply - as possibly with Fire, pneuma, etcetera - an assumed elemental force of principle? Or a demiurge who is a (or the) theos of Fire and pneuma? Or does it imply some creator, the Theos of Fire and Pnuema? Or is some sort of artisan meant? And is this an artisan who, possibly by memesis, can create/manufacture a sublime work of Art that at the very least enables us to perceive the cosmic order - the world - in a new way and who, being a theos, can also possibly create, perhaps as a work of Art, a new cosmic order?

However, I incline toward the view, given what follows - ἐδημιούργησε διοικητάς τινάς ἐπτά [see below, *fashioned seven viziers*] - that what is meant here is artisan, rather than demiurge.

fashioned seven viziers. ἐδημιούργησε διοικητάς τινάς ἐπτά.

The word ἐδημιούργησε occurs in Diogenes Laertius [*Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 3.1 (71) - ὅτι καὶ τὸ ὑπόδειγμα ἐν ᾧ ἄφ' οὗ αὐτὸν ἐδημιούργησε] in the section concerned with Plato, where the meaning is what someone (such as a worker or artisan) has wrought, fashioned, or produced.

Viziers captures the meaning of διοικητάς (at the time the text was written) in a way that terms such as controllers, procurators, governors, do not, given the modern senses such terms now have and especially given the context, ἡ διοίκησις αὐτῶν εἰμαρμένη καλεῖται: that their administration - how these viziers discharge their duties; how they operate given their powers - "is described as fate." That is, is understood, by we mortals, as fate or destiny.

Vizier is a term used in Persia (in its various older forms) and ancient Egypt (a transcription of a hieroglyph), and also later on in the Middle East and North Africa following the rise of Islam, to denote a person who governed or who ruled over - in the name of a higher authority - a particular region or territory or who had a particular sphere of influence; a role similar to the Viceroy of the British Empire.

The seven viziers are the seven classical planetary bodies, named Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Sun, Jupiter, and Saturn, and well-described in ancient

texts, from ancient Persia onwards. Copenhaver [*Hermetica, The Greek Corpus Hermeticum and the Latin Asclepius*, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p.105] refers to some of the scholarly literature regarding these 'seven'.

spheres. The context - the cosmic order, and especially the seven planetary viziers who surround or encompass - suggest the meaning of spheres (or orbs) rather than 'circles'. Cf. Sophocles, *Antigone*, 415-6 where κύκλος could suggest sphere, or orb, or circle, but where circle seems apposite:

χρόνον τάδ' ἦν τοσοῦτον, ἔστ' ἐν αἰθέρι μέσω κατέστη λαμπρὸς ἡλίου
κύκλος καὶ καῦμ' ἔθαλπε

And long this continued until Helios with his radiant circle had established himself in middle-sky, burning us

10.

downward parsements ... logos of theos. Given that the MSS have στοιχείων τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος the meaning here is conjectural.

'Downward parsements' implies that the fundamental (elemental, primal) components by their nature had a tendency to descend, rather as rain descends down by nature and not because it is 'heavy' [cf. Xenophon, *On Hunting*, 5.3: ἀφανίζει δὲ καὶ ἡ πολλὴ δρόσος καταφέρουσα αὐτά] Hence 'descending parsements' would also be an appropriate translation here.

Regarding θεοῦ λόγος, I have again opted for a transliteration since the common translation here of 'word of God' imposes a particular, Christian, interpretation on the text, (i) given that 'word of god' is most probably what Cyril of Alexandria meant by the phrase, since τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος interestingly occurs in *Cyrilli Epistula Tertia ad Nestorium*:

μονογενῆς τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος ὁ ἐξ αὐτῆς γεννηθεὶς τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ
πατρὸς ὁ ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ θεὸς ἀληθινός τὸ φῶς τὸ ἐκ τοῦ φωτός ὁ
δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο τά τε ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ τὰ ἐν τῇ γῇ

only-offspring of the logos of theos, born from the essence [οὐσία] of the father, genuine god from genuine god, the phaos from the phaos, by whom all things in heaven and on Earth came into being

and (ii) given that this paraphrases the Nicene creed of 325 CE, with the notable exception of μονογενῆς τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος instead of τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ, the latter conventionally translated as 'only begotten Son of God'.

Thus, were the translation of 'word of god' to be accepted, with the implied meaning from the *Epistula Tertia ad Nestorium*, then Pœmandres is, apparently,

here stating that 'the Word of God' - Jesus of Nazareth, true god from true god, Light from Light, and the only begotten son of God by whom all things in heaven and on Earth came into being - somehow bounded up to be reunited with the work of the artisan-creator (presumably, in this context, God) who is of the same essence [ὁμοούσιος].

While this is a possible interpretation of the text given that Poemandres uses the same word, in reference to logos, as Cyril of Alexandria - οὐσία (which correctly understood means the very being - the essential nature/physis, or essence - of someone or some-thing) - it does seem somewhat restrictive, considering (i) the many possible meanings, and shades of meaning, of both λόγος and θεός (before and after the advent of Christianity and especially in the context of pagan, Hellenic, weltanschauungen) and (ii) how theos is described by Poemandres (for example, as being both male and female).

fine artisements of Physis. Fine - καθάρως; clean and free of defects. Artisement - the product of the skilled work of the artisan and the artist; their artisanship (cf. the 16th century English verb artize) and which artisements include beings of various kinds (including living and/or 'archetypal' ones).

It thus becomes clear, especially given what follows, why transliterating φύσις is better than translating it always as 'nature', as if φύσις here implied what we now, after hundreds years of scientific observation and theories such as that of Darwin, understand as 'the natural world', as a 'nature' that we are or can be or should be masters of and can and do and should control, and which we can (or believe we can) understand.

Physis is capitalized here, as in section 14, to suggest the objectification that the text here implies; and objectified as possibly a being - whomsoever or whatever such a being is - or possibly as some apprehension/emanation of theos (whomsoever or whatever theos is), or some fundamental principle, or some form such as what we now understand as an archetype. This Physis, therefore, might or might not be Nature (as Nature was understood in Hellenic times) although, given what follows about Earth delivering (from her womb) living beings [ἡ γῆ ἐξήνεγκεν ἀπ' αὐτῆς ἃ εἶχε ζῶα...] it might be that it is not Nature but something else, for example what may have been understood as the genesis of what we now denote by Nature.

It is interesting that here it is "the descending parsements of physis" (not Physis) who were "left, devoid of logos" while in section 14 it is Physis that is, by implication, described as 'devoid of logos' - ὥκησε τὴν ἄλογον μορφήν. This is often understood in the pejorative sense, as if this Physis, and the living beings devoid of logos - ζῶα ἥνεγκεν ἄλογα - in section 11, are somehow [to quote one translation] 'unreasoning' beings (or forms) - lacking in reason - and thus somehow [to quote another translation] 'irrational' compared to (and by extension somewhat inferior to) the 'son of theos', which mistaken and unnecessary value-judgements arise from interpreting and translating λόγος as

'Word' or as meaning/implying 'reason'. However, logos is just logos, and devoid of (without) logos - ἄλογος - could be, depending on how logos is interpreted, akin to ἀθάνατος said in respect, for example, of theos [Θεὸν δ' εἶναι ζῶον ἀθάνατον] or implying 'cannot be reduced to something else' and thus heterogeneous [αἱ δὲ ταύτη ἀσύμμετροι ἄλογοι καλείσθωσαν], or lacking the faculty of human speech (as in animals, who are not all 'brutish') or (more esoterically) suggestive of *sans denotatum*, of not denoting things or beings by assigning names or terms to them and thus not distinguishing them or marking them as separate from the whole, the unity, of which one type of wholeness is Physis understood as the goddess of Nature, as the creative force that is the genesis of, and which maintains the balance of, the life which inhabits the Earth.

Substance. ὕλη. Since the Greek term does not exactly mean 'matter' in the modern sense (qv. the science of Physics) it is better to find an alternative. Hence 'substance' - the *materia* of 'things' and living beings - contrasted with οὐσία, essence.

11.

the perceivization of that artisan. As previously, and like physis, both νοῦς and λόγος are here objectified.

spinning them around. δυνῶν ροίζω.

12.

brought forth...a mortal. ἀπεκύησεν ἄνθρωπον. The word ἀπεκύησεν in relation to πατήρ perhaps refers back to where theos, the perceivization, is described as being both male and female [ἀρρενόθηλος] although whether the meaning here is the literal 'gave birth' or the descriptive 'brought forth' is interesting, especially a different word, ἐξήνεγκεν [which the English word delivered - in the sense of giving birth, of 'a woman having disburdened herself of a foetus' - usefully describes] is used in reference to the (female) Earth. This different usage, and the Epistle of James, written not long before the Pœmandres tractate where 'brought forth' is apposite [v.1.15 ἡ δὲ ἀμαρτία ἀποτελεσθεῖσα ἀποκύει θάνατον] incline me toward 'brought forth' here.

In respect of ἄνθρωπος (often emended to ἄνθρωπος) the sense here, as often, is the gender neutral 'human being' - a mortal - and not 'a man'.

image. μορφή. Image in both senses of the English term - as outward physical appearance, and as the impression (or concept) that others may have of, or see in, a person.

Image plays an important part in what follows; the image that the son of theos

has of himself and sees reflected back to him and which image he loves. The image Physis has of him and sees a reflection of, and the image which he has of her and which makes him desire her.

bequeathed to him all his works of Art. παρέδωκε τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πάντα δημιουργήματα. This is a very interesting phrase; theos as artisan, as artist, whose works - whose creations, whose artisements, whose divine re-presentations (μίμησις) - apparently include both the cosmic order, the artisan mentioned previously, and we mortals. Less suggestive of the meaning is 'bequeathed to him all his (various) artisements'.

13.

that father. Reading πατρί, with the MSS, and not the emendation παρί.

Ingressing to the artisan's realm. γενόμενος ἐν τῇ δημιουργικῇ σφαίρᾳ. The realm of the artisan: where the artisan works, and produces artisements and divine works of art, and where someone - here, the mortal, son of theos - can learn and master that skill and produce his own works. This realm is that of the seven spheres, the seven viziers.

function. τάξεως. Cf. Plato, *Laws*, 809d - ἡμερῶν τάξεως εἰς μηνῶν περιόδους καὶ μηνῶν εἰς ἕκαστον τὸν ἐνιαυτὸν ἵνα ὥραι καὶ θυσίαι καὶ ἑορταὶ τὰ προσήκοντ' ἀπολαμβάνουσιν ἑαυταῖς ἕκασται τῷ κατὰ φύσιν ἄγεσθαι - where the sense is of the periodic, the orderly, functioning of things; of days into weeks, weeks into months, and of months into a year; and which functionality enables us to know when to celebrate and undertake the seasonal festivals and feasts.

limit. περιφέρεια. Not here the literal Euclidean meaning of circumference [for example, Euclid, *Elements*, Book 13, Proposition 10 - ἐπεὶ ἴση ἐστὶν ἡ ΑΒΓΗ περιφέρεια τῇ ΑΕΔΗ περιφερείᾳ] but rather of the limits, the boundary, set or marked by the seven spheres; a limit that the mortal, son of theos, is "determined to burst out past".

imposed their strength upon the Fire. Cf. section 7 - περισχεσθαι τὸ πῦρ δυνάμει μεγίστη (the fire, embraced by a strong force).

14.

burst through the strength of the spheres. I follow the reading of the MSS, which have ἀναρρήξας τὸ κράτος τῶν κύκλων, amended by Scott and Nock to ἀναρρήξας τὸ κύτος [burst through the container].

harmonious structure. Here, ἁρμονία implies the 'structure' of the κόσμος, the

cosmic order [qv. the note on κόσμος in section 7] and which structure is harmonious [qv. ἀρμονίας ἐναρμόνιος in section 15].

vigour. ἐνέργεια. The words 'force' and 'energy' bring too many irrelevant modern connotations to the text, and 'vigour' well expresses the meaning of ἐνέργεια here, with the suggestion, as often elsewhere, of 'vigorous activity'.

When she beheld. This, as what follows suggests, is Physis, personified. In respect of beholding such beauty, cf. section 8 - *having seen the beauty of the cosmic order*.

on Earth, his shadow. τὸ σκίασμα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. Cf. Diogenes Laertius [*Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.146, Zeno] not especially for the similarity - τὸ τῆς γῆς σκίασμα - but more for the interesting section, preceding this mention of the shadow of the moon on Earth during an eclipse, of how the cosmic order came into being [142] and for the equally interesting following discussion [147] which concerns the attributes and images of theos - the god - who is described as 'the father of all', who has both male and female aspects, and which aspects of the divinity are given their classical pagan names with their areas of authority specified. The interest lies in how the classical gods, and the creation of the cosmic order, and thus Hellenic paganism, were understood and remembered not long after the *Hermetica* was written, and thus how they echo in part some of the metaphysical themes in, and the cosmogony of, the *Pœmandres* tractate.

Physis grasped [...] intimately joined together. ἡ δὲ φύσις λαβοῦσα τὸν ἐρώμενον περιεπλάκη ὅλη καὶ ἐμίγησαν ἐρώμενοι γὰρ ἦσαν. The sense of μίγνυμι here is that of a physical union, a sexual joining together - not of some 'philosophical mingling' of 'forms'. Similarly, περιπλέκω is not some ordinary 'embrace' but a sexual twinning (of limbs). Cf. Hesiod, *Theogony*, 375 - Κρίω δ' Εὐρυβίην τέκεν ἐν φιλότῃ μιγεῖσα Ἀστραῖόν.

jumelle. For διπλοῦς. The much underused and descriptive English word jumelle - from the Latin gemellus - describes some-thing made in, or composed of, two parts, and is therefore most suitable here, more so than common words such as 'double' or 'twofold'.

deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal. θνητὸς μὲν διὰ τὸ σῶμα, ἀθάνατος δὲ διὰ τὸν οὐσιώδη ἄνθρωπον. Here, in respect of my choice of English words, I must admit to being influenced by Chapman's lovely poetic translation of the Hymn to Venus from the Homeric Hymns:

That with a deathless goddess lay a deathful man

In respect of οὐσιώδης, I prefer, given the context, 'inner' - suggestive of 'real' - rather than the conventional 'essential'; although 'vital' is an alternative

translation here, suggested by what Eusebius wrote (c.326 CE) about φῶς [phaos] pre-existing even before the cosmic order, with φῶς used by Eusebius to mean Light in the Christian sense:

τό τε φῶς τὸ προκόσμιον καὶ τὴν πρὸ αἰώνων νοερὰν καὶ οὐσιώδη σοφίαν τὸν τε ζῶντα [Historia Ecclesiastica, Book 1, chapter 2]

The Light of the proto-cosmos, the comprehension and vital wisdom existing before the Aeons

wyrd. For ἡ εἰμαρμένη. A much better choice, here, than either 'fate' or 'destiny' given how overused both those words now are and how their interpretation is also now so varied. An overview of how the concept may have been understood in the late Hellenic period (around the time the Hermetica was probably written) is given in the 2nd century CE discourse *De Fato*, attributed to Plutarch, which begins by stating that εἰμαρμένη has been described in two ways, as ἐνέργεια (vigorous activity) and as οὐσία (essence) -

πρῶτον τοίνυν ἴσθι, ὅτι εἰμαρμένη διχῶς καὶ λέγεται καὶ νοεῖται: ἡ μὲν γάρ ἐστιν ἐνέργεια ἡ δ' οὐσία

of a wakeful one <...> There is some text missing, indicated by <...>, for after ἄϋπνος ἀπὸ ἄϋπνου the MSS have κρατεῖται [mastered/ruled by - cf. 4 Maccabees 2.9 ἢ ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου κρατεῖται διὰ τὸν λογισμὸν]. Although some suggestions have been made as to this missing text (such as "ruled by love and sleep" [ἔρωτος καὶ ὕπνου] - they are purely conjectural.

16.

<...> *my perceivervation*. Again, the suggestions for the missing text are purely conjectural.

a mysterium esoteric. For κεκρυμμένον μυστήριον. The term mysterium - a truth or insight or knowledge about some-thing, which is considered religious and/or metaphysical ('hermetic') and which is unknown/unrevealed to or as yet undiscovered by others, and hence 'mysterious' to them - expresses the meaning of the Greek here (as the word mystery by itself does not). Likewise in respect of esoteric - kept concealed or which is concealed/hidden to most or which is revealed to an individual by someone who already 'knows' what the mysterium in question is.

Hence why I write *a* mysterium here rather than *the* mysterium, and why "a mysterium, esoteric even to this day", is better than the rather bland "the mystery kept hidden until this very day".

possessed the physis of the harmonious seven. The seven viziers. A more literal translation would be 'possessed the physis of the [harmonious] structure of the

seven'. Here, physis could mean 'character' (of a person) or some-thing more archetypal/elemental of which such character or personal characteristics are an outward manifestation.

seven male-and-female humans. These seven humans, born from Physis, are thus akin to both theos and the child of theos who also have a male (a masculous) and a female (a muliebral) aspect. That is, although mortal - having been brought forth by and from divinities - these humans are, in their very being, both male and female and thus, in their creation, dissimilar to ordinary mortals, for reasons which Pœmandres goes on to explain.

In addition, these seven mortals have the same or a similar physis as the 'harmonious seven'.

ætherean. For μεταρσίους. Ætherean is the metaphorical sense of μεταρσίους here, not 'exalted' or 'sublime' (which imply some sort of human admiration or some sort of religious attitude/apprehension). For the sense is similar to what Dio Chrysostom wrote, in his tract on leadership, about the sons of Boreas, who - semi-divine - have the attributes of their father and who are depicted in and belonging to their natural realm:

ὁποίους τοὺς Βορεάδας ἐνεθυμήθησάν τε καὶ ἔγραψαν οἱ γραφεῖς
ἐλαφρούς τε καὶ μεταρσίους ταῖς τοῦ πατρὸς αὔραις συνθέοντας
[Orationes, 4.1]

Ætherean is used in the poetic sense - that is, 'supernal', meaning of the harmonious - the heavenly - cosmic order and also refined: of the essence, οὐσία, and thus not just ὕλη, substance (qv. section 10).

Primary explanation. πρῶτον λόγον [cf. Plato, *Republic*, Book 3 [395b] εἰ ἄρα τὸν πρῶτον λόγον διασώσομεν]. An explanation of our origins, as mortals, and thus of the 'first principle' that forms the basis of the 'hermetic weltanschauung'.

17.

those seven came into being in this way. It is interesting to compare 'these seven' with 'the 'nine' and the seven spheres (Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sol, Venus, Mercury, Moon) of the Somnium Scipionis described by Cicero:

Novem tibi orbibus vel potius globis conexas sunt omnia, quorum unus est caelestis, extimus, qui reliquos omnes complectitur, summus ipse deus arcens et continens ceteros; in quo sunt infixi illi, qui volvuntur, stellarum cursus sempiterni. Cui subiecti sunt septem, qui versantur retro contrario motu atque caelum. Ex quibus summum globum possidet illa, quam in terris Saturniam nominant. Deinde est hominum

generi prosperus et salutaris ille fulgor, qui dicitur Iovis; tum rutilus horribilisque terris, quem Martium dicitis; deinde subter mediam fere regionem Sol obtinet, dux et princeps et moderator luminum reliquorum, mens mundi et temperatio, tanta magnitudine, ut cuncta sua luce lustret et compleat. Hunc ut comites consequuntur Veneris alter, alter Mercurii cursus, in infimoque orbe Luna radiis solis accensa convertitur. Infra autem iam nihil est nisi mortale et caducum praeter animos munere deorum hominum generi datos; supra Lunam sunt aeterna omnia. Nam ea, quae est media et nona, Tellus, neque movetur et infima est, et in eam feruntur omnia nutu suo pondera. [*De Re Publica*, Book VI, 17]

Nine orbs - more correctly, spheres - connect the whole cosmic order, of which one - beyond the others but enfolding them - is where the uppermost deity dwells, enclosing and containing all. There - embedded - are the constant stars with their sempiternal movement, while below are seven spheres whose cyclicity is different, and one of which is the sphere given the name on Earth of Saturn [...]

Muliebral. For θηλυκή. The term muliebral derives from the classical Latin word *muliebris*, and is used here to refer to those positive traits, abilities, and qualities, that are conventionally and historically associated with women. Muliebral is more expressive - and more redolent of the meaning of the Greek - than 'feminine', especially given how the word 'feminine' is so often misused (sometimes in a pejorative way).

It should be noted that the older reading of θηλυκή γὰρ ὁ ἄηρ makes Air - not Earth - the muliebral one.

Lustful. For ὀχευτικόν. The sense is similar to ἐπιθυμία as used, for example, in Romans 14.13 - τῆς σαρκὸς πρόνοιαν μὴ ποιῆσθε εἰς ἐπιθυμίας [make no intention regarding the flesh, to gratify its carnal desires]

From Æther, the pneuma. ἐκ δὲ αἰθέρος τὸ πνεῦμα ἔλαβε. It is best to transliterate αἰθήρ - as Æther - given that it, like Earth, Air, Fire, Water, and pneuma, is an elemental principle, or a type of (or a particular) being, or some-thing archetypal.

cyclic until its completion. μέχρι περιόδου τέλους. I follow the reading of the Turnebus MS, taking περίοδος to refer to a posited cyclic - periodic - cosmic order, of Aeons, which periodicity continues until its purpose is achieved/fulfilled/completed.

18.

the connexions between all things. Compare this unbinding of the cosmic bonds with the 'connexions' that make up the nine spheres in the Somnium Scipionis

[qv. the quotation from Cicero, above].

bringing into being portions that were masculous with the others muliebral. ἐγένετο τὰ μὲν ἀρρενικὰ ἐν μέρει τὰ δὲ θηλυκὰ ὁμοίως. The meaning of ἀρρενικὰ and θηλυκὰ are not 'male' and 'female' but rather masculous (masculine) and muliebral (of or considered appropriate to women).

propagate by propagation and spawn by spawning. The same Greek words - αὐξάνεσθε and πληθύνεσθε - occur in LXX, Genesis 1.22: ἡὺλόγησεν αὐτὰ ὁ θεὸς λέγων αὐξάνεσθε καὶ πληθύνεσθε ["Theos praised them, saying: propagate and spawn"; Tyndale - "God blessed them saying, grow and multiply"; KJV - "God blessed them saying, Be fruitful and multiply"].

creations and artisements. κτίσματα καὶ δημιουργήματα. Although κτίσμα is generally translated here as 'creature' (as also for example in most translations of Revelation 5.13) I incline toward the view, given the context, that the more general sense of a 'creation' (or 'created thing') is meant - cf. Strabo, Geography, Book 16. 1 [ἥς ἐστὶ κτίσμα ἢ Βαβυλῶν] where what is described is a construct, a creation - a work constructed by or on behalf of someone. Here, what is described are the creations of theos.

In respect of 'artisements', see section 10.

the perceiver. ὁ ἔννοους.

Eros as responsible for death. τὸν αἴτιον τοῦ θανάτου ἔρωτα. The consensus is, and has been, that ἔρωτα here signifies 'carnal desire' - or something similar - so that it is assumed that what is meant is some sort of ascetic (or Gnostic or puritanical) statement about how sexual desire should be avoided or at the very least controlled. However, this seems rather at variance with the foregoing - regarding propagating and spawning - which inclines me to suggest that what is meant here is 'eros', not necessarily personified as the classical deity (ἡδ' Ἔρος ὃς κάλλιστος ἐν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι πάντων δὲ θεῶν πάντων τ' ἀνθρώπων δάμναται ἐν στήθεσσι νόον καὶ ἐπίφρονα βουλήν), although the comparison is interesting, but rather as an elemental or archetypal principle, akin to νοῦς and λόγος. Consider, for example, the following from *Daphnis and Chloe*, written by Longus around the same time as the *Corpus Hermeticum*: πάντως γὰρ οὐδεὶς ἔρωτα ἔφυγεν ἢ φεύζεται μέχρις ἂν κάλλος ᾗ καὶ ὀφθαλμοὶ βλέπωσιν [Book 1, Proem, 4 - "no one can avoid or has ever been able to avoid Eros, while there is beauty and eyes which perceive"]. In modern terms, few - poetically, metaphorically, none - have avoided or could avoid, at some time in their life, the unconscious power of the anima/animus.

Eros - as some-thing similar to an archetypal principle, applicable to or of (existing in/part of) "all beings/creations/things" - might also go some way toward explaining the καὶ πάντα τὰ ὄντα that follows in the text (for example in the Turnebus MS) for which various emendations have been proposed,

including omitting it altogether.

19.

foreknowing, through wyrd.....coagulations. The foreknowing of theos, which enabled theos through wyrd and the cosmic structure to 'found the generations'. The coagulations, the copulation, of beings (created things).

self-knowledge. ἀναγνωρίσας ἑαυτὸν. A pedantic aside: here, as often elsewhere, I have gone against convention (grammatical and otherwise) by, where possible, choosing neutral personal pronouns, thus avoiding sentences such as "And he who has self-knowledge..." This sometimes results in using third person plural pronouns - such as 'their' and 'they' - as if they were personal pronouns, or using constructs such as "the one of self-knowledge" or "whoever has self-knowledge". In addition, it should be noted that the grammatical categorization of a word (male, female, gender neutral) is only a grammatical categorization and does not always reflect the nature of the being that that word denotes or refers to.

a particular benefit. τὸ περιούσιον ἀγαθόν. Literally, 'the particular benefit' [an alternative, possibly better, translation would be 'the esoteric benefit']. What the text refers to is not some abstract 'good' but rather what is good for, what benefits, the person. Thus, self-knowledge can lead to a particular, a specific, benefit.

perceptively. αἰσθητῶς - cf. Strabo, *Geography*, Book 3, chapter 5.1, a description of a high tide; of the sea, due to the moon, begin to perceptively/visibly both rise and go far onto the shore - ἀρχεσθαι διοιδεῖν τὴν θάλατταν καὶ ἐπιβαίνειν τῆς γῆς αἰσθητῶς μέχρι μεσουρανήσεως.

20.

to discover things. That is, discover/apprehend for yourself, to reveal (dis-cover) the nature of things, and thus fully understand them; qv. section 3 ('apprehend the physis of beings') and section 6 ('then discover phaos and become familiar with it') and section 7 ('such I observed and discovered because of those words of Pœmandres').

why death is expected for those who are in death. διὰ τί ἄξιοί εἰσι τοῦ θανάτου οἱ ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ ὄντες. Somewhat obscure, given the phrase 'in death' and given that what follows - "because originally..." - does not really offer an explanation of it.

I take the meaning of ἀξιόω here to be 'expect' rather than 'worthy' given (i) what the English phrase 'they are worthy of death' (or 'they deserve death') implies, an implication - a moralizing attitude - that is not justified by either the immediate context or the rest of the text, and (ii) usages such as (a) νῦν παρ'

ὁμῶν τὸ αὐτὸ ἀξιοῦμεν κομίζεσθαι ['we now expect to receive the same from you'; Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, Book 1, chapter 43] and (b) ὥστε οὐκ οἴκτου οἱ τοιοῦτοι ἀξιοί εἰσιν, ἀλλὰ τιμωρίας ['they are expected to be punished not pitied', Hyperides, *Orations Against Philippides*, 2.12]

Nourishes. ἀρδεύεται here is obviously metaphorical, as it literally means "is irrigated/watered" as in Diodorus Siculus when he describes India - τὰ πολλὰ δὲ τῆς χώρας ἀρδεύεται καὶ διὰ τοῦτο διττοὺς ἔχει τοὺς κατ' ἔτος καρπούς ['much of the land is irrigated which is why there are two yields a year'; *Bibliotheca Historica*, Book 2, 35.3]

21.

progress within themselves. εἰς αὐτὸν χωρεῖ. Literally, 'progress to (or proceed/advance toward) him', with the usual assumption being that it is theos that is meant (hence, 'proceed toward theos'), with the alternative translation, of 'progress to themselves', ignored. However, given the immediate context - of a self-discovery - and given examples such as Mark 7.15 (εἰσπορευόμενον εἰς αὐτὸν, entering *into* him) and given that (insofar as I understand it) the tractate concerns (i) self-knowing, (ii) a 'mysterium' that is esoteric, and (iii) a desire to know and to understand 'the physis of beings', rather than a religious 'progressing toward god' à la Thomas à Kempis, then I am inclined to favour the somewhat radical translation of 'within themselves'.

the father of all beings. ὁ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων. The word 'all' by itself does not really capture the sense of ὅλων here, which is 'all beings'. The phrase ὁ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων occurs in many other writings, some of which are Christian. For instance in the Τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰουστίνου πρὸς Τρύφωνα Ἰουδαῖον Διάλογος [The Dialogue of Justinus with Trypho, a Jew] where it is said in the context of Christ being crucified, dying, and then being raised again by 'the father of all' for the benefit of all human beings - τὸν ἑαυτοῦ Χριστὸν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐκ παντὸς γένους ἀνθρώπων ὁ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων τὰς πάντων κατάρας ἀναδέξασθαι ἐβουλήθη (xcv, 2).

However, interestingly and relevant here, the phrase also occurs in the polemic by Irenaeus against the 'heresy of gnosticism' - the *Adversus Haereses* [ἔλεγχος καὶ ἀνατροπή της ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως] - written not long before the Poemandres tractate:

μεταδοῦναί σοι θέλω τῆς ἐμῆς χάριτος ἐπειδὴ ὁ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων τὸν ἄγγελόν σου διαπαντὸς βλέπει πρὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ ὁ δὲ τόπος τοῦ μεγέθους ἐν ἡμῖν ἐστὶ δι' ἡμᾶς ἐγκαταστήσαι (Book I, Chapter 13, 3)

I desire to pass on to you my Charis because the father of all beings has observed that your angel is constantly before him

These are the words Irenaeus ascribes to a person called Marcus, 'the heretic'; words used by this person skilled in the trickery of sorcery (μαγικῆς κυβείας ἐμπειρότατον) to, apparently, entice men and wealthy women to be his followers. Irenaeus then goes on, in a passage also quoted by Eusebius in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* (4.11.5), to describe some of the rites - the 'disgusting initiation into the mysteries' - of these people, and which rites include a 'mystical marriage' (πνευματικὸν γάμον) as well as a doxology to 'the father and the mother', εἰς ὄνομα ἀγνώστου πατρὸς τῶν ὅλων εἰς ἀλήθειαν μητέρα τῶν πάντων, and which doxology, with its contrast between ὅλων (ascribed to the father) and πάντων (ascribed to the mother) may go some way toward explaining the meaning of ὅλων as used here, in the Pœmandres tractate, given that μητέρα πάντων - as Γαία, Earth Mother - is the subject of, among other things, one of the Homeric hymns, Εἷς Γῆν Μητέρα Πάντων, where She is described as πρέσβιστος, the elder among beings, and the mother of the gods, θεῶν μήτηρ.

Thus, πατρὸς τῶν ὅλων as the father of all beings, and μητέρα τῶν πάντων as the mother of being, of all Life, both mortal and immortal.

22.

respectful deeds. ὀσίοις. A difficult word to translate, given that most of the English alternatives - such as religious, pious, holy, devout, blessed, sinless, saintly, humble - have acquired, over centuries, particular religious meanings, often associated with Christianity or types of asceticism; meanings which, in my view, are not or may not be relevant here, and whose use would distort one's understanding of the text.

The correct meaning is someone who, aware of or sensitive to the difference between the numinous and un-numinous [regarding 'numinous', see the note on ἅγιος in section 5], seeks to avoid, in their behaviour, what might cause them to hubriatically 'overstep the limits' and thus unbalance them, so taking them away from that natural balance and that respect for the numinous, which they personally, by their (or a particular) way of living (personal, religious, spiritual, mystical, or otherwise) seek or desire to cultivate, or which (and importantly) is a natural part of their admirable (and often admired) character. For example:

ἐκεῖνός γε μὴν ὑμῶν οὐποτ' ἔληγεν ὥς τοὺς θεοὺς οἶοιτο οὐδὲν ἧττον ὀσίοις ἔργοις ἢ ἀγνοῖς ἱεροῖς ἡδεσθαι ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ ὁπότε εὐτυχοίη οὐκ ἀνθρώπων ὑπερεφρόνει ἀλλὰ θεοῖς χάριν ἥδει καὶ θαρρῶν πλείονα ἔθυσεν ἢ ὀκνῶν ἠῤῥετο εἴθιστο δὲ φοβούμενος μὲν ἰλαρὸς φαίνεσθαι εὐτυχῶν δὲ πρᾶος εἶναι [Xenophon, *Agésilas*, 11.2]

this person, whom I praise, never ceased to believe that the gods delight in respectful deeds just as much as in consecrated temples,

and, when blessed with success, he was never prideful but rather gave thanks to the gods. He also made more offerings to them when he was confident than supplications when he felt hesitant, and, in appearance, it was his habit to be cheerful when doubtful and mild-mannered when successful.

For these reasons, I have translated not as one English word, but as the phrase 'respectful deeds'. See also the note on εὐσεβέω below.

honourable. ἀγαθός. The sense is not of being 'good' in some moralistic, sanctimonious, superior, way, but rather of being of noble character, as for example described in the Corpus Aristotelicum:

τῆς δὲ φρονήσεώς ἐστι τὸ βουλευσασθαι, τὸ κρῖναι τὰ ἀγαθὰ καὶ τὰ κακὰ καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν τῷ βίῳ αἰρετὰ καὶ φευκτά, τὸ χρῆσθαι πᾶσι καλῶς τοῖς ὑπάρχουσιν ἀγαθοῖς, τὸ ὁμιλῆσαι ὀρθῶς [*De Virtutibus et Vitiis Libellus* 1250a]

It is part of wisdom to accept advice, to distinguish the honourable, the dishonourable, and all that is, in life, acceptable or to be avoided; to fairly use all resources; to be genuine in company

refined. καθαροίς. Literally it means 'physically clean', often in the sense of being in a state of ritual purification: qv. the inscription on one of the ancient tablets (totenpasse) found in Thurii - ἔρχομαι ἐκ καθαρῶν καθαρὰ χθονίων βασιλεία (in arrivance, purified from the purified, mistress of the chthonic).

Since the English word 'pure' is unsuitable given its connotations - religious, sanctimonious, political, and otherwise - I have opted for the not altogether satisfactory 'refined'.

compassionate. ἐλεήμοσι. Those who undertake merciful, charitable, humane, deeds; qv. Luke 11.41 (πλὴν τὰ ἐνόντα δότε ἐλεημοσύνην, καὶ ἰδοὺ πάντα καθαρὰ ὑμῖν ἐστίν), Acts 10:2, κτλ.

aware of the numinous. εὐσεβοῦσι. As with ὁσίους, εὐσεβέω is a difficult word to translate, given that most of the English alternatives - such as reverent, pious - have acquired, over centuries, particular religious meanings, often associated with Christianity or types of asceticism. The correct sense is 'aware of the numinous', and thus imbued with that sense of duty, that sense of humility - or rather, an awareness of their human limitations - which makes them appreciate and respect the numinous in whatever form, way, or manner they appreciate, feel, intuit, apprehend, or understand, the numinous, be it in terms of the gods, the god, Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες, God, or whatever. It is this

awareness which inclines a person toward 'respectful deeds' [qv. ὁσίοις, above].

soon acquire knowledge of the whole. εὐθὺς τὰ πάντα γνωρίζουσι. Knowledge of 'the whole picture'; of what has been and is being discussed: perceivization; the cosmic structure; the nature of humans; the seven viziers; and so on. The sense is not "gnosis of all things", which - in its hubris - is incompatible with the immediately proceeding mention of εὐσεβέω and ὁσίοις.

affectionately gracious toward. There are two ways of interpreting τὸν πατέρα ἰλάσκονται ἀγαπητικῶς and what follows. (i) As if it is some kind of Christian eulogy by the faithful, with mention of "lovingly propitiating the father" and the "singing of hymns" to him; and (ii) in a rather more religiously neutral way with phrases such as ἰλάσκονται ἀγαπητικῶς and words such as ὕμνεῦσιν suggesting the more Hellenic "affectionately gracious" and "celebrating in song". I have chosen the latter, as it is, in my view, more in harmony with the rest of the text.

the influencing impressions. αἰσθήσεις. What is meant here is not simply 'the [bodily] senses' nor what is perceptible to or perceived by the senses, but rather those particular impressions, conveyed by the senses, which influence a person in a way which is disliked because they do or they can affect a person in a manner detrimental to their immortality. That is, not all 'feelings' nor all 'sensations' are meant but only those which impresses upon [cf. Cicero, *Academica*, 2.6, impressum effictumque] a person in a certain way and thus affect that person also in a certain way, as 'impressionable feelings' do:

αὐτὸς δὲ διὰ ποιημάτων φιλοσοφεῖ, καθάπερ Ἡσίοδος τε καὶ
Ξενοφάνης καὶ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς κριτήριον δὲ τὸν λόγον εἶπε: τάς τε
αἰσθήσεις μὴ ἀκριβεῖς ὑπάρχειν φησὶ γοῦν [Diogenes Laertius,
Parmenides, 9.3]

he himself, through the form of verse, presented his knowledge, as did Hesiod, Xenophanes and Empedocles, stating that it was a way of judging what was reasonable since impressionable feelings were not an accurate enough starting point

This is the type of 'impression' - the type of influence - meant by some alchemical texts, for example, in the *Compound of Alchymy*, by Ripley, contained in the *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* ['the Body of the Spryte taketh impression' (ix. xi)] and also, some centuries later, by Hume in his *Treatise on Human Nature* ['those perceptions, which enter with most force and violence, we may name impressions' (I. i. 12)]. Cf. also Aristotle, *Poetics* 1451a - τοῦ δὲ μήκουσ ὅρος ὁ μὲν πρὸς τοὺς ἀγῶνας καὶ τὴν αἴσθησιν οὐ τῆς τέχνης ἐστίν - where what is meant is the 'impression' made upon an audience, which thus influences them.

the bad. The usual translation of κακός here, as often elsewhere, is 'evil'.

However, I regard such a translation as unhelpful, given that the English word 'evil' is (1) now often interpreted and understood in a moralistic, preconceived, way according to some theological dogma/criteria and/or according to some political/social doctrine, and (2) that it does not denote what the classical and the Hellenic term κακός does.

Classically understood κακός is what is bad in the sense of some-thing rotten or unhealthy, or – the opposite of κάλος – what is displeasing to see. κακός is also what is unlucky, a misfortune, and/or injurious, as for example in The Agamemnon

τὸ μὲν γυναιῖκα πρῶτον ἄρσενος δίχα
ἦσθαι δόμοις ἔρημον ἔκπαγλον κακόν (vv. 862-3)

Primarily, for a lady to be separate from her mate -
To remain unprotected by family – is a harsh misfortune

When applied to a person, the sense is of a 'rotten' person; someone with bad, harmful, physis; a bad - dishonourable, weak, cowardly - personal character; someone whose nature, for examples, inclines them toward doing harm and doing what is generally considered to be wrong.

This sense is still appropriate to Hellenic usage. For example, in respect of Romans 12.17 with its contrast of κακός and κάλος:

μηδενὶ κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἀποδιδόντες προνοούμενοι καλὰ ἐνώπιον πάντων ἀνθρώπων

Do not render what is bad with what is bad; rather, show concern for what all humans see is good

Similarly with the synonym σαπρός, as for example in Luke 6.43-5:

Οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν δένδρον καλὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν σαπρόν, οὐδὲ πάλιν δένδρον σαπρὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν καλόν, ἕκαστον γὰρ δένδρον ἐκ τοῦ ἰδίου καρποῦ γινώσκεται· ὁ ἀγαθὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ θησαυροῦ τῆς καρδίας προφέρει τὸ ἀγαθόν, καὶ ὁ πονηρὸς ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ προφέρει τὸ πονηρόν· ἐκ γὰρ περισσεύματος καρδίας λαλεῖ τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ

For no healthy tree brings forth rotten fruit just as a rotten tree cannot bring forth healthy fruit. For each tree is judged by its fruit. A good person from the store of good in their heart brings forth what is good, and a bad person from their bad store brings forth what is bad; for it is because of an overflowing heart that the mouth speaks.

23.

hubriatic. ἄσεβέσι; someone lacking in or who is arrogantly disdainful of σέβομαι, of what is regarded as honourable, revered, respected. Someone who is thus 'hubriatic'. It is the opposite of εὐσεβέω, that is, the opposite of someone who is aware of and respectful of the numinous.

the avenging daemon. τῷ τιμωρῷ δαίμον.

Τιμωρῷ is an epithet of the god Mars, mentioned by Cassius Dio Cocceianus in his *Historiae Romanae* when he recounts how Caligula, celebrating the murder of someone, sent three daggers to the temple of Mars the Avenger, in Rome, as offerings to the god - ξιφίδια τρία τῷ Ἄρει τῷ Τιμωρῷ ἐς [Book 59, chapter 22 v.7].

Correctly understood, a δαίμων (daemon) is neither a 'demon' nor one of the pantheon of major Greek gods - θεοί - but rather a lesser type of divinity who might be assigned by those gods to bring good fortune or misfortune to human beings and/or to watch over certain human beings and especially particular numinous (sacred) places.

which tests them. καὶ τοῦτον βασανίζει. The sense here is rather obscure, with some proposed emendations (for example, οὕτως, and τοῦτο for τοῦτον). I take the sense here of βασανίζω to be 'tested', as in being 'put to the test'; a sense in accord with what precedes and with what follows.

24.

Anados. ἄνοδος. A transliteration, as the word has specific meanings in ancient Greek 'mystery cults' and in Hellenic 'mysticism', one of which meanings is the ascent, or progress, or journey, of the initiate/individual toward their goal, however that goal/ascent/progress/journey is described and/or understood, and/or represented (symbolically, mythologically, or otherwise). Quite often, the journey - the 'way up' - is described as the one between the living and the dead (the next life) or as one from the chthonic (the underworld) to our mortal world; which journey sometimes involves a symbolic/mythological death and then a rebirth.

the dissolution of the physical body allows that body to be transformed. ἐν τῇ ἀναλύσει τοῦ σώματος τοῦ ὑλικοῦ παραδίδως αὐτὸ τὸ σῶμα εἰς ἀλλοίωσιν. Literally, 'in the dissolution of the material body it hands over that body to alteration'.

ethos. ἦθος. Here, ethos in the personal sense; the 'spirit' - the personality - of an individual: their traits, character, disposition, nature, temperament.

25.

in the first realm. The sphere of the Moon, the first of the seven planetary/alchemical/astrological spheres, realms, or emanations - the ἑβδομάς; hebdomad, septenary system - that, in respect of the journey (ἄνοδος) of the mortal toward immortality, form the basis of, are emanations of, the harmonious cosmic structure (qv. sections 9 and 14). On this journey, the mortal passes through each realm - sphere - in turn.

which grows and which fades. Cf. Sextus Empiricus - ταύτην δὲ ἤτοι αὐξητικήν ἢ μειωτικήν [Adversus Mathematicos, IX, 393]

arrogance of command. Reading ὑπερηφανίαν not προφανίαν.

26.

ogdoadic physis. ὀγδοατικήν φύσιν. An interesting and important term, often overlooked and often misinterpreted. What is meant is not a realm - ζώνη - or sphere, similar to but 'beyond' the seven realms, but rather 'of what' the mortal has become, is reborn as, at the end of the journey: partaking in and being of 'the ogdoadic physis', and thus sharing the being/existence of those who have, or who have attained, that particular type of being/existence/physis. The existence, that is, of an immortal beyond the seven emanations.

with the others there, celebrates the father in song. ὑμνεῖ σὺν τοῖς οὓσι τὸν πατέρα. Again - qv. section 22 - not 'hymns' in the Christian sense but rather celebrating in song/verse/chant; celebrating the father of this mortal, the parent of all mortals, and ὁ πατήρ τῶν ὅλων, the 'grandfather' of all beings (qv. section 21).

force. δύναμις. Cf. section 7. Those forces, those particular powers - or, more precisely, that type (or those types) of being(s) or existence - that are not only beyond the septenary system but beyond the ogdoadic physis of those mortals who have, because of their journey (ἄνοδος) through the septenary system, achieved immortality.

It is therefore easy to understand why some considered there were, or represented their understanding/insight by, 'nine' (seven plus two) fundamental cosmic emanations, or by nine realms or spheres [qv. the quote from Cicero in section 17] - the seven of the hebdomad, plus the one of the 'ogdoadic physis' mentioned here, plus the one (also mentioned here) of what is beyond even this 'ogdoadic physis'. However, as this text describes, there are seven realms or spheres - a seven-fold path to immortality, accessible to living mortals - and then two types of existence (not spheres) beyond these, accessible only after the mortals has journeyed along that path and then, having 'offered up' certain things along the way (their mortal ethos), 'handed over their body to its death'. Ontologically, therefore, the seven might somewhat simplistically be described as partaking of what is 'causal' (of what is mortal) and the two types of

existence beyond the seven as partaking of - as being - 'acausal' (of what is immortal). Thus, Poemandres goes on to say, the former mortal - now immortal - moves on (from this first type of 'acausal existence') to become these forces (beyond the ogdoadic physis) to thus finally 'unite with theos': αὐτοὶ εἰς δυνάμεις ἑαυτοὺς παραδιδόασιν καὶ δυνάμεις γενόμενοι ἐν θεῷ γίνονται.

26.

become united with theos. ἐν θεῷ γίνονται. Literally, '[they] become in theos', or '[they] enter into theos', although given what follows - θεωθῆναι - what is meant is 'become of/be united with theos', and thus 'become-of' what is no longer mortal but rather both immortal and 'of theos'.

become of theos. θεωθῆναι. This does not mean 'made divine/god', or 'achieve divinity' or 'become god/a god', or deification, but rather, having become immortal, to be (re)united with theos and thus, by such a 'becoming', re-present (become-of) in that new (acausal) existence the numinosity of theos, and which return and re-presentation is the real aim of our mortal lives and the function of λόγος, and of the λόγοι (such as pneumatic logos and the phasical logos). That is, as explained in some of the rather neglected works of Maximus of Constantinople [qv. Migne Patrologiae Graeca, 90 and 91], Θεώσις in the sense of reunited with theos - ultimately because of ἀγάπη - without actually being or becoming 'a divinity' or 'God':

τῆς ἐπὶ τῷ θεωθῆναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον μυστικῆς ἐνεργείας λήψεται πέρας κατὰ πάντα τρόπον χωρὶς μόνης δηλονότι τῆς πρὸς αὐτὸν κατ' οὐσίαν ταυτότητος. *Quaestiones ad Thalassium de Scriptura Sacra*, XXII [Patrologiae Graeca, 90, c.0318]

the end of the opus mysterium of human beings becoming of Theos can be in all ways except one, namely that of having the identity of His Essence

the noble goal. τὸ ἀγαθὸν τέλος. This might well be taken as an axiom of the 'hermetic' weltanschauung presented in this tractate. In respect of ἀγαθός as honourable/noble, see the note in section 22.

those who seek to acquire knowledge. Given the use here of the word γνῶσις, the sense could be interpreted, and has by others been interpreted, to mean 'those who seek to acquire/attain gnosis'.

other mortals can - through theos - escape. I take the sense of σώζω here to be 'escape', for the English word 'saved' now imposes, after nearly two thousand years of scriptural exegesis and preaching, various religious preconceptions on the text. Also, the usual translation of 'saved by god' is somewhat at variance with the hermetic/gnostic weltanschauung which suggests a progression -

ἄνοδος - through the realms/spheres in order to attain immortality.

For the 'escape' is from the mortal to the immortal, and therefore to be 'saved', because of theos, so that (qv. section 21) they can "progress to return to Life"

27.

joined with those forces. The meaning here is somewhat obscure, although it possibly signifies that Pœmandres leaves the mortal realm and rejoins - returns to - his existence, beyond the hebdomad, where those forces/powers exist.

an insight of great importance. μεγίστην θέαν. An important 'insight into' the workings of the cosmos, immortality, and the nature of mortals, rather than 'a vision' or a 'revelation'.

awareness of the numinous. See the note on 'aware of the numinous'/εὐσεβέω in section 22.

earth-bound mortals. ἄνδρες γηγενεῖς. The literal meaning is 'earth-born mortals', which is rather obscure here, although what is meant is probably not the somewhat pejorative 'primordial/primitive' type [qv. ἔστι ἐν τῇ ἀκροπόλει ταύτῃ Ἐρεχθεὺς τοῦ γηγενέος λεγομένου εἶναι νηός, Herodotus, 8.55; and ἄλλοι δὲ γηγενεῖς καὶ χαλκασπίδας, Strabo, 10.3] nor even the 'earthy/rural' type [qv. μὴ μισήσης ἐπίπονον ἐργασίαν καὶ γεωργίαν ὑπὸ Ὑψίστου ἐκτισμένην, LXX, Sirach 7.15] but rather the contrast, mentioned in section 15, between those 'deathful of body' and the 'deathlessness of the inner mortal'; with a similar contrast occurring in Plato [οὐδὲν γὰρ γηγενὲς Ὀλυμπίων ἐντιμότερον ἄλλ' ὁ περὶ ψυχῆς ἄλλως δοξάζων ἀγνοεῖ ὡς θαυμαστοῦ τούτου κτήματος ἀμελεῖ, Laws 727e]. Hence my suggestion of 'earth-bound', which is apposite considering what follows - οἱ μέθη καὶ ὕπνω ἑαυτοὺς ἐκδε δωκότες.

sleepfulness. To translate ὕπνος here as simply 'sleep' is not particularly helpful to the reader, as what seems to be implied is not normal everyday 'sleep' - a necessity for all humans - since such normal healthy sleep is a strange companion for 'intoxicating liquor'. Regarding ὕπνος, Jebb in his commentary on *Antigone* in respect of ὕπνος ὁ παντογῆρως (v.606) mentioned that "sleep, the renewer of vigour, could not be described as 'bringing old age to all'. Nor can the epithet be explained as 'enfeebling all', in the sense of 'subduing them'; nor, again, as 'attending on all, even to old age'," which led him to write that παντογῆρως was probably corrupt and to suggest, as some others had done, an emendation.

The fact that sleep personified, as Hypnos/Somnus, is the brother of Death [qv. ἔνθ' Ὑπνῷ ξύμβλητο κασιγνήτῳ Θανάτῳ, Iliad, 14.231] is also in favour of normal, healthy, sleep not being meant, as does what follows - θελγόμενοι ὕπνῳ ἀλόγῳ. Thus a possible alternative would be to interpret ὕπνος here somewhat metaphorically, either as a 'state of mind' (such as 'sleepwalking through life')

or as something akin to soporation (an underused English word, from the Latin) with the meaning here of 'an inclination or a tendency to sleep excessively or unnecessarily; to be inactive, drowsy, sleepful; disconnected from reality'. Hence my tentative interpretation - 'sleepfulness'.

unknowing of theos. ἀγνωσία τοῦ θεοῦ. Unknowing is a more suitable English word - given its meaning, usage (past and present) and given the context - than 'ignorance'

stop your drunkenness. παύσασθε δὲ κραιπαλῶντες. Literally, 'cease to be intoxicated'. It is interesting to compare this preaching to what Plutarch wrote about Demosthenes:

ὁδυρομένου δὲ τοῦ Δημοσθένους πρὸς αὐτόν ὅτι πάντων φιλοπονώτατος ὢν τῶν λεγόντων καὶ μικροῦ δέων καταναλωκέναι τὴν τοῦ σώματος ἀκμὴν εἰς τοῦτο χάριν οὐκ ἔχει πρὸς τὸν δῆμον, ἀλλὰ κραιπαλῶντες ἄνθρωποι ναῦται καὶ ἀμαθεῖς ἀκούονται καὶ κατέχουσι τὸ βῆμα, παρορᾶται δ' αὐτός [Demosthenes, 7.1]

To him, Demosthenes complained that although he was an industrious orator and had expended much bodily vigour in pursuing that duty, he was not favoured by the people who ignored him but listened to those who were intoxicated, the ignorant, and sailors, when they and their like held the floor.

28.

change your ways. μετανοήσατε. Not 'repent', which imposes a particular religious interpretation upon the text.

have kinship with the unknowing ones. συγκοινωνήσαντες τῇ ἀγνοίᾳ. Kinship in the sense of being 'kindred spirits', or 'fellow travellers'.

dark phaos. σκοτεινοῦ φωτός. An interesting phrase, lost in translation when φως is translated as 'light'. See the note on phaos in section 4.

29.

threw themselves down at my feet. ἑαυτοὺς πρὸ ποδῶν μου ῥίψαντε. A literal translation, although, given what follows, it seems unlikely that this is a metaphorical expression of their eagerness to learn. Indeed, this whole section seems rather at variance with the rest of the text - especially considering the following καθοδηγὸς ἐγενόμην τοῦ γένους - although perhaps 'the guide', having only just been informed of certain esoteric matters by Pœmandres, is here in this section somewhat obliquely revealing that he himself has yet (qv. section 25) to offer up "that eagerness which deceives; the arrogance of command; profane insolence."

became a guide to those of my kind. That is, not 'a guide to my race/mankind' but a guide to those who, seeking immortality, desire to undertake the journey through the seven spheres and thus are akin to - of the same type as - the guide.

informing them of the logoi. τοὺς λόγους διδάσκων. The logoi [plural of logos] are - qv. the note on θεωθῆναι in section 26 - the various apparent forms (or emanations) of the logos, and include the pneumatic logos, the phasmal logos, and the logos kyrios, previously mentioned in the text. They are often considered to be how the logos is sometimes manifest to us, as mortals who are yet to begin or are yet to progress far along the septenary path toward immortality. Furthermore, those who are on the journey - following the way to theos - are also logoi.

logoi of sapientia. σοφίας λόγους. Something more than just 'words of [the] wisdom' is meant, especially as the English word 'wisdom' does not fully reflect the meaning (and the various shades) of σοφία, especially in a metaphysical (or esoteric) context, in this case of 'the opus mysterium'. The use here, in my translation, of the terms *logoi* and *sapientia* is intended - as with transliterations such as phaos - to cause the reader to pause and perhaps engender in them a certain curiosity as to what the terms may, or may not, mean, suggest, or imply, and to thus (and hopefully) convey something about the original text.

celestial elixir. ἀμβροσίου ὕδατος. Literally, 'ambrosial water'; the food/drink that, in mythology, confers and maintains the immortality of the gods and chosen mortals.

30.

temperance of [the] psyche. τῆς ψυχῆς νῆψις. Again transliterating ψυχῆς, since the English word 'soul' imposes particular - religious/philosophical, and/or modern - meanings on the text, whereas it may well be used here in its classical/Hellenic sense of 'spark' (or breath) of life; that is, as referring to that 'thing' (principle, or cause) which animates mortal beings making them 'alive', and which principle or cause was also personified as Psyche.

genuine insight. ἀληθινὴ ὄρασις. Cf. μεγίστην θέαν in section 27.

expression of the logos. It not clear how or in what form this manifestation of the logos occurs, although the context - of silence - might suggest that 'utterance' or 'speech' is not meant.

the logos of authority. τῆς αὐθεντίας λόγου. A similar expression occurs in section 3 also in reference to Pömandres - τῆς αὐθεντίας νοῦς, the perceivance of authority.

this revealing. I take the sense of ἀληθείας here to be not some abstract

(undefined, probably contentious and thus possibly undefinable) 'truth' but rather as a revealing of what is 'genuine' as distinct from what is mere 'appearance'. Here, literally, '*the* revealing' - of the nature of mortals, of the way to immortality, of logos and of theos.

31.

Agios o theos, father of all beings. ἅγιος ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων. For πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων, see the note in section 22.

I have given, as an intimation, a transliteration of the first part, as these are doxologies, similar to the Kyrie eleison [Κύριε ἐλέησον], and much (if not all) of their numinous/sacred/mystical/esoteric quality and meaning are lost when they are translated into plain - or into archaic, KJV type - English. Although they are best read/recited in the original Greek, the Latin preserves much of the numinosity of these and other such doxologies. The Latin of the nine doxologies given here is:

Sanctus deus pater universorum.
Sanctus deus, cuius consilium ad finem deducitur a propriis potentiis.
Sanctus deus, qui cognosci vult et cognoscitur a suis.
Sanctus es, qui verbo constituisti entia omnia.
Sanctus es, cuius universa natura imago nata est.
Sanctus es, quem natura non formavit.
Sanctus es, qui omni potentia es fortior.
Sanctus es, qui omni excellentia es maior.
Sanctus es, qui omnes superas laudes.

The Greek text is:

ἅγιος ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων.
ἅγιος ὁ θεός, οὗ ἡ βουλὴ τελεῖται ἀπὸ τῶν ιδίων δυνάμεων.
ἅγιος ὁ θεός, ὃς γνωσθῆναι βούλεται καὶ γινώσκεται τοῖς ἰδίοις.
ἅγιος εἶ, ὁ λόγῳ συστησάμενος τὰ ὄντα.
ἅγιος εἶ, οὗ πᾶσα φύσις εἰκὼν ἔφυ.
ἅγιος εἶ, ὃν ἡ φύσις οὐκ ἐμόρφωσεν.
ἅγιος εἶ, ὁ πάσης δυνάμεως ἰσχυρότερος.
ἅγιος εἶ, ὁ πάσης ὑπεροχῆς μείζων.
ἅγιος εἶ, ὁ κρείττων τῶν ἐπαίνων.

ἅγιος ὁ approximates to 'Numinous is' [theos] - qv. the note on ἅγιος in section 5 - and ἅγιος εἶ to 'Numinous are' [you].

As to why there are nine doxologies, it may be (and probably is) just a coincidence, or it may reflect the 7+2 structure of the 7 causal aspects (the hebdomad) and the 2 'acausal' modes of being beyond them (qv. the note on δύναμις in section 26).

his own arts. I take the sense of δυνάμεων here to be not 'powers', forces (or something similar) but 'arts'; that is, those abilities, qualities, skills, and strengths - of the 'artisan-creator' - which are inherent in theos and express the very nature of theos. Abilities, qualities, skills, and strengths, which an artisan - with assistance and help and instruction from theos, the chief artisan - uses, for example, to 'fashion seven viziers' and the 'fine artisements of physis'. See sections 9-13 and the notes thereon.

whose disposition is to be recognized. γνωσθῆναι here with γινώσκεται is not exactly the straightforward '[who] wills/desires to be known' but rather the more subtle '[whose] disposition is to be recognized', and (i) disposition/inclination as an expression of the nature, the very being, of theos, (ii) to be recognized in the sense of to be perceived for who and what theos is, in essence, in very being. Those who so recognize theos - who thus understand and 'appreciate' theos and are cognizant of the type of Being theos is - are those who partake in some way, or who re-present or emanate, or who 'imitate' [qv. Thomas à Kempis, The Imitation of Christ] the nature of that Being; and which Being is therefore 'recognized/understood by those who are of his [type of] being,' although the Greek literally means "is recognized by his own".

Agios es. For ἅγιος εἶ. Combining the Latin with the Greek, for readability and expressiveness.

form all being. In both senses of the term 'form' - constitute, and form being into beings and which beings are or can be re-united with Being (theos) by logos.

you who engender all physis as eikon. The meaning and significance of this are often overlooked and often lost in translation. I have transliterated εἰκὼν as here it does not only mean what the English words 'image' or 'likeness' suggest or imply, but rather it is similar to what Maximus of Constantinople in his *Mystagogia* [Patrologiae Graeca, 91, c.0658] explains. Which is of we humans, and the cosmos, and Nature, and psyche, as eikons, although according to Maximus it is the Christian church itself (as manifest and embodied in Jesus of Nazareth and the Apostles and their successors and in scripture) which, being the eikon of God, enables we humans to recognize this, recognize God, be in communion with God, return to God, and thus find and fulfil the meaning of our being, our existence.

According to the hermetic weltanschauung, as outlined by Pœmandres here, all physis - the being, nature, character, of beings - their essence beyond the form/appearance their being is or assumes or is perceived as - re-presents (manifests, is an eikon of) theos. That is, the physis of beings can be considered not only as an emanation of theos but as re-presenting his Being, his essence. To recognize this, to recognize theos, to be in communion with theos, to return to theos, and thus become immortal, there is the way up (anados) through the

seven spheres:

Thus does the mortal hasten through the harmonious structure, offering up, in the first realm, that vigour which grows and which fades, and - in the second one - those dishonourable machinations, no longer functioning. In the third, that eagerness which deceives, no longer functioning; in the fourth, the arrogance of command, no longer insatiable; in the fifth, profane insolence and reckless haste; in the sixth, the bad inclinations occasioned by riches, no longer functioning; and in the seventh realm, the lies that lie in wait. [Section 25]

you whom the Physis did not morph. Given the construction - ὃν ἡ φύσις - I have capitalized Physis here (see sections 14 and 17]. By 'morph' is meant what the Greek term (ἐμόρφωσεν) implies, which is 'shape or transform' into some-thing-else, to give some-thing the 'semblance' of theos . That is, theos was, is, and remains, theos; there is no-thing resembling theos.

you who are mightier than all artifice. The artifice - the works, expedients, skill, manifestations, artifices, products, machinations, ingenuity, the 'domination', and the force - of others.

It is interesting to compare this might, the strength and power of theos, with what Epictetus writes about human strength in his *Discourses*:

οὔτε τύραννος κωλύσει με θέλοντα οὔτε δεσπότης οὔτε οἱ πολλοὶ τὸν ἕνα οὔθ' ὁ ἰσχυρότερος τὸν ἀσθενέστερον: τοῦτο γὰρ ἀκώλυτον δέδοται ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκάστω [4.5]

neither a tyrannos nor some Lord shall negate my intent; nor some crowd although I be just one; nor someone stronger although I be weaker, since such unhindrance is a gift, to everyone, from theos

wordful. The expressive term 'wordful' is more suitable here than 'speech', and also contrasts well with 'ineffable' and 'inexpressible'.

32.

the knowledge. For τῆς γνώσεως, although 'acquiring the knowledge' and 'the gnosis' are alternatives, so that with the latter it reads "I ask of you to grant that I am not foiled in the gnosis germane to our essence", with the phrase 'our essence' referring to the essence - οὐσία - of both mortals and theos.

favour. χάρις. A gift, favour, or kindness, here from theos [χάρις θεοῦ] and which type of gift is also mentioned in the New Testament (for example, Luke, 2.40). See also the quotation from Irenaeus in the note on *the father of all beings* in section 21.

the unknowing. In respect of 'unknowing' see the note in section 27.

who are your children. In respect of υἱὸς as the gender neutral 'child', rather than 'son', see the note on υἱὸς θεοῦ in section 6, and also the note on gender neutrality under ἀναγνωρίσας ἑαυτὸν in section 19.

share in [your] numinosity. For συναγιάζειν.

Ιερός Λόγος

An Esoteric Mythos

Tractate III

A Pagan And Esoteric Mythos

While the title - Ιερός Λόγος - of the third tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum is generally translated as either "A Sacred Discourse" or "A Holy Sermon", it would perhaps be more accurate to translate as *An Esoteric Mythos* given (i) that it describes a numinous theogony of the kind recounted to initiates of the mystery traditions of ancient Greece, and thus recounts a mythos that pre-dates the Biblical story of Genesis, as given in the Septuagint (LXX), by centuries, and (ii) that ἱερός λόγος/ἱεροί λόγοι (an esoteric mythos/esoteric mythoi) were phrases often used to describe such mystery traditions, both Greek and Greco-Egyptian, as, for example, by Herodotus {1}.

For it is possible that the often-stated belief of the tractate being influenced by the story recounted in LXX is incorrect, and that whatever similarities there are between the text of the tractate and Greek text of the Biblical story of Genesis might be due either to the scribe of what was a previously esoteric aural tradition being familiar with LXX or some parts of it and borrowing a particular word or words to try and express an aspect of that paganus tradition (an opinion held by the Christian Byzantine historian Mikhael Psellus, d. 1078 CE), or to the Biblical story of creation itself being influenced by a more ancient Greek mythos or mythoi, just as it was influenced by similar, more ancient, mythoi from Sumeria and elsewhere. In addition, the overt polytheism of the tractate, and Greek concepts such as φύσις (physis) and Πνεῦμα (pneuma) {2}, are at odds with such influence and with that Biblical story.

Furthermore, far from it being (again, as has often been previously believed) a very corrupt, or overwritten text, the *Ἱερός Λόγος* most probably reasonably represents, like the *Pymander tractate*, a pagan metaphysical *weltanschauung* germane to the period of its composition and one which is based upon or recounts an earlier, and most probably aural, tradition. Furthermore, as Wildberg has suggested, the text might simply incorporate some marginalia {3}.

Such an esoteric mythos, as recorded in the *Ἱερός Λόγος* hermetic tractate, had - like the Biblical Genesis story - antecedents. Such as

οἱ Γῆς ἐξεγένοντο καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος

those who came-into-being from Gaia and the starry heavens {4}

from the *theogony* of Hesiod (106) - written c. 700 BCE - of which there is a remarkably similar expression in funerary inscriptions, from some four centuries later (c. 300 BCE) in Pharsalos, Thessalyon,

Γῆς παῖς εἰμι καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστ<ερόεντος>

I am a child of Gaia and the starry heavens

and on a gold funerary tablet (c. 200 BCE) found at Eleutherna, Crete,

ΓΑΣ ΥΙΟΣ ΕΙΜΙ ΚΑΙ ΟΥΡΑΝΟΥ ΑΣΤΕΡΟΕΝΤΟΣ

Γᾶς υἱός ἡμι καὶ Ὀρανῶ ἀστερόεντος {5}

and also in a, purportedly Orphic, religious text (the *Derveni papyrus*) dating from c. 330 BCE {6} which contains the Hesiodian phrase οἱ Διὸς ἐξεγένοντο [those who came-into-being from Zeus]. Thus, it is part of this ancient esoteric mythos, and/or its antecedents, that may well be echoed in LXX (Genesis, 1:1), written centuries later:

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν

In the beginning, Theos produced the heavens and the Earth {7}

and which Biblical text is, interestingly, given by Aquila - qv. the *Hexapla* {8} - as:

Ἐν κεφαλᾷ ἐκτίσεν ὁ Θεὸς σὺν τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ σὺν τὴν γῆν

As foundation, Theos formed the heavens and the Earth {9}

It is thus my view that the third tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum is a valuable hermetic document, presenting as it does - probably after centuries of aural transmission as befitted ἱεροί λόγοι - an esoteric weltanschauung that pre-dates, and thus is independent of, not only Christianity but also of the myths, stories, and theology, manifest in the Old Testament.

Understood thus, the Ἱερός Λόγος tractate is the story of genesis according to an ancient pagan, and esoteric, weltanschauung; a text in all probability older than the other texts in the Corpus Hermeticum; and a text which the author of the *Poemandres* tractate might well have been familiar with, as a reading of both texts indicates.

Commentary, Translation, and Text

The references in the commentary here to the *Poemandres* tractate are to my translation of and commentary on that text for I have retained the transliterations, and some of the English phrases, used and explained there, such as physis, phaos, theos. I have also, as there, occasionally used some particular, or some quite obscure English words - or forms of them - in order to try and elucidate the meaning of the text or to avoid using, in what is a metaphysical text, some commonplace term with various connotations (contemporary or otherwise) that may lead to a misunderstanding of the text. I have endeavoured to explain such obscure words in the commentary. There is thus in this translation, as in my translation of *Poemandres*, a certain technical - or rather, esoteric - vocabulary.

Purely for readability, I have arranged the translation into (non-poetic) verses rather than long paragraphs. All translations in the commentary and notes are mine.

Notes

{1} (a) ἔστι λόγος περὶ αὐτοῦ ἱρὸς λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 48, s3. (b) ἔστι ἱρὸς περὶ αὐτοῦ λόγος λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 62, s2. (c) ἔστι δὲ περὶ αὐτῶν ἱρὸς λόγος λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 81, s2.

{2} In ἱεροί λόγοι and in many hermetic texts, φύσις suggests something more than what the terms 'nature' or 'character' - of a thing or person - denote. That is - qv. the *Poemandres* tractate (see footnote 8) - it suggests to "know what is real" and to apprehend the physis of those real things - νοῆσαι τὴν τοῦ τῶν φύσιν; to thus have an understanding of ontology. For physis is a revealing, a manifestation, of not only the true nature of beings but also of the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being.

In respect of pneuma, qv. DeWitt Burton: *Spirit, Soul, and Flesh: The Usage of Πνεῦμα, Ψυχή, and Σάρξ in Greek Writings and Translated Works from the Earliest Period to 225 AD* (University of Chicago Press, 1918)

{3} Christian Wildberg: *The Genesis of a Genesis: Corpus Hermeticum, Tractate III*, in Lance Jenott and Sarit Kattan Gribetz: *Jewish and Christian Cosmogony in Late Antiquity* (pp.139-166). *Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum*, 155. Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen, 2013.

{4} Pedantically, a more accurate translation of ἀστερόεντος would be stelliferous - hence the 'stelliferous heavens' - but 'starry heavens' is far more poetic.

{5} Interestingly, some similar inscriptions - such as another one from Eleutherna - are gender neutral and simply say ΓΥΑΤΗΡΚΑΙΩΠΑΝΩΑΣΤΕΡΟΕΝΤΟΣ. That is, 'of Gaia and the starry heavens'.

{6} Bernabé, Alberto, and Francesc Casadesús. *Orfeo y la tradición órfica: Un reencuentro*. Madrid: Akal. 2008.

{7} Although I give here, for Ἐν ἀρχῇ, the conventional 'In the beginning', I am inclined to prefer 'In primacy' (the first thing/principle/origin of; cf. Anaximander, where there is also mention of the heavens and 'the world' or cosmos: πρῶτος τοῦτο τοῦνομα κομίσας τῆς ἀρχῆς λέγει δ' αὐτὴν μήτε ὕδωρ μήτε ἄλλο τι τῶν καλουμένων εἶναι στοιχείων ἀλλ' ἑτέραν τινὰ φύσιν ἄπειρον ἐξ ἧς ἅπαντας γίνεσθαι τοὺς οὐρανοὺς καὶ τοὺς ἐν αὐτοῖς κόσμους. Simplicius, *Physics*, 24:13-21).

An alternative, suggested by the Greek text of Aquila of Genesis 1:1, would be "As foundation, Theos produced..." Furthermore, instead of the 'creavit' of the Latin Vulgate, the older Vetus Latina has 'In principio *fecit* deus caelum et terram.'

{8} Frederick Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum quæ Supersunt*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1875.

{9} Literally, "In foundation, Theos built/produced..."

The Latin of Jermone - who, according to certain sources, was acquainted with the text of Aquila - is *in principio creavit Deus caelum et terram*.

Translation

[1] The numen of all beings is theos: numinal, and of numinal physis.
The origin of what exists is theos, who is Perceivation and Physis and Substance:
The sapientia which is a revealing of all beings.
For the numinal is the origin: physis, vigour, incumbency, accomplishment, renewance.

In the Abyss, an unmeasurable darkness, and, by the influence of the numen,
Water and delicate apprehending Pnuema, there, in Kaos.
Then, a numinous phaos arose and, from beneath the sandy ground,
Parsements coagulated from fluidic essence.
And all of the deities <particularize> seedful physis.

[2] With all beings unformed and not yet presenced,
What was lightsome was separated out, upward
And what was burdensome set in fluidic ground
With all defined through Fire, then elevated - and conveyed - by Pnuema.
Thus the heavens became perceivable in seven spheres,
Deities represented in the arrangements of the stars,
With the outer revolving in the æther, and circulating by the Pnuema of theos.

[3] Through their distinguishing influence, each deity did what was assigned to them
So that there came-into-being beasts four-footed and slithering
And those dwelling in water and those that fly,
And harvestable seeds and pastures and all kinds of verdant flowers,
<Seeding within> the semination of rebirth.
Thus can the offspring of mortals apprehend the works of theos, a living witness of physis,
So that the multitude of mortals can husband all that is below the heavens,
Appreciate honour, and propagate by propagation and spawn by spawning.

Thus, every psyche - embodied in flesh - can
By the mirificence of the circumferent deities coursing the heavens
Apprehend the heavens, and honour, and physis presenced, and the works of theos;
Can understand divine influence as wyrdful change
And thus, regarding what is good and what is bad, discover all the arts of honour.

[4] For this is the commencement of their living, of such learning
As is - by circumferent deities coursing - wyrdful, and the discoagulation of it,
For the great earthly artialized memorials they have left
Will, with the passing of the seasons, fade
Just as, for the generations of psyche-bearing flesh and fruitful seeds and artiselements,
There will be renewance through incumbency, renewance through the divine
And by the circumferent coursing of Physis.

The divine is all of that mixel: renewance of the cosmic order through Physis
For Physis is presenced in the divine.

Commentary

1.

The numen of all beings is theos. Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεός. The sense of δόξα here, especially given the following mention of θεῖος and φύσις, is of immanence and of transcendent sublimity, encompassing both (i) the interpretation given to the word in LXX and the New Testament, of a divine glory (qv. Exodus 16:10, Matthew 25:31, and Luke 2:9) and thus of what is considered to be - that is, is outwardly manifest as - glorious, or splendid, as in Matthew 4:8, a sense well-expressed in the Latin of Jerome: iterum adsumit eum diabolus in montem excelsum valde et ostendit ei omnia regna mundi et gloriam eorum, and (ii) the classical, more personal sense, of honour, and reputation or repute, the latter as for example referenced by Boethius: Unde non iniuria tragicus exclamat: ὦ δόξα, δόξα, μυρίοισι δὴ βροτῶν οὐδὲν γεγῶσι βίοτον ὠγκώσας μέγαν (Book III, vi).

Hence I have opted for 'numen', rather than the usual 'splendour' or 'glory' which do not, in my view given their modern connotations and common usage, express the sense of the Greek; with the meaning of 'numen' here being expressed by what follows: "numinal and of numinal physis", where by numinal - in this ἱερός λόγος - is meant divine not in the specific sense of a monotheistic and Biblical (a masculous) God but in the more general sense of pertaining to a deity or deities, male or female, as in a paganus (and not necessarily patriarchal) polytheism.

In this paganus context, the numinous is therefore what is, or what manifests (presences) or can manifest or remind us of (what can reveal) what is regarded or understood as sacred, numinal, sublime, awe-inspiring, beautiful, noble, esoteric, beyond the mundane, and beyond our ability, as mortals, to control. Thus, in terms of ἱεροὶ λόγοι in general, the numen reminds us of 'the natural order of things' (the physis of theos, of theoi, of Nature and of the heavens), reminds us of our own physis, and thus of our duties and responsibilities as mortals (especially in relation to deities) and thence the need to avoid hubris.

In respect of hubris, Hesiod, in Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι [Works and Days], vv 213-218, wrote:

σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης, μὴδ' ὕβριν ὄφελλε:

ὔβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῶ βροτῶ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς
215 ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύνатаι, βαρύθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς
ἐγκύρσας ἄτησιν: ὁδὸς δ' ἐτέρηφι παρελθεῖν
κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει
ἐς τέλος ἐξελθοῦσα: παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω

You should listen to [the goddess] Fairness and not oblige Hubris
Since Hubris harms unfortunate mortals while even the more fortunate
Are not equal to carrying that heavy a burden, meeting as they do with Mischief.
The best path to take is the opposite one: that of honour
For, in the end, Fairness is above Hubris
Which is something the young come to learn from adversity.

Notes:

- a. δίκη. The goddess of Fairness/Justice/Judgement, and – importantly – of Tradition (Ancestral Custom). In Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι, as in Θεογονία (Theogony), Hesiod is recounting and explaining part of that tradition, one important aspect of which tradition is understanding the relation between the gods and mortals. Given both the antiquity of the text and the context, 'Fairness' – as the name of the goddess – is, in my view, more appropriate than the now common appellation 'Justice', considering the modern (oft times impersonal) connotations of the word 'justice'.
- b. Mischief. The sense of ἄτησιν here is not of 'delusion' nor of 'calamities', per se, but rather of encountering that which or those whom (such as the goddess of mischief, Ἄτη) can bring mischief or misfortune into the 'fortunate life' of a 'fortunate mortal', and which encounters are, according to classical tradition, considered as having been instigated by the gods. Hence, of course, why Sophocles [Antigone, 1337-8] wrote ὡς πεπρωμένης οὐκ ἔστι θνητοῖς συμφορᾶς ἀπαλλαγὴ (mortals cannot be delivered from the misfortunes of their fate).
- c. δίκαιος. Honour expresses the sense that is meant: of being fair; capable of doing the decent thing; of dutifully observing ancestral customs. A reasonable alternative for 'honour' would thus be 'decency', both preferable to words such as 'just' and 'justice' which are not only too impersonal but have too many inappropriate modern connotations.
- d. νήπιος. Literal – 'young', 'uncultured' (i.e. un-schooled, un-educated in the ways of ancestral custom) – rather than metaphorical ('foolish', ignorant).

Theos. θεὸς. As with the Pœmandres tractate, I have opted for a transliteration, for the Biblical 'God' is not what is meant here, given the title of the tractate and the content, while the word 'god' (singular, lower case) now has certain connotations (some of which are theological) not always relevant to ancient Greek deities. In terms of *theos*, what is most probably meant here – cf. Hesiod's Theogony – is the, or a, prime, first, or primordial deity (such as Οὐρανός) from whence came-into-being the other Greek deities, including Zeus (cf. the use of πρῶτον by Plato in *Timeas*, 69b).

Thus, in respect of this tractate, I translate θεοὶ not as 'gods' but as 'deities' in the hope of providing a more balanced view of this particular ancient pagan text.

Physis. As in my translation of Pœmandres tractate I have given a transliteration to suggest, as I wrote there, "something more than what 'nature' or 'character' - of a thing or person - denotes. That is, to know what is real and apprehend the physis of those real things - νοῆσαι τὴν τοῦ τῶν φύσιν; to discern the physis, the true nature, of beings. That is, to have an understanding of ontology; for physis is a revealing, a manifestation, of not only the true nature of beings but also of the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being".

Occasionally I have capitalized physis, when the context merits it, such as when the physis of what we term Nature is meant or implied; or when - as here at the beginning - it is an attribute of theos.

τῶν ὄντων. What is real/what exists (Reality/Existence) - qv. the beginning of the Pœmandres tractate, and my commentary thereon.

νοῦς. *Perceivation*, not 'mind', qv. Pœmandres 2.

substance. ὕλη, the *materia* of 'things' and living beings - contrasted with οὐσία, essence. qv. Pœmandres 10.

sapientia. σοφία. qv. Pœmandres 29.

vigour. ἐνέργεια. In the sense of vitality and vigorous activity. See my note on ἡ εἰμαρμένη, Pœmandres 15.

incumbency. Often personified as Ἀνάγκης, the primordial goddess of incumbency; that is, of *wyrd*: of that which is beyond, and the origin of, what we often describe as our Fate as a mortal being. To render ἀνάγκη here somewhat blandly as 'necessity' is to miss both the subtle esotericism of an ἱερός λόγος and what Empedocles wrote:

ἔστιν Ἀνάγκης χρῆμα, θεῶν ψήφισμα παλαιόν,
αἰδίων, πλατέεσσι κατεσφρηγισμένον ὄρκοις·
εὖτέ τις ἀμπλακίησι φόνωι φίλα γυῖα μήνηι,
νείκεί θ' ὅς κε ἐπίορκον ἀμαρτήσας ἐπομόσσει,
δαίμονες οἷτε μακραίωνος λελάχασι βίοιο,
τρίς μιν μυρίας ὥρας ἀπὸ μακάρων ἀλάλησθαι,
φυομένους παντοῖα διὰ χρόνου εἶδεα θνητῶν
ἀργαλέας βιότοιο μεταλλάσσοντα κελεύθους.
αἰθέριον μὲν γάρ σφε μένος πόντονδε διώκει,
πόντος δ' ἐς χθονὸς οὐδας ἀπέπτυσε, γαῖα δ' ἐς αὐγὰς
ἡελίου φαέθοντος, ὃ δ' αἰθέρος ἔμβαλε δίναις·
ἄλλος δ' ἐξ ἄλλου δέχεται, στυγέουσι δὲ πάντες.
τῶν καὶ ἐγὼ νῦν εἰμι, φυγὰς θεόθεν καὶ ἀλήτης,
Νείκεϊ μαινομένωι πίσυνος.

There exists an insight by Ananke, an ancient resolution
Of the gods, immutable and sealed by vows,
Regarding when one of the daimons - those whose allotted portion of life is long -
Has their own hands stained from murder
Or who, once having sworn an oath, because of some feud breaks that oath.
For they shall for ten thousand tripled seasons wander away from the beautified,
Begotten during that period in all manner of mortal form
And exchanging during that voyage one vexation for another:

The fierce Ætherials chase them to the Sea,
The Sea spits them out onto dusty ground,
Gaia hurls them to the burning light of the Sun
Who flings them back to those swirling Ætherials.
Moved from one to the other, all detest them.

I am one of those, a vagabond in exile from the gods
Who has to rely on strongful Disagreement.

Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker, Diels-Kranz, B115

Notes:

νεῖκος (disagreement) is - according to what we can adduce of the philosophy of Empedocles from the fragments of his writings that we possess - a fundamental principle, and one understood in relation to another fundamental principle, Φιλότης, expressive as they both are of the logos (λόγος) by which we can possibly apprehend the workings of the cosmic order (κόσμος). However, the common translations - of 'strife' and 'love' respectively - do not in my view express what Empedocles seems to be trying to convey, which is 'disagreement' and 'fellowship' (a communal or kindred working-together in pursuit of a common interest or goal). For while disagreement sometimes disrupts fellowship, it is often necessary as the genesis of productive change.

Thus, just as Odysseus had to rely on the support of Athena, who disagreed with how Poseidon treated Odysseus, so does the 'vagabond in exile from the deities/the gods' have to rely on disagreements among the immortals to end their own exile.

Abyss. ἄβυσσος.

A delicate apprehending pneuma. πνεῦμα λεπτὸν νοερόν. In respect of νοερός, the sense here is not 'intelligent'/'intelligence' - as in "quickness or superiority of understanding, sagacity", etcetera - but rather of self-awareness; that is, of possessing a faculty to perceive, comprehend, and to rationally understand the external world. Which is why I have opted for 'apprehending'.

influence. δύναμις. Not here 'force' or 'power' per se but rather the influence arising from, inherent in, the numen by virtue of the numinosity of theos. The kind of influence which can nurture a 'delicate apprehending pneuma'.

Kaos. χάος.

numinous phaos. φῶς ἅγιον. Regarding the transliteration of φῶς - using the Homeric φάος (phaos) - see my commentary on Pœmandres 4; and regarding ἅγιος as 'numinous', rather than the conventional 'holy' or 'sacred', refer to the commentary on Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεὸς above, and especially the note on the duality of the numinous in pagan weltanschauungen in my commentary on Pœmandres 5.

beneath (that) sandy ground. ὑφ' ἄμμῳ. Regarding ἄμμος, qv. Xenophon, *Apomnemoneumata* 3.3.6 - πότερον ἐπάγειν τοὺς πολεμίους ἐπὶ τὴν ἄμμον κελεύσεις - for the reference, in context, seems to be to sandy ground or to sea marshes or, and perhaps more metaphorically, to waterlogged (boggy, unsuitable) land in general, and not necessarily (as some have theorized) to the sandy places and sand dunes in North Africa (such as in Egypt and Libya) as mentioned in Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica* 3.50.2, τὴν δὲ χροάν ἄμμῳ παραπλησίαν ἔχουσι.

It is possible that ἄμμος, in regard to the ἱερός λόγος recounted in this tractate, had some esoteric or metaphysical meaning, now lost.

flowing (as in fluidic). The sense of ὑγρός here and in Pœmandres 4.

essence. οὐσίας. qv. Pœmandres 14.

parsements. For στοιχεῖον. qv. Pœmandres 8.

Coagulated. πήγνυμι.

<particularize>. As in 'distinguish between'. The MSS have καταδιερῶσι. Various emendations have been proposed, including καταδιωρῶσι, while Wildberg has suggested that "and all of the deities..." - καὶ θεοὶ πάντες καταδιωρῶσι - was originally marginalia.

2.

With all beings unformed and not yet presenced. ἀδιορίστων δὲ ὄντων ἀπάντων καὶ ἀκατασκευάστων. An interesting phrase, with the English term 'presenced' perhaps expressing at least something of its philosophical implications derived as that term is from the noun 'presencing' (dating from c.1637) and meaning as it does "the action or process of making some-thing manifest and/or present and/or established." For, as the tractate goes to explain, what becomes formed and manifest are 'the seven-fold heavens' and deities, manifest as stars, within them.

In respect of ἀκατασκευάστων, while some commentators have pointed to Genesis 1:2 - ἡ δὲ γῆ ἦν ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος, 'and the Earth was unperceived and formless' - as a parallel, σκευαστῶν occurs in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (5.1013b) in reference to the classification of differences in

causation, such as whether or not something is 'manufactured', as in produced by an artisan (such as a statue, ἀνδριάς) or by some other means, and, regardless, πάντα ὅθεν ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς μεταβολῆς ἢ στάσεως. Interestingly, in his commentary on the Metaphysics, Thomas Aquinas wrote: "Apposuit autem cum insit, ad differentiam privationis et contrarii: nam statua quidem fit ex aere, quod inest statuae iam factae; fit etiam ex infigurato, quod quidem non inest statuae iam factae. Unde aes est causa statuae, non autem infiguratum, cum sit principium per accidens tantum" (Commentaria, *In libros Physicorum*, 2, Lectio 5).

Thus, there is initially a 'privation of form', unformed being, which is then formed - as a statue from unshaped bronze - by theos as artisan-creator, and thus a possible metaphysical parallel in Pœmandres, such as in 31: πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων... οὗ ἡ βουλὴ τελεῖται ἀπὸ τῶν ἰδίων δυνάμεων...ὁ λόγῳ συστησάμενος τὰ ὄντα [father of all beings...whose purpose is accomplished by his own arts...you who by logos form all being]. It is also interesting to compare all this with Plato's description in the Timaeus, 69b-c, in which his expression καὶ τῶν μὲν θεῶν αὐτὸς γίγνεται δημιουργός is noteworthy.

lightsome/burdensome. Used in preference to the less descriptive, ubiquitous, 'light' and 'heavy'. The whole passage is somewhat obscure, but if ἀποδιωρίσθη τὰ ἐλαφρὰ εἰς ὕψος was a metaphorical 'separating out' of what is 'light' from what is not light - rather than what is 'light' being somehow sent upwards, 'to the heights', or 'separated off upwards' - and, in particular, if ἀνακρεμασθέντων πνεύματι ὀχεῖσθαι was understood as referring to what - having been defined by, wrought in form through Fire, as bronze and iron are formed and shaped through fire - becomes elevated and conveyed by Pneuma, then philosophically it makes sense, especially given the Greek concept of the psyche (the immortal essence, or 'spirit') of sentient beings being conveyed through life and beyond (and presenced) by (or as) Pnuema, or by our mortal body (as mentioned by Plato).

seven spheres. qv. Pœmandres 9, 17, etcetera.

the outer revolving in the æther. The text is rather obscure, and one assumes 'the outer' refers to the outermost, the peripheral, sphere. Furthermore, I have here translated ἀήρ not as 'air' but as æther since ordinary, terrestrial, air is most certainly not what is meant and the ambiguous term æther (understood classically or otherwise) is suggestive of what may be meant. For whether ἀήρ here - as æther - refers to the fifth element as mentioned by Plato in *Epinomis* (981c) - πέντε οὖν ὄντων τῶν σωμάτων, πῦρ χρὴ φάναι καὶ ὕδωρ εἶναι καὶ τρίτον ἀέρα, τέταρτον δὲ γῆν, πέμπτον δὲ αἰθέρα - or whether it refers to a more mystical or esoteric, or hypothesized, substance that formed part of ἱεροὶ λόγοι, is an interesting question.

So that there came-into-being beasts four-footed. cf. Poemandres 11.

<Seeding within them> the semination of rebirth. τὸ σπέρμα τῆς παλιγγενεσίας ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἐσπερμολόγουν. Although the text is obscure and has been variously emended by Reitzenstein, Nock, et al, the presumption is that this rebirth - or, alternatively, and more probably, this 'regeneration through offspring' - refers either to the deities themselves or (more probably) to the previously described living things which the deities brought-into-being.

My view is that what seems to be suggested by the text is that the deities seeded within living beings (human, animal, and otherwise) the ability to regenerate through offspring.

Thus can the offspring of mortals apprehend the works of theos. There is an interesting parallel here with some Quranic ayat, such as:

"The creations in Heaven and Earth, the very change of Night to Day, are Signs [from Allah] for those gifted with understanding, those who whether sitting, standing or reclining on their sides, give praise to Allah and who frequently recall those creations in Heaven and Earth." 3:189-191 Interpretation of Meaning

mortals should husband all that is below the heavens. I take the sense of δεσποτεία here - given what precedes and what follows - to suggest husbandry (of Earth) rather than to mean power in the sense of mastery (as in over a slave).

appreciate honour. Given the context - mortals, theos, deities, physis - I take the meaning of ἀγαθός here to refer to what is personal, not to some abstract concept of 'good'. Hence the personal virtue of honour; to behaving, to living, in a noble, a valourous, way, as opposed to being dishonourable or cowardly; a contrast mentioned in the Iliad, Book 17, 631-2: τῶν μὲν γὰρ πάντων βέλε' ἄπτεται ὅς τις ἀφήῃ ἢ κακὸς ἢ ἀγαθός [whether hurled by someone honourable or dishonourable, all of the missiles still strike their target].

The personal sense of ἀγαθός here also has the virtue of making what follows, at the end of section 3 - γινῶναι ἀγαθῶν καὶ φαύλων καὶ πᾶσαν ἀγαθῶν δαιδαλουργίαν εὐρεῖν - somewhat more understandable. Hence, a discovery or a learning of "all the arts of honour" in contrast to discovering "every artful workmanship of good things".

propagate by propagation and spawn by spawning. qv. Poemandres 18.

a living witness of physis. The sense of ἐνεργοῦσαν here is poetically metaphysical, not literal. Hence a "living witness of physis" rather than an 'active' or 'working' one. An alternative would be 'presenced', suggested by Aristotle's Metaphysics: ἐπεὶ δὲ περὶ τῆς κατὰ κίνησιν λεγομένης δυνάμεως

εἴρηται περὶ ἐνεργείας διορίσωμεν τί τέ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐνέργεια καὶ ποῖόν τι... ἔστι δὴ ἐνέργεια τὸ ὑπάρχειν τὸ πρᾶγμα μὴ οὕτως ὥσπερ λέγομεν δυνάμει. (1048a)

with every psyche, embodied in flesh. The text following this is (to the end of the tractate) is often so obscure (or corrupted) that any interpretation is tentative. Wildberg's suggestion that διὰ δρομήματος θεῶν ἐγκυκλίων τερασπορίας...καὶ φύσεως ἐνεργείας is marginalia, while interesting, does little to alleviate the obscurity of this part of the text.

mirificence. This rather neglected English word - from the post-classical Latin word mirificentia: the action or the fact of doing what is or appears to be wondrous, portentous - in my view expresses the meaning implicit in διὰ δρομήματος θεῶν ἐγκυκλίων τερασπορίας εἰς κατοπτεῖαν οὐρανοῦ somewhat better than such turns of phrase as "the wonder-working course of..," or "by portent-sowings of the course of..."

presenced. qv. the previous note on ἐνεργοῦσαν.

understand divine influence as wyrdful change. γνῶσιν θείας δυνάμεως μοίρης ὀχλουμένης. This exceptionally obscure Greek phrase has been interpreted in a variety of ways, with my interpretation just one among many. 'Wyrd' rather than 'fate', given how the term 'fate' has acquired contemporary meanings not relevant here.

all the arts of honour. Less poetically, more literally, "the skills of all the honourable arts".

4.

As is - by circumferent deities coursing - wyrdful. This is open to three different interpretations, as perhaps was intended. First, that it is the deities themselves who determine the wyrd of mortals. Second, that a person's wyrd can be discovered - learned, possibly predicted - by astrological means; that is, by understanding the movement of the planets and the stars associated with the deities since the "deities are represented in the arrangements of the stars". Third, given the septenary nature of the deities - for "the heavens are perceivable in seven spheres" - one's wyrd can be discovered by an esoteric and septenary anados as described in the Pœmandres tractate.

artialized. From verb artize - qv. 'artisements' below - and meaning here produced or constructed by an artisan or skilled craftsman.

which the passing of the seasons will fade. Not χρόνος as some abstract 'time' measured by some human manufactured mechanism such as a clock (a relatively recent concept, in terms of aeonic ἱεροὶ λόγοι), but rather measured by the passing of the seasons, as determined - for example - by the appearance and the disappearance in the night sky of certain constellations and stars:

θεοὺς μὲν αἰτῶ τῶνδ' ἀπαλλαγὴν πόνων
φρουρᾶς ἐτείας μῆκος, ἣν κοιμώμενος
στέγαις Ἀτρειδῶν ἄγκαθεν, κυνὸς δίκην,
ἄστρον κάτοιδα νυκτέρων ὁμήγυριν,
καὶ τοὺς φέροντας χειῖμα καὶ θέρος βροτοῖς
λαμπροὺς δυνάστας, ἐμπρέποντας αἰθέρι
ἀστέρας, ὅταν φθίνωσιν, ἀντολὰς τε τῶν.

Again I have asked the gods to deliver me from this toil,
This vigil a year in length, where I repose
On Atreidae's roof on my arms, as is the custom with dogs
Looking toward the nightly assembly of constellations
And they who bring to mortals the storm-season and the summer:
Those radiant sovereigns, distinguished in the heavens
As stars when they come forth or pass away.

(Agamemnon, 1-7)

artisements. The products of the skilled work of the artisan and the artist; their artisanship; cf. the 16th century English verb *artize*: to exercise a skill, to pursue a skilled occupation such as that of an artisan.

the circumferent coursing of Physis. Given the context, I have - as at the beginning of the text - capitalized *physis* here.

mixon. Alternate (old) spelling of *mixture*, meaning the condition or state of being mixed, melded, compounded, combined.

Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἢ μονάς

Chaldron Or Monas

Tractate IV

Introduction

The title given to the fourth tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἢ μονάς, requires some consideration if it is to be translated without using English words that have, in the centuries since the text was written, acquired meanings which are not or which may not be relevant to or representative of the metaphysics, and the cosmogony, of such an ancient text; with an injudicious choice of words more often than not resulting in the modern reader projecting certain interpretations upon the text, as might be the case in translating, without some comment, κρατῆρ as 'basin', cup, or 'mixing bowl', μονάς as 'monad', and Τάτ as Thoth.

In respect of κρατῆρ, a more appropriate - and certainly more subtle - translation, given the esoteric nature and antiquity of the text, would be chaldron (an alternative spelling of 'cauldron'), since basin, cup, and 'mixing bowl' are not only too prosaic but also do not conjure the appropriate archetypal imagery: of the primal artisan-creator coagulating and mixing primal substances - cf. tractate III, Ἰερός Λόγος - to produce, to bring-into-being by means of Logos, the cosmic order and thence mortal beings.

In respect of μονάς, the transliteration monas would be more appropriate - and certainly more subtle - than 'monad' given that the term monad is now so often associated with such weltanschauungen as those termed Pythagorean/neo-Pythagorean and Gnostic, an association which may or may not be relevant here. Furthermore, monas has a long and interesting esoteric usage, including (somewhat recently) by John Dee in his *Testamentum Johannis Dee Philosophi*

summi ad Johannem Gwynn, transmissum 1568 - a text included (on page 334) in Elias Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum, Containing Severall Poeticall Pieces of our Famous English philosophers, who have written the Hermetique Mysteries in their owne Ancient Language*, published in London in 1652 - who wrote "our Monas trewe thus use by natures Law, both binde and lewse", and who also entitled one of his works *Monas Hieroglyphica* (Antwerp, 1564), in which work he described (in Theorem XVIII) a septenary system somewhat similar to that of the Poemandres tractate:

In respect of Τάτ, while there is no disputing that Thoth is meant, what may or may not be implied by the name Thoth is whether or not there is a primarily Egyptian genesis for the metaphysics and the cosmogony of this particular tractate. For what does 'Egyptian' mean in the context of the Corpus Hermeticum, written when Egypt was a post-Ptolemaic Roman province where Hellenism still thrived? That is, is the text propounding a metaphysics and a cosmogony primarily redolent of indigenous, pre-Alexandrian, times, with Hermes Trismegistus simply a Hellenic name for the ancient Dynastic deity Thoth, and thus with the Greek Hermes possibly being a son of that ancient Egyptian deity? Or is the text redolent of a classical metaphysics and a cosmogony; or of a Hellenic metaphysics and cosmogony; or of some syncretism of Egyptian (pre-Alexandrian) weltanschauungen with Hellenic mysticism? Or has the author (or authors) of Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς simply used the name of an ancient deity - Thoth - in order to appeal to an audience of Hellenized Egyptians, or Greeks/Romans dwelling in Egypt, or because it seemed to add some esoteric gravitas to the text? Or, as the title might be taken to imply - of Hermes to Thoth - is it a text intended to inform Egyptians (Hellenized or expatriate Greeks/Romans, or otherwise) about Greek/Hellenic metaphysics and cosmogony, with Thoth thus regarded, symbolically, esoterically, or otherwise, as the son of the Greek divinity Hermes?

In this matter, I incline toward the view - based on some forty years of study of the Corpus Hermeticum and similar mystical and esoteric texts, classical, Hellenic, medieval, Arabic and otherwise - that what is imparted in this tractate, as with the Poemandres and Ἱερός Λόγος, is primarily a mystical, and - for centuries - aural, Greek tradition, albeit one possibly influenced, over time and in some degree, by the metaphysical speculations of later philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle. That is, that in Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς and Ἱερός Λόγος and Ποιμάνδρης, we have an intimation of the metaphysics and the cosmogony taught to initiates of that (or those) ancient and aural and paganus Greek mystical tradition(s) mentioned by writers such as Herodotus. And an intimation that is not - a few borrowed illustrative terms notwithstanding - in any significant and metaphysical manner deriving from or influenced by Biblical stories or by early Christian theology or by indigenous Egyptian culture. In the matter of a paganus Greek mystical tradition, the opening of the fourth tractate is, metaphysically, very interesting:

Ἐπειδὴ τὸν πάντα κόσμον ἐποίησεν ὁ δημιουργός οὐ χερσὶν ἀλλὰ
λόγῳ ὥστε οὕτως ὑπολάμβανε ὡς τοῦ παρόντος καὶ ἀεὶ ὄντος καὶ
πάντα ποιήσαντος καὶ ἑνὸς μόνου τῇ δὲ αὐτοῦ θελήσει
δημιουργήσαντος τὰ ὄντα

Because the artisan crafted the complete cosmic order not by hand but through
Logos, you should understand that Being as presential, as eternal, as having crafted
all being, as One only, who by thelesis formed all that is.

For it is incorrect and misleading to write about those three tractates - and
some other tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum - as being in any way
indigenously Egyptian. Rather, their genesis - the tradition they represented -
was the Greek culture of post-Alexandrian Egypt, a cultural influence so evident
in the numerous papyri found in places such as Oxyrhynchus, containing as
such papyri do verses from Homer, Sappho, Menander, Sophocles, and other
Greek authors.

Commentary, Translation, and Text

The references in the commentary here to the *Pœmandres* and Ἱερός Λόγος are
to my translations of and commentary on those texts for, as I mentioned in my
Ἱερός Λόγος,

I have retained the transliterations, and some of the English phrases,
used and explained there, such as physis, phaos, theos. I have also, as
there, occasionally used some particular, or some quite obscure
English words - or forms of them - in order to try and elucidate the
meaning of the text or to avoid using, in what is a metaphysical text,
some commonplace term with various connotations (contemporary or
otherwise) that may lead to a misunderstanding of the text. I have
endeavoured to explain such obscure words in the commentary. There
is thus in this translation, as in my translation of *Pœmandres*, a
certain technical - or rather, esoteric - vocabulary.

As with my Ἱερός Λόγος, I have here, purely for readability, arranged the
translation into (non-poetic) verses rather than long paragraphs. All translations
in the commentary are mine.

Translation

[1] Because the artisan crafted the complete cosmic order not by hand but through Logos
You should understand that Being as presential, as eternal, as having crafted all being,
As One only, who by thelesis formed all that is.

That Being has no body that can be touched or seen or measured or which is separable
Or which is similar to any other body: not of Fire or Water or of Pneuma
Even though all such things are from that Being.
Since that Being is honourable, the desire was to entrust solely to that Being
Such a cosmic order on Earth:

[2] A cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings,
For just as the ever-living cosmic order had an advantage over them
So did they have an advantage over other living beings in their cosmos
Because of Logos and Perceiverance.
Thus did mortals perceive the works of theos, admire them,
Gaining knowledge of their creator.

[3] Thus, Thoth, to all mortals logos was assigned, but not perceiverance
Even though there was no ill-will, for such ill-will arrives not from there
But below, associated with mortals whose Psyche does not convey Perceiverance.

On account of what, father, did theos not assign perceiverance to all?

Son, the desire was to position it half-way between those psyches, as a reward.

[4] Where, then, was it placed?

In that large repleteful chaldron which was dispatched down
With an envoy assigned to declaim to the hearts of mortals:
If you have strength enough, immerse yourself in the chaldron
Should you accept you can ascend -
Having discovered how you came-into-being -
To the one who dispatched down that chaldron.

The many who understood that declaration and were immersive with perceiveration
Gained a certain knowledge, becoming more complete mortals
Through having received the perceiveration
While the many who misunderstood that declaration,
Having logos without the addition of perceiveration,
Are unperceptive regarding how and why they came-into-being.

[5] For they have the alertness similar to that of unthinking animals
And, having an angry and restive disposition,
Have no respect for what is really valuable
But instead follow bodily pleasures and their own desires
Confident as they are that mortals were born for such things.

And yet, Thoth, those who partake to that gift from theos become,
When set against their deeds, immortal instead of mortal

For they with their perceivance apprehend the Earthly, the Heavenly,
And what is beyond the Heavens.
Having gone so far, they perceive what is honourable, and, having so perceived,
They regard what preceded this as a delay, as a problem
And, with little regard for whatever is embodied and disembodied,
They strive toward the Monas.

[6] This, Thoth, is the episteme of perceivance,
Of <considering the divine> and of understanding divinity,
For the chaldron is numinous.

Father, I also desire to be so immersed.

My son, primarily, unless you have a prejudice about the body
You cannot have affection for yourself, and when you have affection for yourself
You can acquire perceivance and, having perceivance,
You can participate in episteme.

Can you, father, explain that?

It is not possible, my son, to be of both the deathful and the divine.
For there are two kinds of existents, the bodily and the non-bodily,
Perceived as deathful and divine; a choice of one or of the other
Should there be a desire to do so. It cannot be both
With the decline of one uncovering the reality of the other.

[7] By choosing the higher not only is there a good ending - the apotheosis of the mortal -
For the one who chooses but also a numinous awareness of theos,
While, if the lower, although it has been the ruination of mortals
It is no termination against theos
But rather something garish that passes by amid us yet is unaffectionate
Even if an impediment to others
Just as those others are garishly worldly
Having been influenced by bodily pleasures.

[8] Because of this, then - Thoth - what is from theos can be and has been ours
So let what accompanies us be that now instead of later.
For it is we who select dishonour rather than honour
With theos blameless in this.
Do you, my son, apprehend how many celestial bodies we have to traverse -
How many groups of Daimons and sequential constellations -
So that we hasten to the Monas.

For the honourable is unpassable, without limit, and unending
Even though to us its origin appears to be the knowledge.

[9] But even though such knowledge is not the origin of it
It yields to us the origin of our knowing.
Thus should we apprehend such an origin and hasten upon our journey
For it is not easy to abandon what we have become accustomed to
And go back to what is elden and in the past.

What is apparent can please us while what is concealed can cause doubt
With what is bad often overt while the honourable is often concealed
Having as it has neither pattern nor guise.

Which is why it is akin to itself but different from everything else
For it is not possible for what is disembodied to be overtly embodied.

[10] This is the distinction between what is akin and what is different
With what is different having a privation of what is akin.

Since the Monas is the origin and foundation of everything
It is within everything as origin and foundation
For if there is no origin there is nothing
And the origin is not from anything but itself
Since it is the origin of everything else,
Just as the Monas, since it is the origin, enfolds every arithmos
Without itself being enfolded by any,
Begetting every arithmos but not begotten by any:

[11] Everything that is begotten is unfinished, partible,
Liable to decline, resurgence
Which do not befall what is complete
For what is resurgent is resurgence from Monas
But what is brought low is so by its own malady
Because unable to hold Monas.

This, then, Thoth, is the eikon of the theos
Insofar as it can be drawn:
If you - clearly, carefully - and with the eyes of your heart apprehend it
Then I assure you, my son, that you shall find the path to what is above:
In truth, the eikon will guide you
Since the seeing of it is uniquely your own,
For those who attain such a beholding are attentively held, pulled up,
Just as it is said lodestone does with iron.

Commentary

1.

artisan. δημιουργόν. See Poemandres 9. The theme of an artisan-creator, and their artisements, is common to the third tractate (Ἰερός Λόγος) as well. That the tractate begins by using the term artisan, rather than theos, is perhaps significant.

that Being. The conventional and grammatical interpretation is "you should understand *him* as..." although how such a human-type gender could be adduced from or manifest by how the 'body' of the artisan-creator is described in subsequent verses is an interesting and relevant metaphysical question.

Can, or should, a 'body' that cannot be touched, that cannot be seen, that

cannot be measured, that is not separable - οὐδὲ διαστατόν - and thus which is not conventionally 'human', be described as male? It is to suggest such metaphysical questions (and the limitations of ordinary language in describing and answering such metaphysical questions) that I have here departed from convention and used 'that Being' instead of 'him'. The term 'Being' also has the advantage that it avoids the gender bias implicit in translating θεός as 'god' given that 'god/God' implies a male entity.

There is also an interesting and perhaps relevant mention, in the second tractate of the Corpus, of the one, the being, who - like an artisan - constructs things: ὁ οὖν θεός <τὸ> ἀγαθόν, καὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ὁ θεός. ἡ δὲ ἑτέρα προσηγορία ἐστὶν ἡ τοῦ πατρός, πάλιν διὰ τὸ ποιητικὸν πάντων. πατὴρ γὰρ τὸ ποιεῖν. (Thus theos is the noble and the noble is theos, although another title is that of father because the artifex of all being. For it is of a father to construct.)

However, in terms of gender and Hellenic mythos and metaphysics, it is sometimes overlooked that Γαῖα, Earth Mother, in one of the Homeric hymns, Εἷς Γῆν Μητέρα Πάντων, is described as πρέσβιστος: the elder among beings, and the mother of the gods, θεῶν μήτηρ. Thus, while it might be of "a father to construct" it is "of a mother to bring forth life", to give birth to beings, including the gods themselves.

presential. πάρειμι. Presential - from the classical Latin praesentia - means "having or implying actual presence", as manifesting (as being presenced) in a locality or with an individual, and is thus more apposite here than the rather bland word 'present'. Cf. the use of 'presenced' in ἱερός Λόγος 2, et sequentia.

One only. ἐνὸς μόνου. A formulaic mystic phrase, implying uniqueness. Cf. ordinary usage in Plato, *Crito* 47, ἢ ἐνὸς μόνου ἐκείνου [...] ἐνὸς μόνου.

thelesis. θέλησις. Given what follows - τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστὶ τὸ σῶμα ἐκείνου, οὐχ ἄπτόν, οὐδὲ ὀρατόν, οὐδὲ μετρητόν, οὐδὲ διαστατόν - a transliteration to suggest something other than a human type 'will' or 'desire'; such as 'disposition'. That is, Being (whatsoever of whomsoever Being is, in terms of gender and otherwise) is predisposed to craft - to presence - being as beings: as immortals (deities), as mortals (humans) and otherwise, qv. ἱερός Λόγος, Poemandres 8 ff, and Poemandres 31: οὐ ἡ βουλὴ τελεῖται ἀπὸ τῶν ιδίων δυνάμεων (whose purpose is accomplished by his own arts).

formed. As an artisan forms their artisements, and thus manifests their skill, their artistry, in what they produce. That is, the artisan-creator has formed, crafted, being (all existence) as beings.

(not) *separable*. οὐδὲ διαστατόν. What is not meant is 'dimension', given what the term 'dimension' now imputes scientifically and otherwise.

Pneuma. πνεῦμα. A transliteration for reasons explained in my commentary on

the text of Poemandres 5:

given that the English alternatives - such as 'spirit' or 'breath' - not only do not always describe what the Greek implies but also suggest things not always or not necessarily in keeping with the Hellenic nature of the text. This particular transliteration has a long history in English, dating back to 1559 CE. In 1918, DeWitt Burton published a monograph - listing, with quotations, the various senses of πνεῦμα - entitled *Spirit, Soul, and Flesh: The Usage of Πνεῦμα, Ψυχή, and Σάρξ in Greek Writings and Translated Works from the Earliest Period to 225 AD* (University of Chicago Press, 1918).

I incline toward the view that πνεῦμα here - like λόγος - does not necessarily imply something theological (in the Christian sense or otherwise) but rather suggests an alternative, more personal, weltanschauung that, being a weltanschauung, is undoctinal and subtle, and which weltanschauung is redolent of Hellenic culture. Subtle and undoctinal in the way that early alchemical texts are subtle and undoctinal and try to express, or hint at (however obscurely to us, now), a weltanschauung, and one which is more paganus than Christian.

Even though all such things are from that Being. ἀλλὰ πάντα ἀπ' αὐτοῦ. Literally, 'even though all are from that'. One therefore might understand it to imply 'even though all beings/things are from that Being.'

honourable. ἀγαθός. qv. Poemandres 22, where I referenced a quotation from the Corpus Aristotelicum:

τῆς δὲ φρονήσεώς ἐστι τὸ βουλευσασθαι, τὸ κρῖναι τὰ ἀγαθὰ καὶ τὰ κακὰ καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν τῷ βίῳ αἰρετὰ καὶ φευκτά, τὸ χρῆσθαι πᾶσι καλῶς τοῖς ὑπάρχουσιν ἀγαθοῖς, τὸ ὁμιλῆσαι ὀρθῶς [De Virtutibus et Vitiis Libellus 1250a]

It is part of wisdom to accept advice, to distinguish the honourable, the dishonourable, and all that is, in life, acceptable or to be avoided; to fairly use all resources; to be genuine in company.

Honourable - noble - rather than some abstract or dogmatically defined 'good'. That is, the Hellenic distinction is between good (honourable) personal character and bad (dishonourable) personal character rather than - as for example in Christianity - referencing some abstract, or God-given or dogmatically (Church) defined 'good'.

entrust solely to. I follow the MSS, which have μόνῳ, with οὐ μόνῳ being a fairly recently emendation which completely changes the meaning.

orderly arrangement. κοσμέω. In esoteric terms, a presencing, on Earth, of the cosmic order itself, qv. Poemandres 8: "having comprehended the logos and having seen the beauty of the cosmic order, re-presented it..."

Regarding 'presencing', qv. my translation of and commentary on section two of the third tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, Ιερός Λόγος:

ἀδιορίστων δὲ ὄντων ἀπάντων καὶ ἀκατασκευάστων.

With all beings unformed and not yet presenced.

2.

a cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings. κόσμον δὲ θείου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον. That is, human beings re-present, presence, the 'divine body' and are, of themselves, a reflection of the cosmic order itself. This, and the preceding line, express a fundamental part of ancient and Renaissance hermeticism: human beings as a microcosm of the cosmic order and the divine.

Hence why the twenty-sixth chapter of the book *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda* by Marsilii Ficini (published in 1489 CE) has as its heading:

Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona.

How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned.

Also, in respect of ἄνθρωπος I have used here - as in my Poemandres - the gender neutral 'human being' instead of the more usual 'man', and also - as there - occasionally used the term 'mortal' when the context suggests it.

Regarding 'the cosmic order' (κόσμος) itself qv. Poemandres 7; 14, and Ιερός Λόγος 4:

The divine is all of that mexion: renewance of the cosmic order through Physis
For Physis is presenced in the divine.

a deathful life and yet a deathless life. This (including the borrowing of the terms deathful and deathless, in juxtaposition, from Chapman) is explained in section 14 of the Poemandres tractate:

θυητὸς μὲν διὰ τὸ σῶμα, ἀθάνατος δὲ διὰ τὸν οὐσιώδη ἄνθρωπον.

deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal.

Logos and Perceiverance. In my commentary on the Poemandres tractate I have explained my reasons for transliterating (and sometimes capitalizing) λόγος as logos (qv. the commentary on section 5) - rather than as 'Word' or 'Speech' - and for translating νοῦς as perceiverance/perceiveration rather than as the conventional 'mind' (see for example the commentary on sections 2 and 10). Refer also to comments there regarding terms such as pneumatic logos (πνευματικὸν λόγον), phasmal logos (φωτεινὸς λόγος) and θεοῦ λόγος.

Here Logos suggests 'reasoning', with perceiverance having its usual sense of 'awareness', of comprehending what is perceived, as for example, in being able to rationally or intuitively assess a situation, a person, or persons. As with (and for example) Logos, Psyche, and Physis, perceiverance - capitalized as Perceiverance - can also be personified and thus regarded as a fundamental quality germane to the life of deathful mortals.

3.

whose Psyche does not convey Perceiverance. It is possible to see in this an esoteric allusion to psyche personified, especially given what follows: τοῦτον ἐν μέσῳ ταῖς ψυχαῖς ὥσπερ ἄθλον ἰδρυῖσθαι. In ancient mythology - such as the ancient myth of Psyche and Eros, retold by Apuleius in his *Metamorphoses*, which was written around the same time as this Hermetic tractate, and which story also involves Hermes - Psyche initially lacked perceiverance but through striving to succeed in the trials given to her by Aphrodite she acquires it.

Hence why here I have personified both psyche and perceiverance. I have also transliterated ψυχή so as, as I noted in my Poemandres, to not impose a particular meaning on the text. For whether what is meant is anima mundi, or the ancient pagan sense of the 'spark' - the source, or breath - of life, or what we now denote by the terms 'soul' and 'spirit', is open to debate, especially as the terms soul and spirit possess much later and modern connotations that may not be relevant to such an ancient text. Connotations such as suggesting the incorporeal, or immaterial being, as distinct from body or matter; or the Christian concept of the soul.

As an illustration of matters of interpretation, two subtly different senses of ψυχή are evident in the Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles:

τῶνδε γὰρ πλέον φέρω
τὸ πένθος ἢ καὶ τῆς ἐμῆς ψυχῆς πέρι.

For my concern for their suffering

Is more than even that for my own psyche.

vv.93-4

ἀλλά μοι δυσμόρῳ γὰρ φθινὰς
τρύχει ψυχάν, τάδ' εἰ κακοῖς κακὰ
προσάψει τοῖς πάλαι τὰ πρὸς σφῶν.

But ill-fated would be my breath of life - which the decay in this soil
Already wears down - if to those troubles of old
There was joined this trouble between you and him.

vv.665-667

In respect of ψυχή, the Hermetic text here implies that ill-will is associated with those whose nature is such that they lack the ability to rationally or intuitively assess and comprehend a situation or other people.

father. ὦ πάτερ is a traditional way of showing respect for an elder, in this case of Thoth for Hermes.

position it half-way between those psyches, as a reward. Thus, while Logos is a gift to all mortals from theos, Perceiverance is not and has to be earned, striven for, as an athlete has to strive to earn a prize. [The English word athlete is related to the Greek word used here - ἄθλον - via the Greek ἀθλητής and thence the classical Latin athleta.]

chaldron. κρατῆρ. See the Introduction.

envoy. While the conventional translation here of κῆρυξ is 'herald', I consider it unsatisfactory given what that English term now often denotes: either the type of herald familiar from the New Testament or the herald of medieval literature and stories (qv. Morte Arthure, and The Knights Tale by Chaucer). Given the Greco-Roman context (Hermes, Thoth) and classical antecedents (such as Hermes as the protector of mortal envoys and messengers) then 'envoy' is more accurate especially given that this is an envoy from the artisan-creator assigned to impart information to mortals.

Ascend to the one [...] how you came-into-being. There are similarities here to the Poemandres tractate in relation to the anados - the journey up through the spheres (Poemandres 24) toward theos - and the desire "to apprehend the physis of beings" (Poemandres 3).

and were immersive with perceiveration. καὶ ἐβαπτίσαντο τοῦ νοός. That is, were or became characterized by having become immersed with - suffused by -

perceivation.

Here, as elsewhere the understanding of νοῦς as perceivance/perceivation rather than as 'mind' makes the text understandable: for the mortals became suffused with a particular (and, for most, probably a new type of) perception, a new way of seeing the world, themselves, and other mortals, and thus acquire a particular type of knowing, whereas an expression such as "immersed themselves with mind" is obscure to the point of being either unintelligible or requiring a long discourse on the nature of "mind" based as such discourses invariably are on certain philosophical assumptions.

The sense of acquiring a new way of seeing the world, themselves, and other mortals is evident in the text that follows: οὔτοι μετέσχον τῆς γνώσεως (gained, acquired, partook of, a knowing).

more complete mortals. The sense of τέλειος here is not that of being 'perfect' but rather of being 'entire', more completed, 'more rounded', than others. Thus there is no sense of "perfect people" or "perfect humans" - with implied moral, and other, superiority - but rather of those who, having a different perception of things to most others, were akin to initiates of a mystical or an esoteric tradition: apart from others because of that particular knowledge that their new, initiated, perception, has brought, but still mortal. This sense is evident in the text that follows: τὸν νοῦν δεξάμενοι.

received the perceivation. It is possible that this is an allusion to 'the perceivance' - the gnosis - that initiates of a particular mystic or esoteric tradition acquire when certain esoteric, mystic, knowledge is imparted to them.

4.

declaim to the hearts of mortals. A figurative usage of 'heart', referring here as often elsewhere in Greek and Hellenic culture to the feelings, the emotions (qv. Iliad, Book IX, 646 and The Odyssey, Book XVII, 489) as well as to the ethos, the nature, and the understanding, of the individual.

See also "with the eyes of the heart" in section 11.

5.

alertness. αἴσθησις. For which see Poemandres 1. The sense is that they are always alert, and - like animals - react instinctively because they lack the objective awareness that perceivance (νοῦς) brings and which objective awareness (of themselves and others) makes mortals into complete human beings.

Confident. Given the context, πιστεύω here suggests 'confidence' rather than 'belief'; for this is the arrogant instinctive confidence of those who lack

perceiverance and who have no firm belief in anything other than their own bodily pleasure and fulfilling their desires and who thus reject - or who cannot intuit - the numinous perspective of the divine, a perspective which would reveal the possibility of immortality.

parten to that gift [...] when set against their deeds. The text suggests that the gift of immortality which theos gives is freely bestowed among those whose deeds reveal that they have understood what the chaldron is and does, with the fourteenth century English word parten [to have something in common with something or someone else] expressing the meaning here of the Greek μετέχω.

apprehend the Earthly, the Heavenly, and what is beyond the Heavens. An alternative - following the Latin version of the text - omnia complexi sua mente, et terrena et caelestia et si quid est supra caelum - would be "apprehend the terran, the celestial, and what is beyond the celestial."

(as a) problem. The context suggests that what is meant is that life before "having so perceived" was a problem, not that it was a 'misfortune' or a calamity. A problem - a challenge - to overcome, which challenge they accepted leading to them gaining the prize, for theos had positioned that prize "half-way between those psyches, as a reward."

The same sense in respect of συμφορά is apparent in Oedipus Tyrannus by Sophocles:

θεοῖσι μὲν νυν οὐκ ἰσούμενόν σ' ἐγὼ
οὐδ' οἶδε παῖδες ἐζόμεσθ' ἐφέστιοι,
ἀνδρῶν δὲ πρῶτον ἔν τε συμφοραῖς βίου
κρίνοντες ἔν τε δαιμόνων συναλλαγαῖς

Not as an equal of the gods do I,
And these children who sit by your altar, behold you -
But as the prime man in our problems of life
And in our dealings and agreements with daimons.

vv. 31-34

disembodied. ἀσώματος - etymologically, a privation of σωματικός - occurs in works by Aristotle and, perhaps more relevant here, in writers such as Iamblichus who in De Mysteriis, V, 16 writes in general terms about the body in relation to offering to the gods and daimons that which, or those things which, might free the body from ailments and bring health, and the necessity in such matters as offerings of not considering the body in either non-bodily or noetic terms:

τότε δὴ οὖν οὐ δῆπου νοερῶς καὶ ἀσωμάτως τὸ σῶμα

μεταχειριζόμεθα· οὐ γὰρ πέφυκε τῶν τοιούτων τρόπων τὸ σῶμα
μετέχειν· τῶν δὲ συγγενῶν ἑαυτῷ μεταλαγχάνον, σώμασι σῶμα
θεραπεύεται τε καὶ ἀποκαθαίρεται.

Thus the sense of καταφρονήσαντες πάντων τῶν σωματικῶν καὶ ἄσωμάτων ἐπὶ τὸ ἓν seems to be that what is important is a striving for the monas not a noetic concern for the difference between whatever is embodied and whatever is considered disembodied.

Monas. μονάς. A transliteration since it here does not necessarily, as I noted in the Introduction, signify "The One, The Only" (τὸ ἓν) of such weltanschauungen as those termed Pythagorean, neo-Pythagorean, or Gnostic; or 'the one God' of religious monotheisms such as Christianity.

6.

episteme. A transliteration of ἐπιστήμη, which could be - and has been - accented thus: épistémé. The meaning is 'a way', or a means or a method, by which something can be known, understood, and appreciated. In this case, perceivation, which the artisan-creator has positioned "half-way between psyches, as a reward."

Episteme, therefore, should be considered a technical, esoteric, term associated with some of the weltanschauungen that are described in the Corpus Hermeticum. Thus, in the Poemandres tractate, the anados through the seven spheres is an episteme.

considering the divine. The MSS have ἐντοπία and various emendations, recent and otherwise, have been proposed including ἐντοπία and ιστορία. Interestingly, the Renaissance Latin text published in 1554 has, for the line, 'scientia mentis est diuinorum contemplatio & intelligentia dei, diuino existente cratere' with Parthey's 1854 edition reading 'mentis scientia, diuinorum inspectio et dei comprehensio, quia diuinus est crater.'

I am inclined toward ιστορία, which conveys the sense here of considering, of obtaining information about - of contemplating - divinity, the numinous, and thus the relation of mortals to divinity. A sense which fits well with the following καὶ ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ κατανόησις.

For the chaldron is numinous. θείου ὄντος τοῦ κρατῆρος. For θεῖος here I have opted for the English word numinous (dating from 1647 and from the classical Latin term numen) to express the sense of inclusion - of/from the divinity and of itself being divine - that the word 'divine' by itself does not, particularly given the previous "considering the divine and of understanding divinity."

Primarily, unless you have a prejudice about the body. Ἐὰν μὴ πρῶτον τὸ σῶμά σου μισήσης. To always - regardless of textual context and milieu - translate

μισέω/μῖσος as "hate" is or can be misleading, given how the English word hate implies (and is understood as meaning) an extreme personal emotion, an intense personal aversion to something, and also a certain malevolence. Consider, for example, the following from Thucydides:

ἀπὸ τούτου τε πρῶτον Περδίκκας Βρασίδαν τε πολέμιον ἐνόμισε καὶ ἐς τὸ λοιπὸν Πελοποννησίων τῇ μὲν γνώμῃ δι' Ἀθηναίους οὐ ζύνηθες μῖσος εἶχε, τῶν δὲ ἀναγκαίων ξυμφόρων διαναστὰς ἔπρασσε ὅτῳ τρόπῳ τάχιστα τοῖς μὲν ξυμβήσεται, τῶν δὲ ἀπαλλάξεται. (4.128)

His reaching an agreement with the Peloponnesians while at the same time still being determined to be rid of his foe does not imply an implacable, intense, personal hatred in the first place, but rather a generalized dislike (in this case just a certain prejudice) of the kind that can be dispensed with if it is personally - or strategically - advantageous to do so. Thus to translate the relevant part as "it was then that Perdiccas first considered Brasidas his foe and felt a prejudice toward the Peloponnesians" seems apt, especially given the qualification mentioned in the text: τῇ μὲν γνώμῃ δι' Ἀθηναίους.

The preference for the metaphysical, for striving for immortality and for understanding the numinous, that this tractate describes is not, as some have assumed, an ascetic "hatred" of the physical body. Instead, it is just a positive bias in favour of such metaphysical, spiritual matters, and a prejudice against a fixation on bodily and material things.

This preference is also evident in Poemandres 19:

"they of self-knowledge attained a particular benefit while they who, misled by Eros, love the body, roamed around in the dark, to thus, perceptively, be afflicted by death."

For, as noted in my commentary on τὸν αἴτιον τοῦ θανάτου ἔρωτα in Poemandres 19:

The consensus is, and has been, that ἔρωτα here signifies 'carnal desire' - or something similar - so that it is assumed that what is meant is some sort of ascetic (or Gnostic or puritanical) statement about how sexual desire should be avoided or at the very least controlled. However, this seems rather at variance with the foregoing - regarding propagating and spawning - which inclines me to suggest that what is meant here is 'eros', not necessarily personified as the classical deity (ἡδ' Ἔρος ὃς κάλλιστος ἐν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι πάντων δὲ θεῶν πάντων τ' ἀνθρώπων δάμναται ἐν στήθεσσι νόον καὶ ἐπίφρονα βουλήν), although the comparison is interesting, but rather as an elemental or archetypal principle, akin to νοῦς and λόγος. Consider, for example, the following from Daphnis and Chloe, written by Longus around the same time as the Corpus Hermeticum: πάντως

γὰρ οὐδεὶς ἔρωτα ἔφυγεν ἢ φεύζεται μέχρις ἂν κάλλος ἦ καὶ ὀφθαλμοὶ βλέπωσιν [Book 1, Proem, 4 - "no one can avoid or has ever been able to avoid Eros, while there is beauty and eyes which perceive"]. In modern terms, few - poetically, metaphorically, none - have avoided or could avoid, at some time in their life, the unconscious power of the anima/animus.

There are two kinds of existents, bodily and non-bodily. δύο γὰρ ὄντων τῶν ὄντων. This duality, in respect of mortals, is evident in the Poemandres tractate:

διὰ τοῦτο παρὰ πάντα τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς ζῶα διπλοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ ἄνθρωπος, θνητὸς μὲν διὰ τὸ σῶμα, ἀθάνατος δὲ διὰ τὸν οὐσιώδη ἄνθρωπον

distinct among all other beings on Earth, mortals are jumelle; deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal

(Poemandres 15)

This contrast between the deathful body and the immortality that is possible (the potential for immortality that lies within mortals) is essentially the same as the one described here: the bodily and the divine, the embodied and the disembodied.

7.

apotheosis of the mortal. Not here a literal making of "the mortal into a god" or even an actual "deification of the mortal" (by whomsoever) but rather a bringing about in the mortal an apotheosis - ἀποθέωσις - in the sense of an ascension toward immortality, a spiritual journey from earthly life, a figurative resurrection of, or actual elevation in, the life of the mortal.

This latter sense is evident in the use of ἀποθέωσις by Cicero in his Epistularum Ad Atticum - videsne consulatum illum nostrum, quem Curio antea ἀποθέωσιν vocabat, si hic factus erit, fabam mimum futurum (Liber Primus, XVI, 13) - for this early use of the Greek word concerns the elevated rank of Consul, and thus the honour and privileges that such a privileged rank brings.

a numinous awareness of theos. In respect of εὐσεβέω as an "awareness of the numinous" qv. my Poemandres, 22.

termeration. From the Latin *termere* and thus appropriate here, given the context, in respect of πλημμελέω, suggesting as it can both a violation and a profanation, while avoiding the interpretation that words such as "transgression" (toward god), "trespassed (against god) and "offence" (against god) impute, especially given the usual translations of Christian texts written in

Greek, such as translations of the following from the Septuagint: ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ περὶ ἐνὸς ἀπὸ πάντων ὧν ἐποίησεν καὶ ἐπλημμέλησεν αὐτῷ (Leviticus 5, 26).

something garish that passes by. The exact meaning of πομπή here is unclear, with suggestions ranging from parade, pageant, to procession (religious or otherwise), which all seem out of context since they all can have an affect, a purpose, and can achieve things other than just being a hindrance to passers-by.

The context suggests something metaphorical and similar to what Cicero wrote:

quem tu mihi addidisti sane ad illum σύλλογον personam idoneam.
Videbis igitur, si poteris, ceteros, ut possimus πομπεῦσαι καὶ τοῖς
προσώποις (Epistularum Ad Atticum, Liber Tertius Decimus, 32:3)

That is, similar to a showy or affected countenance or facade or personae, or an act, or some pompous attempt to impress which however is not effective as in Oedipus Tyrannus:

εἰπὼν ἄπειμ' ὧν οὔνεκ' ἦλθον οὐ τὸ σὸν
δείσας πρόσωπον οὐ γὰρ ἔσθ' ὅπου μ' ὀλεῖς

I shall go but speak that for which I was fetched, with no dread
Because of your countenance. For you cannot harm me. (448)

garishly worldly. I take the sense of κόσμος here to refer to 'that cosmos' - the world of mortals - previously described as "the cosmos of the divine body": the microcosm which the artisan-creator crafted and in which we mortals have our being. See the commentary in section 2 on the phrase *a cosmos of the divine body*.

Hence the poetic metaphor here: garishly worldly. Of living a garish - facile - life in our microcosm even though the artisan-creator has provided a means for us to attain immortality and thus, as described in the Poemandres tractate, become a part of a higher, a divine, cosmic order.

8.

select dishonour For κακός as 'bad' and 'dishonourable' rather than 'evil' refer to my commentary on Poemandres 22 from which this is an extract:

"The usual translation of κακός here, as often elsewhere, is 'evil'. However, I regard such a translation as unhelpful, given that the English word 'evil' is (1) now often interpreted and understood in a moralistic, preconceived, way according to some theological

dogma/criteria and/or according to some political/social doctrine, and (2) that it does not denote what the classical and the Hellenic term κακός does. Classically understood κακός is what is bad in the sense of some-thing rotten or unhealthy, or – the opposite of κάλος – what is displeasing to see. κακός is also what is unlucky, a misfortune, and/or injurious [...] When applied to a person, the sense is of a 'rotten' person; someone with bad, harmful, physis; a bad - dishonourable, weak, cowardly - personal character."

theos blameless in this. In respect of ἀναίτιος, compare Agamemnon 1505:

ὥς μὲν ἀναίτιος εἶ
τοῦδε φόνου τίς ὁ μαρτυρήσων

Is there anyone who will bear witness
That you are blameless in this killing?

celestial body. By σῶμα (body) here is meant the celestial body, the 'harmonious structure', which is described in terms of seven spheres in the Poemandres tractate and which mortals must ascend through in sequence in order to attain immortality and thus be in the company of theos. This ascension through the spheres is there described as an anados - ἔτι δέ μοι εἶπε περὶ τῆς ἀνόδου τῆς γυνομένης - with Poemandres (in section 25) describing the journey in detail, with each sphere represented by one of the seven classical planets:

καὶ τῇ πρώτῃ ζώνῃ δίδωσι τὴν αὐξητικὴν ἐνέργειαν καὶ τὴν
μειωτικὴν, καὶ τῇ δευτέρᾳ τὴν μηχανὴν τῶν κακῶν, δόλον
ἀνενέργητον [...]

Thus does the mortal hasten through the harmonious structure,
offering up, in the first realm, that vigour which grows and which
fades, and - in the second one - those dishonourable machinations, no
longer functioning [...]

Plato, in Timaeus 32c, uses σῶμα to refer to the substance - the body - of the cosmos as being formed from fire, water, air and earth:

ὄν ἀριθμὸν τεττάρων τὸ τοῦ κόσμου σῶμα ἐγεννήθη δι' ἀναλογίας
ὁμολογήσαν

sequential constellations. In context, συνέχειαν καὶ δρόμους ἀστέρων suggests a type of movement, a path, through certain stars or constellations. That is, a particular or ordered sequence: the anados through the septenary system, with it being possible that the use here of ἀστήρ (star) - rather than κύκλος (sphere,

orb) as in Poemandres - implied an aural esoteric tradition associating each sphere with a corresponding star or constellation, an ancient tradition found in Renaissance alchemical and magical texts.

the honourable is unpassable. Reading ἀδιάβατον, which implies that what is honourable is always there, always around, always noticeable when it is presenced by someone. In other words - given the following καὶ ἀπέραντον καὶ ἀτελές - there are always some mortals who will (qv. sections 5 and 8) select honour rather than dishonour: who will (as described in section 4) "receive the perceiviation," having won that prize gifted by theos.

9.

Even though to us its origin appears to be the knowledge. The expression ἡμῖν δὲ δοκοῦν ἀρχὴν ἔχειν τὴν γνῶσιν is interesting given that it refers to 'the knowledge', which some have construed to refer to the gnosis of certain pagan weltanschauungen. However, since what this particular knowledge is, is not specified, to translate as 'the Gnosis' would be to impose a particular and modern interpretation on the text given what the term gnosticism now denotes. All that can be adduced from the text is that this particular knowledge may refer to and be the knowledge imparted in the text itself: the knowledge that Hermes is here imparting to Thoth.

The word translated here as origin is ἀρχή and which Greek term has various philosophical connotations in Anaximander, Plato, et al. What it here denotes, as evident in the text that follows (sections 10 and 11), is origin, beginning, source.

not the origin of it. Referring to what is honourable and its origin/beginning.

hasten upon our journey. While the text - λαβώμεθα οὖν τῆς ἀρχῆς καὶ ὁδεύσωμεν τάχει ἅπαντα - is somewhat obscure it seems reasonable to assume that what is meant or implied is the necessity of beginning - of hastening upon - the complete, the entire, journey toward the Monas with all that implies in terms of everything encountered along the way.

not easy. The sense of σκολιόν here - in the context of leaving what one has become accustomed to and is comfortable with - suggests 'tangled', indirect, 'not straightforward', 'tortuous', and thus 'not easy'.

elden. A rather obscure English word meaning 'belonging to earlier times', and used to avoid the negative connotations that words such as 'ancient' can imply.

What is apparent can please [...] neither pattern nor guise. τὰ μὲν γὰρ φαινόμενα τέρπει, τὰ δὲ ἀφανῆ δυσπιστεῖν ποιεῖ. φανερώτερα δὲ ἐστὶ τὰ κακά, τὸ δὲ ἀγαθὸν ἀφανές τοῖς φανεροῖς

This is an interesting passage, often interpreted in terms of moral abstractions, of 'good' and 'evil'. However, as previously mentioned, I incline toward the somewhat iconoclastic view that there is a more Greek, a more Hellenic, and an essentially pagan, interpretation of ἀγαθός consistent with the Greek mystery traditions, with Homer, with the tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles, and with how theos was generally understood in ancient Greece and in Greco-Roman, Hellenistic, times. Which is of ἀγαθός - and of κακός - (i) when referring to mortals as referring to personal character, of character being most often revealed by deeds, by what has been observed because done visibly, or to outward appearance in terms of τὸ καλόν, of what is considered beautiful or not beautiful; and (ii) when used of things - living or dead - as referring to the difference between 'rotten', bad', and what is not rotten, as in a rotten tree or a piece of food.

What is expressed here is of how outward appearances can please, how we can be suspicious - doubtful - about what is concealed, what has not yet been revealed; with what is bad often outwardly obvious (as in the case of a rotten tree or a rotten person) but with what is good, honourable, often being concealed because it has no particular pattern or guise until it has been revealed, for example by noble, honourable deeds. Thus the suggestion seems to be that there is or can be a revealing of what is good when mortals seek the theos-gifted prize of perceivration, which seeking of that prize, and winning it, is of itself a good, a necessary, an honourable, thing to do, leading at it does to a hastening toward the Monas.

The passage also invites comparison with one in Plato's Republic and one in Aristotle's Metaphysics.

In Book XII, 1074b, Aristotle wrote:

τὰ δὲ περὶ τὸν νοῦν ἔχει τινὰς ἀπορίας: δοκεῖ μὲν γὰρ εἶναι τῶν
φαινομένων θειότατον, πῶς δ' ἔχων τοιοῦτος ἂν εἴη, ἔχει τινὰς
δυσκολίας

The expression δοκεῖ μὲν γὰρ εἶναι τῶν φαινομένων θειότατον has led to disputations among some scholars with some considering the passage corrupt and in need of emendation, for their difficulty lies in Aristotle apparently stating that 'Mind' is, like other phenomena, perceptible to our senses. However, if one does not translate νοῦς as 'Mind' - with all the preconceptions, philosophical and otherwise, that have over centuries become attached to that term - and one also appreciates that φαίνω here as sometimes elsewhere is not a simple 'observing' - of seeing, of observing, phenomena - but rather a revealing, then there is little if any difficulty. For instance, does the following interpretation of part of that passage make sense with respect to phenomena? "Perceivration, of all revealing, appears to be the most numinous."

Indeed so, because perceivration is a perception involving a certain

awareness, a revealing to us, of what is observed; that is, an apprehension, and Aristotle's reasoning (insofar as I understand it) is that this awareness - νοῦς - is the most numinous, 'the most divine', revealing because we mortals can apprehended, be or become aware of, and thus have knowledge of, theos. Which is basically what Hermes has in this tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum imparted to Thoth.

In Book VII, 517β - 517ξ, of the Republic, Plato wrote:

τὰ δ' οὖν ἐμοὶ φαινόμενα οὕτω φαίνεται, ἐν τῷ γνωστῷ τελευταία ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα καὶ μόγις ὁρᾶσθαι

Which brings us, again, to ἀγαθός invariably translated as it hitherto has been - in respect of the Corpus Hermeticum, and many of the writings of Aristotle and Plato - as an abstraction termed 'good', as well it might be in respect of Plato given that he posits an abstract (a true, ideal) beauty and an abstract (true, ideal) being, as in Phaedo 78b where he writes about αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν and about αὐτὸ ἕκαστον ὃ ἔστιν, and why in Symposium 210e - 211a he states regarding his ideal, his form, his ἰδέα/εἶδος, which he sometimes and confusingly uses interchangeably, that:

πρῶτον μὲν ἀεὶ ὄν καὶ οὔτε γιγνόμενον οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον, οὔτε αὐξανόμενον οὔτε φθίνον

Firstly, it always exists, and has no genesis. It does not die, does not grow, does not decay.

What, therefore, seems to have occurred, in respect of this and other tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum, is the assumption that ἀγαθός always refers back to Plato's ἰδέα/εἶδος (and to those influenced by him or are assumed to be his precursors) leading to moralistic interpretations such as that of Mead where ἀγαθός is divorced from the physis (φύσις), the character, the individuality, of mortals: "evils are the more apparent things, whereas the Good can never show Itself unto the eyes, for It hath neither form nor figure." Thus, that in respect of mortals, ἀγαθός, rather than having its genesis, its origin, its very being, in some individual mortals - and attainable by others because of the prize of perceivance offered by theos - is considered as something external which could be attained by, which has its being in, is embodied by, such abstractions (the 'politics') as Plato delineates in his theorized Republic and in such abstractions as were posited by the early Christian Church.

For it is not possible for what is disembodied to be overtly embodied. ἀδύνατον γὰρ ἀσώματον σώματι φανῆναι. That is, it is not possible to discern who is honourable from their outward appearance, for what is honourable is manifest, revealed, through personal deeds.

enfolds every arithmos [...] begetting every arithmos but not begotten by any. This passage, with its mention of ἀριθμός, is often assumed to refer to the Pythagorean doctrine regarding numbers since ἀριθμός is invariably translated as 'number' - thus implying what the English word implies, especially in mathematical terms - even though Aristotle, in discussing ἀριθμός, wrote: ἄλλος δέ τις τὸν πρῶτον ἀριθμὸν τὸν τῶν εἰδῶν ἓνα εἶναι, ἔνιοι δὲ καὶ τὸν μαθηματικὸν τὸν αὐτὸν τοῦτον εἶνα (Metaphysics, Book XIII, 1080b.20).

Given such a necessary distinction - and the discussion regarding ἀριθμός and Pythagoras in Book XIII, 1083b.10 et seq - as well as the fact that what ἀριθμός means here, in this tractate, and what it implies - such as the mathematical numbers 2 and 3 developing from the One - is not mentioned, I have transliterated ἀριθμός thus leaving open what it may or may not mean in relation to the particular weltanschauung being described. However, the context seems to suggest a metaphysical rather than an abstract mathematical notion, especially given what follows at the beginning of section 11: πᾶν δὲ τὸ γεννώμενον ἀτελές καὶ διαιρετόν.

begetting/begotten. It is interesting to compare the use here of γεννάω (beget/engender) with the use of γέννημα in Poemandres 8 (the birth of Psyche) and 30 (of Logos breeding nobility).

11.

resurgence [...] decline. The sense here, in context, is not as abstract, as impersonal, as a translation such as "increase and decrease" implies. Rather it suggests "resurgence and decline", as happens with living things.

what is complete. The reference is to the Monas.

eikon of theos. I have transliterated εἰκὼν as eikon since - for reasons mentioned in my commentary on Poemandres 31 - it implies more, in some ancient mystical tractates, than what the word 'image' now denotes.

eyes of your heart. A similar expression occurs in Paul's Letter to the Ephesians - πεφωτισμένους τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς τῆς καρδίας <ὕμῶν> (1.18) - although, as some scholars have noted (qv. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, Baker Academic, 2002. p.260f) the Greek syntax there is problematic.

the path to what is above. That is, the anados (ἄνοδος) mentioned in the Poemandres tractate, composed as the word ἄνοδος is from ἀνά (above) and ὁδός (path), the two Greek words used here.

the seeing of it is uniquely your own. What is being conveyed is that the eikon is of itself mystical - not an ordinary image or painting - and can impart to the

person, who "with the eyes of their heart" views it, something unique, personal, numinous.

lodestone. μαγνητὶς λίθος. Lodestone, and not a 'magnet' in the modern sense.

Ὅτι ἐν μόνῳ θεῷ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐστὶν ἀλλαχόθι δὲ οὐδαμοῦ.

That In The Theos Alone Is Nobility And Not Anywhere Else

Tractate VI

ooo

Introduction

The sixth tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, concentrating as it does on τὸ ἀγαθὸν in relation to theos and mortals, is - in respect of the milieu of ancient Greco-Roman culture - metaphysically interesting even though existing translations, given that they invariably translate τὸ ἀγαθὸν as 'the good' and θεός as 'god', impart "the sense of reading somewhat declamatory sermons about god/God and 'the good' familiar from over a thousand years of persons preaching about Christianity." [1]

Since, for reasons explained elsewhere [1], I translate τὸ ἀγαθὸν as 'the noble' - implying nobility, honour, as expressed for example by Seneca, summum bonum est quod honestum est; et quod magis admireris: unum bonum est, quod honestum est, cetera falsa et adulterina bona sunt [2] - and also transliterate θεός as theos, then what emerges from this tractate is something redolent of Greco-Roman mysticism and thus of how τὸ ἀγαθὸν was understood by learned men such as Cicero: in terms of personal character [3] rather than as an impersonal moral abstraction leading as such an abstraction invariably does to dogmatic interpretations and thence to disputations and dissent and thence to the accusations of religious 'heresy' that bedevilled Christian churches for centuries, redolent as such moral abstractions, such dogmatism and accusations, are of an ethos that is rather un-Hellenic.

Such an understanding of τὸ ἀγαθὸν is evident in a passage in section nine of the fourth tractate:

τὰ μὲν γὰρ φαινόμενα τέρπει, τὰ δὲ ἀφανῆ δυσπιστεῖν ποιεῖ.
φανερώτερα δὲ ἐστὶ τὰ κακά, τὸ δὲ ἀγαθὸν ἀφανὲς τοῖς φανεροῖς.

What is apparent can please us while what is concealed can cause doubt with what is bad often overt while the honourable is often concealed having as it has neither pattern nor guise.

For what is expressed in that fourth tractate is that while what is bad is often outwardly obvious (as in the case of a rotten tree or a bad person) what is good, honourable, is often being concealed because it has no guise, no particular, discernable, pattern - no outward sign or appearance - becoming revealed only though noble, honourable, personal, deeds.

In respect of tractate six, the choice of τὸ ἀγαθὸν as 'the noble' (instead of the conventional 'the good') and κακός as 'bad' (instead of the conventional 'evil') elevates the text from a type of pious sermon to a metaphysical weltanschauung, something especially evident at the beginning of section three:

In mortals, the noble are arrayed to compare with the bad, for in this place those not especially bad are the noble given that in this place nobility has the smallest portion of the bad.

ἐν δὲ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ κατὰ σύγκρισιν τὸ ἀγαθὸν τοῦ κακοῦ τέτακται τὸ γὰρ μὴ λίαν κακὸν ἐνθάδε τὸ ἀγαθόν ἐστὶ τὸ δὲ ἐνθάδε ἀγαθόν μόνιον τοῦ κακοῦ τὸ ἐλάχιστον

Also, while the language of this sixth tractate is on occasions somewhat convoluted and apparently contradictory - as for example in the description in section two of Kosmos having nobility (τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον ἀγαθὸς ὁ κόσμος καθὰ καὶ αὐτὸς πάντα ποιεῖ) and yet being not noble in other ways (ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις πᾶσιν οὐκ ἀγαθός) what is expressed metaphysically differs somewhat from some other tractates, revealing just how diverse the pagan mystical traditions represented in the Corpus Hermeticum are.

Despite the differences, most obvious when this tractate - with its rather negative portrayal of mortals and the insistence that beauty and nobility cannot be found in this world - is compared to the Poemandres tractate and the third (Ἱερός Λόγος) tractate, what emerges is a hermetic weltanschauung and one that can best be summarized by the following lines from the last two sections:

"[an] apprehension of theos [is] an apprehension of the beautiful and of the noble... [and] a quest for theos is a quest for the beautiful, and there is only one path there: an awareness of the numinous combined with knowledge [...]"

Yet those who do not apprehend, who do not follow the path of awareness of the numinous, have the effrontery to declare that mortals are beautiful and noble even though they have not observed, and have no semblance of, what the noble is."

This goes some way toward resolving the apparently contradictory nature of the text, asserting as it does at the beginning that "the noble exists in no-thing: only in theos alone" and yet also asserting toward the end not only that "if you are able to apprehend theos you can apprehend the beautiful and the noble." This is the ethos of a contemplative pagan, and a cultured, mysticism that seems to have been much neglected.

Notes

[1] Myatt, David. *Concerning ἀγαθός and νοῦς in the Corpus Hermeticum*.

[2] Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales, LXXI, 4.

[3] In *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*, Marcus Tullius Cicero, in criticizing Epicurus and others, presents his view of Summum Bonum: that honestum (honourable conduct) is its foundation and that it can be discerned by careful consideration (ratio) in conjunction with that knowing (scientia) of what is divine and what is mortal that has been described as wisdom (sapientia).

aequam igitur pronuntiabit sententiam ratio adhibita primum divinarum humanarumque rerum scientia, quae potest appellari rite sapientia, deinde adiunctis virtutibus, quas ratio rerum omnium dominas, tu voluptatum satellites et ministras esse voluisti. (II, 37)

He then writes that honestum does not depend on any personal benefit (omni utilitate) that may result or be expected but instead can be discerned by means of consensus among the whole community in combination with the example afforded by the honourable actions and motives of the finest of individuals.

Honestum igitur id intellegimus, quod tale est, ut detracta omni utilitate sine ullis praemiis fructibusve per se ipsum possit iure laudari. quod quale sit, non tam definitione, qua sum usus, intellegi potest, quamquam aliquantum potest, quam communi omnium iudicio et optimi cuiusque studiis atque factis, qui permulta ob eam unam causam faciunt, quia decet, quia rectum, quia honestum est, etsi nullum consecuturum emolumentum vident. (II, 45f)

In effect, Summum Bonum - what the Greeks termed τὸ ἀγαθόν - depends on certain personal qualities such as a careful consideration of a matter; on a personal knowing of what is divine and what is mortal; on the example of personal noble deeds and motives, and on a communal consensus.

There is therefore nothing morally abstract or dogmatic about Cicero's understanding of Summum Bonum which so well expresses, as does Seneca, the

Greco-Roman view, with a perhaps more apt translation of the term Summum Bonum thus being "the highest nobility."

Translation

[1] Asclepius, the noble exists in no-thing: only in theos alone; indeed, theos is, of himself and always, what is noble. If so, then it can only be the quidditas of all changement and of geniture since nothing is deserted by it but has about itself a stability of vigour, neither excessive nor lacking, a replenishable provider, there at the origin of all things. When saying the provider to all-things is noble, that nobility always exists, an attribute of theos alone and of no one else.

He is not in need of anything since for him to desire something would be bad. Nothing that has come into being is lost to him, for such loss would be vexing with vexation a division of badness. Nothing is superior to him so as to be an enemy, nor is there a partner who might harm him through him having a passionate desire. Nor any-thing so unheeding of him that he becomes enraged; nor anyone of better judgement to be jealous of.

[2] Because none of those have being in his quidditas then only nobility is left, and since nothing of what is bad is in that quidditas then nothing of what is noble will be found in those other things, since, in all others be they big or small, those things exist, in each of them and also in that living being which is bigger and mightier than them all. For what is begotten is replete with physicality with breeding itself being physical. Yet where physicality is, nobility is not, and where nobility is there is no physicality just as when there is night there is no day. It is impracticable regarding breeding for nobility to be there for that is only of what is not begotten.

But as substance has been assigned to partake of all being so it does of nobility which is how Kosmos has nobility because of the construction done regarding all things, even though not noble in other ways since there is physicality, and changement: the construction of the physical.

[3] In mortals, the noble are arrayed to compare with the bad, for in this place those not especially bad are the noble given that in this place nobility has the smallest portion of the bad. But it is impractical in this place to refine the noble from the bad, for in this place the noble deteriorate and, deteriorating, become

rotten and no longer noble. Thus the noble is of theos alone or rather it is theos who is the noble one.

Thus it is, Asclepius, that among mortals they are noble in name only and not in the matter itself for that would be impracticable since the physical body cannot hold on to it, restrained on all sides as it is by badness, by toil, by grief, by desire, by rage, by dishonesty, and by unreasonable opinions; and, Asclepius, most ignoble of all, in this place each such thing is believed to be most noble even though unsurpassably bad.

The mistake, the patron of all things rotten, is the absence in this place of nobility.

[4] For myself, I am beholden to theos who has directed my perceivation toward a knowing of nobility; that it is impracticable for it to be in this world replete as it is with badness just as it is with the nobility of theos or as theos is with nobility.

For the eminence of the beautiful is around that quidditas so perhaps revealing that quiddity as certainly unmixed and most refined, and I venture to say, Asclepius, that the quidditas of theos - if he has quidditas - is the beautiful and yet the beautiful and the noble cannot be discerned in the things of the world for everything exposed to the eye are as tenuous depictions, and what is not exposed to it, particularly the beautiful and the noble <...> and since the eye is unable to perceive theos so it is with the beautiful and the noble. For they are intrinsically part of theos, of him alone, belonging to him, unseverable, most fair; loved by theos or by those who love theos.

[5] If you are able to apprehend theos you can apprehend the beautiful and the noble, the exceptionally radiant, but a radiance surpassed by theos, and with that beauty unequalled with the noble defying imitation, as it is with theos. Such is the apprehension of theos, and thus is there an apprehension of the beautiful and of the noble, and since they are inseparable from theos they cannot be shared among other living beings. Thus a quest for theos is a quest for the beautiful, and there is only one path there: an awareness of the numinous combined with knowledge.

[6] Yet those who do not apprehend, who do not follow the path of awareness of the numinous, have the effrontery to declare that mortals are beautiful and noble even though they have not observed, and have no semblance of, what the noble is. Believing that what is bad is noble, they are subsumed by every badness and, thus glutted with it, are fearful of being robbed of it so that they in whatever way fight to not only keep it but to increase it.

Such are, Asclepius, for mortals the beautiful and the noble and from which we are unable to flee or despise. But what is most grievous to bear is that we are unable to live without them.

Commentary

Title.

Ὅτι ἐν μόνῳ θεῷ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐστὶν ἀλλαχόθι δὲ οὐδαμοῦ. That In The Theos Alone Is Nobility And Not Anywhere Else.

The consensus is that the title is not original and was added by some scribe.

1.

The noble. τὸ ἀγαθὸν. As mentioned in the Introduction, I translate ἀγαθός not as some abstract (impersonal) and disputable 'good' but as, and according to context, nobility, noble, honourable.

no-thing. In respect of ἐν οὐδενί ἐστιν I have here (and occasionally elsewhere) used 'no-thing' - "no entity of any kind" - instead of 'nothing' or 'naught' to emphasize the ontological nature of what is expressed. In addition, as often in the Corpus Hermeticum, what is transliterated here as 'theos' - and by others translated as 'god' - can be taken literally to refer to 'the theos', 'the deity'.

...theos is, of himself and always, what is noble. The suggestion of the first sentence seems to be that 'the theos' is the origin of what is noble, and thus the origin of nobility, and that only through and because of theos can what is noble be presenced and recognized for what it is, and often recognized by those who are, or that which is, an eikon of theos. Hence why in tractate IV it is said that "the eikon will guide you,"; why in tractate XI that "Kosmos is the eikon of theos, Kosmos [the eikon] of Aion, the Sun [the eikon] of Aion, and the Sun [the eikon] of mortals," and why in the same tractate it is said that "there is nothing that cannot be an eikon of theos," and why in Poemandres 31 theos is said to "engender all physis as eikon."

then it... Referring to "what is noble".

quidditas. οὐσία. Here, a more appropriate translation of οὐσία - instead of 'essence' or 'substance' - is quidditas, as in tractate XI:2: "it is as if the quidditas of theos is actuality, honour, the beautiful..."

As I noted in my commentary on XI:2,

Quidditas – post-classical Latin, from whence the English word quiddity – is more appropriate here, in respect of οὐσία, than essence, especially as 'essence' now has so many non-philosophical and modern connotations. Quidditas is thus a philosophical term which requires contextual interpretation. In respect of οὐσία, qv. Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015a:

ἐκ δὴ τῶν εἰρημένων ἡ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἡ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὕλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικῇ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐνυπάρχουσά πως ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ.

Given the foregoing, then principally – and to be exact – physis denotes the quidditas of beings having changeament inherent within them; for substantia has been denoted by physis because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changeaments predicated on it. For physis is inherent changeament either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.

One interpretation of quidditas here is 'the being of that being/entity', with such quidditas often presenced in - and perceived via or as - physis.

changeament...geniture. κινήσεως καὶ γενέσεως. cf. tractate XI:2 and my note above regarding οὐσία. As mentioned in my commentary on XI:2, "the unusual English word geniture expresses the meaning of γένεσις here: that which or those whom have their genesis (and their subsequent development) from or because of something else or because of someone else."

nothing that has come into being. In respect of τῶν ὄντων οὐδέν, cf. Aristotle, Metaphysics, 191a27f: φασιν οὔτε γίνεσθαι τῶν ὄντων οὐδέν οὔτε φθείρεσθαι, διὰ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον μὲν εἶναι γίνεσθαι τὸ γιγνόμενον ἢ ἐξ ὄντος ἢ ἐκ μὴ ὄντος.

lost. ἀπόλλυμι. qv. the title of tractate VIII, and my note regarding it.

bad...badness. κακός, κακίας. As with ἀγαθός not some moral impersonal disputable abstraction - in this case 'evil' - but the personal sense of some-thing or someone being bad, rotten, ignoble.

a partner who might harm him. Literally, "a partner to be harmed by." The exact nature of this partnership is not specified, although the following καὶ διὰ τοῦτο αὐτοῦ ἐρασθήσεται indicates a certain scenario. I have omitted the editorial emendation of οὔτε κάλλιον - "nothing is as beautiful."

nothing of what is bad. Reading κακῶν with the MSS and not the emendation ἄλλων.

physicality. Given the context - ἐν τοῖς καθ' ἐν καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ ζῶντι τῷ πάντων μείζονι καὶ δυνατωτάτῳ - here πάθος, παθῶν, παθητῆς suggest a physicality, a physical actuality/occurrence, which the English word 'passion', with its often implicit anthropomorphism, does not quite express.

The author, in these first two sections, is making a distinction between their hermetic concept of theos and other living beings, especially mortals; of theos as detached from all those things - such as physicality, jealousy, anger - which mortals are subject to and with theos as described here is thus not only very different from the vengeful, angry, Jehovah of the Old Testament but also quite similar to, if not in perhaps some manner based on, the Hellenic concept as mentioned by Aristotle:

ὥστε ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐνέργεια, μακαριότητι διαφέρουσα, θεωρητικὴ ἂν εἴη:
καὶ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων δὴ ἡ ταύτη συγγενεστάτη εὐδαιμονικωτάτη.
σημεῖον δὲ καὶ τὸ μὴ μετέχειν τὰ λοιπὰ ζῶα εὐδαιμονίας.
Nicomachean Ethics (Book X) 1178b.22

Therefore the activity of theos, excelling others in bliss, is wordless-awareness [θεωρέω] and the nearest thing to that among mortals arises from good-fortune [εὐδαιμονία].

construction. cf. tractate II, ὁ οὖν θεὸς <τὸ> ἀγαθόν, καὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ὁ θεός. ἡ δὲ ἑτέρα προσηγορία ἐστὶν ἡ τοῦ πατρός, πάλιν διὰ τὸ ποιητικὸν πάντων. πατρὸς γὰρ τὸ ποιεῖν. (Thus theos is the noble and the noble is theos, although another title is that of father because the artifex of all being. For it is of a father to construct.)

not noble in other ways. That is, while Kosmos - qv. tractate XI for what or who this Kosmos may be - has nobility by the act of construction, of forming substance into beings, because some of those beings possess physicality then Kosmos unlike theos is not completely noble.

3.

in this place. I incline toward the view that ἐνθάδε here does not refer, as some have conjectured, to "here below" (qv. Plato, Gorgias, 525b: ὅμως δὲ δι' ἀλγηδόνων καὶ ὀδυνῶν γίνεται αὐτοῖς ἡ ὠφελία καὶ ἐνθάδε καὶ ἐν Ἄιδου) but rather just to "this place, here."

refine. καθαροῖς. cf. Poemandres 10, and 22. As I noted in my commentary on Poemandres 22:

Literally [καθαροῖς] means 'physically clean', often in the sense of being in a state of ritual purification: qv. the inscription on one of the ancient tablets (totenpasse) found in Thurii - ἔρχομαι ἐκ καθαρῶν καθαρὰ χθονίων βασίλεια ("in arrivance, purified from the purified, mistress of the chthonic"). Since the English word 'pure' is unsuitable given its connotations - religious, sanctimonious, political, and otherwise - I have opted for the not altogether satisfactory 'refined'.

Here however, the choice of refine seems apposite, given the text:

ἀδύνατον οὖν τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐνθάδε καθαρεύειν τῆς κακίας

It is impractical in this place to refine the noble from the bad

This makes perfect (and practical) sense, in contrast to the fairly recent, conventional, and somewhat moralistic translation of Copenhaver: "the good cannot be cleansed of vice here below."

Interestingly, the Greek word καθαροῖς formed the basis for the relatively modern (c.1803) English term 'catharsis'.

physical body. cf. Poemandres 24: ἐν τῇ ἀναλύσει τοῦ σώματος τοῦ ὕλικου παραδίδως αὐτὸ τὸ σῶμα εἰς ἀλλοίωσιν (the dissolution of the physical body allows that body to be transformed).

restrained on all sides. παντόθεν ἐσφιγμένον.

each such thing. This might well be a reference to "restrained on all sides as it is by badness" - to bad things in general - and not to the immediately preceding "toil, grief, desire, rage, dishonesty, and unreasonable opinion."

the patron of all things rotten. I have omitted the very odd reference to "gluttony" - ἡ γαστριμαργία - which follows τὸ μᾶλλον ἀνυπερβλήτον κακόν, as in all probability it is a gloss. Nock, in his text, indicates a lacuna between the following χορηγὸς and ἡ πλάνη.

If the reference to gluttony is not omitted then a possible interpretation of the text would be: "Gluttony is the patron of all things rotten <...> the mistake in this place is the absence of nobility."

4.

or as theos is with nobility. In order to try and express in English something of the meaning of the Greek - and to avoid repeating "replete" (πλήρωμά), which repetition is not in the Greek text - I have slightly amended the word order. Nock indicates a lacuna between ἀγαθὸν τοῦ θεοῦ and αἱ γὰρ ἔξοχαί. The

transition between "replete with" and "the beautiful" is certainly abrupt.

For the eminence of the beautiful is around that quidditas. Although the Greek text here is rather obscure and various emendations have been proposed - none of which are entirely satisfactory - the general sense, of the beautiful surrounding or being near to the quidditas (οὐσία) of theos, seems clear.

tenuous depictions. The Greek words εἶδωλον and σκιαγραφία require careful consideration if one is not to read into the text philosophical meanings from other ancient authors which may not be relevant here, as might be the case in respect of εἶδωλον if one chose the word 'image'. In addition, if the English word chosen has other, perhaps more modern, associations then there may well be a 'retrospective re-interpretation' of the text, reading into it a meaning or meanings which also might not be relevant, as might be the case in respect of εἶδωλον if one chose 'phantom' given what that word now often imputes. Hence I have chosen 'tenuous' and 'depiction' respectively.

particularly the beautiful and the noble. Some text is missing in the MSS so that what follows οὐδὲ τὸ καλὸν καὶ τὸ ἀγαθόν unfortunately remains unknown.

5.

quest. The sense of ζητέω here is more than that of a simple 'inquiry' or an 'asking'. It is to 'seek after' something with an earnest purpose, as in Matthew 2:13 where there is a desire by Herod to seek out and kill the infant Jesus:

Ἀναχωρησάντων δὲ αὐτῶν ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος κυρίου φαίνεται κατ' ὄναρ τῷ Ἰωσήφ λέγων· ἐγερθεὶς παράλαβε τὸ παιδίον καὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ φεῦγε εἰς Αἴγυπτον καὶ ἴσθι ἐκεῖ ἕως ἄν εἴπω σοι· μέλλει γὰρ Ἡρώδης ζητεῖν τὸ παιδίον τοῦ ἀπολέσαι αὐτό.

awareness of the numinous. As I noted in my commentary on Poemandres 22:

As with ὁσίους, εὐσεβέω is a difficult word to translate, given that most of the English alternatives - such as reverent, pious - have acquired, over centuries, particular religious meanings, often associated with Christianity or types of asceticism. The correct sense is 'aware of the numinous', and thus imbued with that sense of duty, that sense of humility - or rather, an awareness of their human limitations - which makes them appreciate and respect the numinous in whatever form, way, or manner they appreciate, feel, intuit, apprehend, or understand, the numinous, be it in terms of the gods, the god, Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες, God, or whatever. It is this awareness which inclines a person toward 'respectful deeds'.

6.

semblance. Here, ὄναρ suggests 'semblance' rather than 'dream'.

ooo

Appendix

Concerning Personal Pronouns

Regarding the interpretation of ancient texts - of translating an ancient language into English - there is the matter of personal pronouns with the convention being to default to the masculine singular (Man, his, he) even when the gender is not specified but only assumed, as in the matter of θεός in the sixth tractate where unlike some other tractates (such as Poemandres and tractate VIII) the term πατήρ does not occur.

Thus, conventionally defaulting to the masculine singular in sections 12 and 13 of tractate XI of the Corpus Hermeticum - based on the assumption that the MS reading ἄρχων καὶ ἡγέμων [1] and the title πρόδρομος refer to a man - one translates as:

He creates all things [...] If it is demonstrated that no one really exists without producing something how much more so for theos? If there is anything he has not created then - although it is not the custom to say this - he is incomplete, while if theos is complete and not otiose then he creates all things. [2]

πάντα οὖν αὐτὸς ποιεῖ [...] εἰ γὰρ ἀποδέδεικται μηδὲν δυνάμενον εἶναι, πόσω μᾶλλον ὁ θεός; εἰ γὰρ τί ἐστὶν ὃ μὴ ποιεῖ, ὃ μὴ θέμις εἰπεῖν, ἀτελής ἐστίν· εἰ δὲ μήτε ἀργός ἐστι, τέλειος δέ, ἄρα πάντα ποιεῖ.

However, if one uses the plural - non-gender specific - "they" as a personal pronoun then one has:

"They create all things [...] If it is demonstrated that no one really exists without producing something how much more so for theos? If there is anything they have not created then - although it is not the custom to say this - they are incomplete, while if theos is complete and not otiose then they create all things."

Which somewhat changes the meaning and is perhaps confusing for some, although the non-literal alternatives of "the theos" or "the divinity" are rather cumbersome:

"The divinity creates all things [...] If it is demonstrated that no one really exists without producing something how much more so for the divinity? If there is anything the divinity has not created then - although it is not the custom to say this - the divinity is incomplete, while if the divinity is complete and not otiose then the divinity creates all things."

An alternative would be the neutral if even more cumbersome phrase "that Being":

"That Being creates all things [...] If it is demonstrated that no one really exists without producing something how much more so for that Being? If there is anything that Being has not created then - although it is not the custom to say this - that Being is incomplete, while if that Being is complete and not otiose then that Being creates all things."

As I noted in my commentary on the phrase ἀναγνωρίσας ἑαυτὸν in the Poemandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, given that in that tractate theos is not only referred to using the ancient honorific πατήρ [3] but also described as ἀρρενόθηλος, as both male and female:

"here, as often elsewhere, I have gone against convention (grammatical and otherwise) by, where possible, choosing neutral personal pronouns, thus avoiding sentences such as "And he who has self-knowledge..." This sometimes results in using third person plural pronouns - such as 'their' and 'they' - as if they were personal pronouns, or using constructs such as "the one of self-knowledge" or "whoever has self-knowledge". [2]

While I have in my translation here of tractate six used the conventional default of the masculine singular pronoun it might be an interesting exercise for those interested to provide a version using, where appropriate, gender-neutral personal pronouns, which undoubtedly would result in an interpretation of the text quite different from other translations available, my own included.

ooo

[1] Nock - *Corpus Hermeticum*, Third Edition, 1972 - has the emendation ἄρχοντος καὶ ἡγεμόνος.

[2] Myatt, *Corpus Hermeticum I, III, IV, VIII, XI*. 2017.

[3] cf. τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν φώτων (Epistle of James, I, 17), "the father of phaos". In respect of phaos, qv. Poemandres 4-6; tractate III, 1 (φῶς ἅγιον), and tractate XI, 7.

**Ὅτι οὐδὲν τῶν ὄντων ἀπόλλυται
ἀλλὰ τὰς μεταβολὰς ἀπωλείας καὶ θανάτους πλανώμενοι λέγουσιν**

That no beings are lost,
despite mortals mistakenly claiming that such transformations are death and a loss.

Tractate VIII

ο ο ο

Introduction

The eighth tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, concise as it is, provides an interesting summary of some of the tenets of the Hermetic weltanschauung. As, for example, in the mention of a first being (the primary theos) and of a second being (a theos) who is an eikon (εἰκὼν) of the first, and which first being - theos - is the artisan of all beings; and as, for example, in the mention of mortals having a natural empathy (συμπάθεια) with this eikon, this second being, who is identified as κόσμος, with κόσμος understood here, as in tractate XI, either as a personification, as a divinity, the theos - a deathless living being, ζῶον ἄθνατον - who is the living cosmic order, or, as in the Poemandres tractate as simply referring in an impersonal manner to 'the cosmic order' itself.

While most other translators have opted here, as in other tractates, to translate κόσμος as cosmos (which English term suggests that the physical universe is meant) I incline toward the view that here - as in tractate XI - a divinity is meant, especially given how κόσμος is described: as "a second theos and a deathless living being," and as an eikon of the primary theos.

There are certain parallels with tractate XI and in which tractate it is stated that "Kosmos is the eikon of theos, Kosmos that of Aion, the Sun that of Aion, and mortals that of the Sun. It is said that change is death since the body disintegrates with life departing to the unperceptible," (section 15) and, in section 14, that "Life is the enosis of perceiver and psyche, while death is not the loss of what was joined but the end of enosis."

What therefore emerges from this, the eighth, tractate are two things: how we mortals are part of, and connected to, Kosmos and thence - since Kosmos is an eikon - to the first, the primary, theos, and how diverse the Hermetic weltanschauung is in respect of some details while nevertheless retaining an

underlying ethos.

ooo

Translation

[1] It is regarding psyche and the corporeal that, my son, we now must speak: of why psyche is deathless and how its vigour assembles and separates the corporeal. For there is no death of what-is, only an apprehension grounded in the denotatum 'deathless', either through unavailing toil or, by discarding the important part, that what is called deathless is deathful. That is, for the deathful there is a loss. But nothing of the Kosmos is ever lost, for if Kosmos is a second theos and a deathless living being then it is not possible for any portion of such a deathless living being to be lost since all beings of Kosmos are part of Kosmos, as most certainly are mortals, the noetic living being.

[2] In truth, the first is theos; the eternal, unborn. The second was engendered from, nurtured by, that being and rendered deathless and eikon of that being, as by an everlasting father, never-dying because deathless.

For never-dying is unlike everlasting. For that one was not a bringing-into-being by another although if there was a bringing-into-being it was his own bringing-into-being since he is always a bringing-into-being. For the everlasting - because it is everlasting - is all that is, with the father everlasting because of himself while Kosmos became everlasting and deathless because of the father.

[3] And the father endowed such substance as he gathered, extending it all to create something spherical, conferring upon it a particular quality, deathless and of substance everlasting. Having seeded such qualities and replete with semblances, the father enclosed them in the sphere as if in a cavern. His deliberation was to equip with each quality what would follow; to encompass with deathlessness everything corporeal so that substance would not by thesis be separated from that bringing-together to thereby dissolve into its own disorder.

For when, my son, substance was incorporeal it was disordered even though that was restricted to other smaller qualities, to the kind of increase and decrease that mortals name death.

[4] For such disorder occurs with earthly-living beings, with celestial beings having one order allotted to them by the father from the beginning and maintained from disintegration by the periodicity of each of them, while the periodicity of earthly living beings is of a separation of their bringing together

and of the indissoluble corporeal; that is, of the deathless. Thus there is the loss of those influencing impressions and not the destruction of what is embodied.

[5] Now, as to the third living being, mortals, brought-into-being as eikon of Kosmos and who, because of the deliberations of the father and beyond the other living beings on Earth, have perceivance and also empathy with the second theos and perception of the first.

For of the one there is apprehension as of the corporeal, while of the other there is an influencing impression as of the incorporeal and as of a noble perceivance.

Then this life is not lost?

Speak softly, my son, and apprehend who theos is, who Kosmos is, what a deathless living being is, what a dissoluble living being is, and apprehend also that Kosmos is of theos and within theos and that mortals are of Kosmos and within Kosmos and thus that theos is the origin of, encompasses, and constitutes, everything.

ooo

Commentary

Title.

lost. ἀπόλλυμι. Lost, rather than 'destroyed' or 'perished'. They are not 'lost' because beings - entities/things - once brought-into-being - are still emanations of Being, of theos, even if their presencing, their form, is changed, transformed, morphed, as happens for example with those mortals who, via the anados mentioned in the Poemandres tractate, go beyond the seven spheres to, and then beyond, the ogdoadic physis.

1.

corporeal. σῶμα. Here, the context - qv. for example the following τῶν γὰρ οὐρανίων τὰ σώματα μίαν τάξιν ἔχει in section 4 and τοῦ δὲ ἔννοιαν λαμβάνει ὡς ἀσωμάτου καὶ νοῦ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ in section 5 - suggests corporeal rather than a literal body. A subtle distinction, between "of the nature of matter" and a specific type of "physical body". Compare also the fourth tractate: ἀεὶ ὄντος καὶ

πάντα ποιήσαντος καὶ ἐνὸς μόνου, τῇ δὲ αὐτοῦ θελήσει δημιουργήσαντος τὰ ὄντα· τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστὶ τὸ σῶμα ἐκείνου, οὐχ ἄπτόν, οὐδὲ ὁρατόν, οὐδὲ μετρητόν, οὐδὲ διαστατόν, οὐδὲ ἄλλω τινὶ σώματι ὅμοιον.

vigour. ἐνέργεια. qv. Poemandres 14, tractate XI: 2, etcetera.

assembles. σύστασις. cf. Euripides, *Andromache*, 1088: τοῦθ' ὑποπτον ἦν ἄρ' ἐς δὲ συστάσεις κύκλους τ' ἐχώρει λαὸς οἰκίτωρ θεοῦ.

In Poemandres 10 it is mentioned how "the logos of theos bounded to the fine artisements of Physis and joined with the perceiviation of that artisan." Thus a theme shared by several tractates is how the various 'artisans' of theos - and theos - skillfully craft beings from Being, as in tractate IV, Chaldron or Monas:

Ἐπειδὴ τὸν πάντα κόσμον ἐποίησεν ὁ δημιουργός οὐ χερσὶν ἀλλὰ λόγῳ ὥστε οὕτως ὑπολάμβανε ὡς τοῦ παρόντος καὶ αἰεὶ ὄντος καὶ πάντα ποιήσαντος καὶ ἐνὸς μόνου τῇ δὲ αὐτοῦ θελήσει δημιουργήσαντος τὰ ὄντα

Because the artisan crafted the complete cosmic order not by hand but through Logos, you should understand that Being as presential, as eternal, as having crafted all being, as One only, who by theosis formed all that is.

apprehension. νόημα. cf. Poemandres 3, "I seek to learn what is real, to apprehend the physis of beings."

denotatum. For προσηγορία. In this case, the denotatum - the naming - is the word 'deathless'.

or by discarding the important part [...] what is called deathless is deathful. ἢ κατὰ στέρησιν τοῦ πρώτου γράμματος λεγόμενος θάνατος ἀντὶ τοῦ ἀθάνατος. Literally, "by discarding the first letter it is called θάνατος [deathful] instead of ἀθάνατος [deathless].

Regarding τοῦ πρώτου γράμματος, what seems to be implied is that the mortal apprehension of 'deathless' does not include the most important - the correct - apprehension regarding death, which correct apprehension is explained by what follows.

Kosmos. κόσμος. As at Poemandres 7, κόσμος carries with it the suggestion that the cosmos is an ordered structure. However, here I construe κόσμος, as in tractate XI, as a divinity, the theos who is the living, deathless, cosmic order.

the noetic living being. τὸ λογικὸν ζῶον. The word λογικός imputes the sense of both the faculty of speech and the faculty of thought, something well-expressed by Sophocles: φθέγμα καὶ ἀνεμόεν φρόνημα καὶ ἀστυνόμους ὀργὰς ἐδιδάξατο

καὶ δυσαύλων πάγων ὑπαίθρεια καὶ δύσομβρα φεύγειν βέλη παντοπόρος,
(Antigone, 355f).

2.

artisan of all beings. In respect of artisan (δημιουργόν) cf. Poemandres 9, and tractate IV: 1. Regarding "of all beings", cf. Poemandres 31, ὁ πατήρ τῶν ὅλων.

eikon. εἰκὼν, qv. Poemandres 21 and 31, and tractate XI:15. Thus the suggestion is that is this eikon represents - presences, manifests - theos, the artisan.

never-dying...everlasting. In order to try and express the dissimilarity between ἀείζωος and αἰδῖος I have translated the former as never-dying (a sense suggested by ἀείζων ὡς ἀθάνατος) and the latter as everlasting, a dissimilarity that is not immediately apparent from translations such as "the everliving is different from the eternal."

That one. Referring to 'the first' who engendered Kosmos as eikon.

not a bringing-into-being by another ... always a bringing-into-being. The text - with its repetition of ἐγένετο - is somewhat obscure, and various emendations have been proposed, none of which are entirely satisfactory. The sense seems to be of "that one" - the first - always having been, and is, and always will be, "a coming-into-being".

3.

such substance ... particular quality. The text is quite obscure and several emendations have been suggested, with Nock indicating that some text may be missing after τῷ ἑαυτοῦ, although ὑπ' αὐτόν seems reasonable. Any translation - whatever emendation is accepted - is conjectural.

The sphere may refer to Kosmos, cf. Poemandres 9,

"Theos, the perceiviation, male-and-female, being Life and phaos, whose logos brought forth another perceiviation, an artisan, who - theos of Fire and pneuma - fashioned seven viziers to surround the perceptible cosmic order in spheres and whose administration is described as fate."

The suggestion might thus be that these seven spheres are themselves enclosed within a sphere, which might explain Poemandres 13-14, "Having fully learned their essence, and having partaken of their physis, he was determined to burst out past the limit of those spheres [and] with full authority over the ordered

cosmos of humans and of beings devoid of logos, he burst through the strength of the spheres to thus reveal to those of downward physis the beautiful image of theos."

substance. ὕλη, qv. Poemandres 19, tractate III:1, tractate XI:3.

create. ποιέω, qv. tractate XI:5

semblances. Does ἰδέα here equate with the concept of 'form' as described by Plato? The consensus is that it does, even though such an assumption imposes a specific philosophical meaning on the text and even though the cosmogonic context - of the living Kosmos as eikon, of Kosmos made deathless by the father, and of theos, the father, conferring upon the sphere a particular quality - does not seem to support such an abstract, definite, concept. Thus, to avoid imposing a very particular meaning on the text, and given that the hermeticism described in this and in the other tractates represent varied weltanschauungen (albeit having a similar underlying ethos) rather than one well-defined philosophy, I have translated not as 'forms' but as semblances.

as if in a cavern. Does this refer to Plato's allegory of the cave, as so many seem to have assumed? Probably not, since - to give just one example - in the Βιβλιοθήκη of Pseudo-Apollodorus - written around the same time as this tractate - ἐν ἄντρῳ refers to a cave, or cavern, in which Maia, one of the seven Pleiades, gave birth to Hermes: Μαῖα μὲν οὖν ἡ πρεσβυτάτη Διὶ συνελθοῦσα ἐν ἄντρῳ τῆς Κυλλήνης Ἑρμῆν τίκτει. οὗτος ἐν σπαργάνοις ἐπὶ τοῦ λίκνου κείμενος.

deliberation. qv. Poemandres 8. As with the preceding *such substance ... particular quality*, the text here is quite obscure, and any translation - whatever emendation is accepted - is conjectural.

thelesis. θέλησις, qv. tractate IV:1. As noted in the commentary there, a transliteration to suggest something more metaphysical than a human type wish or desire. Such as that the physis - the being - of substance (ὕλη) might be such that without the intervention of theos it might naturally dissolve into disorderliness (ἄταξία).

4.

one order allotted to them. That is, celestial beings - those resident in and of the heavens - have a particular order distinct from that of ordinary mortals, but which order mortals can, via an anados such as described in the Poemandres tractate, journey to, discover, and become a part of.

the periodicity of earthly living beings is of a separation of their bringing together and of the indissoluble corporeal. While the periodicity of celestial beings is unchanging and is maintained from disintegration, the periodicity of

mortals is varied and involves the cycle, the separation, of life and death and yet also involves the reality of death not being an end - since what is deathless, the indissoluble part of what is corporeal, cannot suffer from disintegration.

influencing impressions. αἰσθήσεις. qv. Poemandres 22, and my commentary thereon, for what is meant is not simply 'the [bodily] senses' nor what is perceptible to or perceived by the senses but rather those particular impressions, conveyed by the senses, which may influence a person in a particular way.

what is embodied. The indissoluble part of what is apprehended as corporeal.

5.

perceiverance. νοῦς. Not 'mind', qv. Poemandres 2, tractate III:1, etcetera. As noted in my commentary on Poemandres 2:

I incline toward the view that the sense of the word νοῦς here, as often in classical literature, is perceiverance; that is, a particular type of astute awareness, as of one's surroundings, of one's self, and as in understanding ('reading') a situation often in an instinctive way. Thus, what is not meant is some-thing termed 'mind' (or some faculty thereof), distinguished as this abstract 'thing' termed 'mind' has often been from another entity termed 'the body'.

Perceiverance thus describes the ability to sense, to perceive, when something may be amiss; and hence also of the Greek word implying resolve, purpose, because one had decided on a particular course of action, or because one's awareness of a situation impels or directs one to a particular course of action.

empathy. συμπάθεια.

perception. cf. Poemandres 18. An apprehension of the numinous, and thus of theos, of Kosmos as eikon, and so on.

there is an influencing impression as of the incorporeal and of a noble perceiverance. This refers to 'the first', to theos, the father; with the preceding "apprehension as of the corporeal" referring to 'the second', that is, to Kosmos.

Regarding ἀγαθός as 'noble/nobility', qv. my commentary on Poemandres 22. and especially the commentary on φανερώτερα δέ ἐστι τὰ κακά τὸ δὲ ἀγαθὸν ἄφανές τοῖς φανεροῖς in tractate IV:9.

Thus theos is apprehended - understood, felt - in the same, mystical, numinous, way not only as the incorporeal is, but also as inherently noble.

Speak softly. εὐφήμεσον. qv tractate XI:22.

(Kosmos is ...) within theos. ἐν τῷ θεῷ. Literally, 'within the theos'.

Νοῦς πρὸς Ἑρμῆν

From Perceivance To Hermes

Tractate XI

The eleventh tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum is particularly interesting for two reasons. First, the cosmogony in which Aion, Kronos, and Sophia feature. Second, possible links to the Poemandres tractate, given - for example - the mention of a septenary system and the supposition that Perceivance - νοῦς - who addresses Hermes Trismegistus may well be Poemandres himself.

As with my translations of tractates I, III, and IV of the Corpus Hermeticum, I here transliterate certain Greek words, such as theos, in order to avoid what I have described as 'retrospective re-interpretation'.

ooo

Translation

[1] Take account of this discourse, Hermes Trismegistus, remembering what is said for I shall not refrain from mentioning what occurs to me.

Because there is much difference among the many who speak about theos and all other things, I have not uncovered the actuality. Therefore, my Lord, make it unambiguous for me, for you are the one I trust in this.

[2] Hear then, my son, of theos and of everything: theos, Aion, Kronos, Kosmos, geniture. Theos brought Aion into being; Aion: Kosmos; Kosmos, Kronos; Kronos, geniture. It is as if the quidditas of theos is actuality, honour, the beautiful, good fortune, Sophia. Of Aion, identity; of Kosmos, arrangement; of Kronos, variation; of geniture, Life and Death.

The vigour of theos is perceivration and Psyche; but of Aion: continuance and exemption from death; of Kosmos, a cyclic return and renewal; of Kronos, growth and abatement; of geniture, capability. Aion, thus, is of theos; Kosmos of Aion; Kronos of Kosmos; and geniture of Kronos.

[3] The foundation of all being is theos; of their quidditas, Aion; of their substance, Kosmos. The craft of theos: Aion; the work of Aion: Kosmos, which is not just a coming-into-being but always is, from Aion. Thus it cannot be destroyed since Aion is not destroyable nor will Kosmos cease to be since Aion surrounds it.

But the Sophia of theos is what?

The noble, the beautiful, good fortune, arête, and Aion. From Aion to Kosmos: exemption from death, and continuance of substance.

[4] For that geniture depends on Aion just as Aion does on theos. Geniture and Kronos - in the heavens and on Earth - are jumelle; in the heavens, unchanging and undecaying; yet on Earth, changeable and decayable.

Theos is the psyche of Aion; Aion that of Kosmos; the heavens that of the Earth. Theos is presenced in perceivration, with perceivration presenced in psyche, and psyche in substance, with all of this through Aion, with the whole body, in which are all the bodies, replete with psyche with psyche replete with perceivration and with theos. Above in the heavens the identity is unchanged while on Earth there is changement coming-into-being

[5] Aion maintains this, through necessitas or through foreseeing or through physis, or through whatever other assumption we assume, for all this is the activity of theos. For the activity of theos is an unsurpassable crafting that no one can liken to anything mortal or divine.

Therefore, Hermes, never presume that what is above or below is similar to theos since you will descend down from actuality. For nothing is similar to that which, as the one and only, has no similitude. Never presume that he would delegate his work to someone else, for who else is the cause of life, of exemption from death, of Changement? What else but create?

Theos is not inactive for otherwise everything would be inactive; instead they are replete with theos, and there is nowhere in the cosmos nor anywhere else where there is inaction. Inactive is thus a vacant nomen in regard to a creator and what is brought into being.

[6] For every being there is a coming-into-being, each one in balance with its place, with the creator in all that exists, not found in just some nor creating only some but everything. His craft is in what he creates so that their coming-into

being is not independent of him but rather comes-into-being because of him.

ooo

Correctly consider and observe Kosmos as suggested by me and thus the beauty thereof, a body undecayable and nothing more eldern and yet always vigorous and fresh, even more now than before.

[7] Observe also the septenary cosmos ordered in arrangement by Aion with its separate aeonic orbits. Everything replete with phaos but with no Fire anywhere. For fellowship, and the melding of opposites and the dissimilar, produced phaos shining forth in the activity of theos, progenitor of all that is honourable, archon and hegemon of the septenary cosmos.

The Moon, prodomus of all of those, an instrument of Physis, of the changement of the substance below - with the Earth amid them all, a settled foundation of the beautiful Kosmos - and nourisher and nurturer of those on Earth.

Consider also the numerous deathless, and just how many, as well as deathful lives there are. And amid both the deathless and the deathful, the travelling Moon.

[8] All are replete with psyche, all in motion, some around the heavens with others around the Earth, with those on the right not toward to the left and those on the left not toward the right, not those above to below nor below to above. That all have come-into-being you do not, dear Hermes, have to learn from me, for they have bodies, psyche, motion, and to meld them into one is not possible without someone to bring them together. Such a one must exist and be, in every way, a unity.

[9] For, given dissimilar objects, motion is different and diverse with one hastiness appointed to them all, and thus it is not possible for there to be two or more creators for if there are many then such an arrangement cannot be kept. For the result of many is strifeful emulation of the stronger, and if one of two was the creator of changeable mortal living beings they would covet creating deathless ones even as the creator of the deathless would deathful ones.

If indeed there were two with one substance and the other psyche who would provide the creations? If both of them, which would have the larger part?

[10] Consider that every living being, deathful and deathless, and whether devoid of logos, is formed of substance and psyche, for all living beings presence life while the non-living are substance only. Similarly, psyche of itself from its creator is the cause of the living while the cause of all life is the creator of deathless beings.

What then of the living that die and the deathless ones? For why does the deathless one who creates deathless beings not create other living beings so?

[11] It is evident someone is so creating and that he is One; for Psyche is one, Life is one, Substance is one.

But who is it?

Who could it be if not One, the theos? To whom if not to theos alone would it belong to presence life in living beings?

Theos therefore is One, for having accepted the Kosmos is one, the Sun is one, the Moon is one, and divinity-presenced is one, could you maintain that theos is some other number?

[12] He creates all beings, and how supreme it is for the theos to create life and psyche and the deathless and changement, with you doing so many things, for you see, hear, speak, smell, touch, walk, perceive, and breathe. Yet it is not someone else who is seeing and another who is hearing and another who is speaking and another who is touching and another who is hearing and another who is smelling and another who is walking and another who is perceiving and another who is breathing, but one being doing all such things.

None of which are separate from theos. Just as you are not really living if you are otiose so would theos, if otiose - and it is not the custom to say this - no longer be theos.

[13] If it is demonstrated that no one really exists without producing something how much more so for theos? If there is anything he has not created then - although it is not the custom to say this - he is incomplete, while if theos is complete and not otiose then he creates all things.

For a little longer, Hermes, give way to me and you will more readily apprehend that the work of theos is one: of everything brought-into-being; what is coming-into-being, what has come-into-being, and what will come-into-being. This, my friend, is Life; this is the beautiful, this is the noble; this is the theos.

[14] If you maintain this should be apprehended in deeds, consider when you seek to procreate, for it not the same for him since there is no delight, no colleague. Instead, a working alone, and forever working for he is what he creates. If ever isolated from it, everything would - because of Necessitas - fall apart, with everything dying because there would be no Life. But if everything is alive, and Life is One, then theos is One. While if everything is alive, and Life is One, then theos is One. Also, if everything is alive both in the heavens and on Earth and Life is One for them all as brought-into-being by theos and theos is that, then all are brought-into-being by theos.

Life is the enosis of perceiverance and psyche, while death is not the loss of

what was joined but the end of enosis.

[15] Kosmos is the eikon of theos, Kosmos that of Aion, the Sun that of Aion, and mortals that of the Sun. It is said that changelement is death since the body disintegrates with life departing to the unperceptible. My dear Hermes, while I state there is changelement in Kosmos because every day portions of it come-into-being in the unperceptible, it never disintegrates. These are the occurrences of the Kosmos, cyclicity and occultations; the cyclic a turning and occultation renewal.

[16] The Kosmos is polymorphous and forms are not imposed on it but rather, within itself, it is such changelement. Since the Kosmos is polymorphous who created it and who would that be? Whomsoever cannot be without-form and yet if polymorphous would be akin to Kosmos and if only one form would be lower than Kosmos.

What therefore can be said without confusion given that there should be no confusion concerning apprehending theos? If there is a kind then it is a singular kind, incorporeal, and not subject to perception but revealed through the corporeal.

[17] And do not wonder about an incorporeal kind since it is akin to words, mountains which appear in depictions to be rugged but which when examined are flat and smooth. So heed these words of mine bold as they are but honest, for as mortals cannot be separate from Life, theos cannot be separate from creating nobility since for theos this creating is Life and motion, the movement of everything and the giving of life.

[18] Some of the matters spoken of require a certain apprehension, so consider what I say: everything is in the theos but not as if lying in a particular place - since the place is a body and also immovable and what is lain does not move - but an incorporeal representation apprehends what is lain otherwise.

Thus apprehend what embraces everything and apprehend that the incorporeal has no boundary, that nothing is swifter, nothing as mighty, since the incorporeal is boundless, the swiftest, the mightiest.

[19] And apprehend this about yourself and so urge your psyche to go to any land and, swifter than that urging, it will be there. Likewise, urge it to go to the Ocean and again it will be swiftly there without passing from place to place but as if already there.

Urge it to go up into the heavens and it will be there without the need of any wings. Indeed, nothing will impede it: not the fire of the Sun nor Aether, nor the vortex, nor the bodies of the other stars, but - carving through them all - it will go as far as the furthest body. Should you desire to burst through The Entirety and observe what is beyond - if indeed there be anything beyond that ordered

system - then it is possible for you.

[20] Thus see how much might and swiftness you have. If you can do all those things then cannot theos? In such a manner you should consider theos as having all - Kosmos, The Entirety - as purposes within himself. For until you compare yourself with theos you cannot apprehend theos because what is similar can understand the similar.

Extend yourself greatly, immeasurably; leap beyond every body, surpass Kronos, become Aion, and you can apprehend theos. Having supposed that for you there is nothing that is not possible, regard yourself as deathless, capable of apprehending everything: every craft, all learning, the nature of every living being. Become elevated above every elevation, deeper than every depth. Gather within yourself awareness of every creation; of Fire and Water; the Dry and the Moist; and jointly be at all places on land, at sea, in the heavens. Be not yet born; in the womb; young; old; having died; what is beyond death.

And if you apprehend all that together - durations, places, occurrences, quality, quantity - you will be capable of apprehending theos.

[21] But if you enclose your psyche in your body and lessen it, saying "I comprehend nothing; have no power; fear the sea; am unable to go up into the heavens; do not know who I was and cannot know what I will be," then what is there with you and also with the god?

For, indulging the body and rotten, you are unable to apprehend the beautiful, the noble. To be completely rotten is to be unaware of the numinous, while having the ability to discover, to have volition, to have expectations, is the direct, the better - its own - way to nobility, and which you will encounter everywhere and which will everywhere be perceived whether you anticipate it or not: awake, asleep, at sea; whether journeying by night, by day, when speaking or when silent. For there is nothing that cannot be an eikon of theos.

[22] Do you affirm that theos is unperceived?

Speak softly. Who is more clearly revealed? He created everything such that in them you might discern him, for such is the nobility, such is the arête, of the theos, that he is revealed in everything. For nothing is unperceivable, not even the incorporeal, with perceivability evident through apprehension, theos through creation.

So Trismegistus, let what has been revealed so far be apprehended by you, and if you consider other things in the same way you will not be deceived.

Commentary

Title.

perceivance. νοῦς. qv. my commentary on the term in Poemandres where I wrote:

"The conventional interpretation [of νοῦς] is 'mind', as if in contrast to 'the body' and/or as if some fixed philosophical and abstract principle is meant or implied.

This conventional interpretation is in my view incorrect, being another example of not only retrospective reinterpretation but of using a word which has acquired, over the past thousand years or more, certain meanings which detract from an understanding of the original text. Retrospective reinterpretation because the assumption is that what is being described is an axiomatic, reasoned, philosophy centred on ideations such as Thought, Mind, and Logos, rather than what it is: an attempt to describe, in fallible words, a personal intuition about our existence, our human nature, and which intuition is said to emanate from a supernatural being named Poemandres [...]

I incline toward the view that the sense of the word νοῦς here, as often in classical literature, is *perceivance*; that is, a particular type of astute awareness, as of one's surroundings, of one's self, and as in understanding ('reading') a situation often in an instinctive way. Thus, what is not meant is some-thing termed 'mind' (or some faculty thereof), distinguished as this abstract 'thing' termed 'mind' has often been from another entity termed 'the body'.

Perceivance thus describes the ability to sense, to perceive, when something may be amiss; and hence also of the Greek word implying resolve, purpose, because one had decided on a particular course of action, or because one's awareness of a situation impels or directs one to a particular course of action."

1.

The first paragraph of this section is spoken by Perceivance [Νοῦς], the second by Hermes Trismegistus.

theos. As with my translations of tractates I, III, and IV of the Corpus

Hermeticum, I here transliterate θεός rather than translate as God (as most others do) which translation in my opinion imposes a particular and Christian interpretation on the text given two thousand years of Christian exegesis regarding both God and the Old and New Testaments. A suitable alternative to 'theos' might be 'the god', which emphasizes that the theos described in this tractate is, like Zeus in classical times, the pre-eminent divinity. Occasionally, when the text warrants it - for example τῷ θεῷ and εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός - I have used 'the theos' instead of theos.

I have not uncovered the actuality. ἐγὼ τὸ ἀληθές οὐκ ἔμαθον. I incline toward the view that the sense of ἀληθής here is not some abstract (disputable) 'truth' but rather of the reality, the actuality, beyond the conflicting views, beyond appearance, and thus of uncovering - of learning - the reality of theos and other things.

2.

Aion. αἰών. A transliteration since the usual translation of 'eternity' imposes modern (cosmological and theological) meanings on the text, especially as αἰών can also imply a personification of a 'divine being', and 'an age or era' of long duration, or the lifespan of a mortal (as in Herodotus: πρὶν τελευτήσαντα καλῶς τὸν αἰῶνα πύθωμαι, Book 1, 32.5). In Aristotle, αἰών has specific meanings which the English term 'eternity' does not describe. For instance, in Περὶ Οὐρανοῦ where he writes: Ὅτι μὲν οὖν οὔτε γέγονεν ὁ πᾶς οὐρανὸς οὔτ' ἐνδέχεται φθαρῆναι, καθάπερ τινὲς φασιν αὐτόν, ἀλλ' ἔστιν εἷς καὶ αἰδίος, ἀρχὴν μὲν καὶ τελευτὴν οὐκ ἔχων τοῦ παντὸς αἰῶνος, ἔχων δὲ καὶ περιέχων ἐν αὐτῷ τὸν ἄπειρον χρόνον (Book 2, 1).

Which is somewhat echoed in this tractate in respect of Kosmos which is not just a coming-into-being but always just *is*, from Aion (γενόμενος οὔποτε καὶ ἀεὶ γινόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος).

Interestingly, Jung used the term to describe a particular archetype, one which provides "intimations of a kind of enantiodromian reversal of dominants" as he writes in his *Aion: Researches Into The Phenomenology Of The Self*.

In addition, αἰών - as with the following χρόνος - might well be a personification, or an esoteric/philosophical term or principle which requires interpretation, as might κόσμος (Kosmos). Since κόσμος here does not necessarily imply what we now understand, via sciences such as astronomy, as the physical cosmos/universe it seems inappropriate to translate it as 'the cosmos', especially given expressions such as οὐδὲ ἀπολεῖται τι τῶν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τοῦ κόσμου ὑπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος ἐμπεριεχομένου.

Kronos. χρόνος. For reasons I have explained many times in my writings (for instance in Appendix I), I do not translate χρόνος as 'time', which translation seems to me to impose a particular modern meaning on the text given that for

centuries the term 'time' has denoted a certain regularity (hours, minutes) measured by a mechanism such as a clock and given that the term 'duration' is usually more appropriate in relation to ancient Greek texts where the duration between, for example, the season of Summer and the season of Autumn was determined by the observations (the appearance in the night sky) of certain constellations and stars.

geniture. γένεσις. The unusual English word geniture expresses the meaning of γένεσις here: that which or those whom have their genesis (and their subsequent development) from or because of something else or because of someone else. Alongside χρόνος, αἰών, and κόσμος, here γένεσις could well be a personification.

It is as if the quidditas of theos is [...] τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ ὡςπερ οὐσία ἐστὶ... Quidditas - post-classical Latin, from whence the English word quiddity - is more appropriate here, in respect of οὐσία, than essence, especially as 'essence' now has so many non-philosophical and modern connotations. Quidditas is thus a philosophical term which requires contextual interpretation. In respect of οὐσία, qv. Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015a: ἐκ δὲ τῶν εἰρημένων ἡ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἡ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὕλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικῇ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστὶν, ἐνυπάρχουσά πως ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ. [Given the foregoing, then principally - and to be exact - physis denotes the quidditas of beings having change inherent within them; for substantia has been denoted by physis because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changes predicated on it. For physis is inherent change either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.]

In addition, I follow the MSS, which have τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, ἡ εὐδαιμονία.

honour. ἀγαθός. That is, the substance of theos - in mortals - is manifest in the brave, in nobility of character, in what being noble means. Regarding ἀγαθός as honour rather than some abstract, disputable 'good', qv. my commentary (i) on Poemandres 22 and (ii) on τὰ μὲν γὰρ φαινόμενα τέρπει [...] φανεροῖς in section 9 of Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς (tractate IV), and (iii) Appendix II and III.

good fortune. εὐδαιμονία.

Sophia. σοφία. A transliteration, because - just like ἀληθής - it is not necessarily here something abstract, something disputable, such as 'wisdom' or 'good judgement'. Just as with Aion and Kronos, it might be a personification or used here as an esoteric term which thus requires contextual interpretation.

identity...arrangement. ταυτότης...τάξις. An alternative for 'identity' would be

'form' (but not necessarily in the sense used by Plato and Aristotle) for the meaning seems to be that Aion provides the form, the identity, of beings with Kosmos arranging these forms into a particular order.

of Kronos, variation. See the note on Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book 5, 1015α, above.

vigour. ἐνέργεια. As at Poemandres 14, not 'energy' given that the word energy has too many modern connotations and thus distracts from the meaning here. See also the note on 'activity' in section 5 where 'activity' is a more perspicacious translation.

cyclic return and renewal. ἀποκατάστασις καὶ ἀνταποκατάστασις. I take this expression as implying something metaphysical rather than astronomical; an astronomical meaning as described, for example, in the Greek fragments of a book on astrology by Dorotheus of Sidon (qv. *Dorothei Sidonii carmen astrologicum. Interpretationem Arabicam in linguam Anglicam versam una cum Dorothei fragmentis et Graecis et Latinis*, edited by Pingree, Teubner, Leipzig, 1976).

For there is a similar metaphysical theme in Poemandres 17 - μέχρι περιόδου τέλους (cyclic until its completion) - with apokatastasis becoming (possibly as an echo of Greek Stoicism) a part of early Christian exegesis as exemplified by Gregory of Nyssa who wrote ἀνάστασις ἐστὶν ἡ εἰς τὸ ἀρχαῖον τῆς φύσεως ἡμῶν ἀποκατάστασις (*De Anima et Resurrectione*, 156C) where apokatastasis implies a return to, a resurrection of, the former state of being (physis) of mortals lost through 'original sin' and in respect of which returning baptism is a beginning.

3.

substance. ὕλη. qv. Poemandres 10. Given that the ancient Greek term does not exactly mean 'matter' in the modern sense (as in the science of Physics) it is better to find an alternative. Hence substance, the materia of 'things' and living beings. Thus 'materia' would be another suitable translation here of ὕλη.

The craft of theos: Aion. δύναμις δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἰών. Aion as artisan who has, through theos, the power to not only craft Kosmos but also renew it, for Kosmos was/is not just a once occurring coming-into-being but is forever renewed: γενόμενος οὐποτε, καὶ ἀεὶ γινόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος.

On δύναμις as implying an 'artisan-creator' rather than just the 'power/strength' of a divinity, qv. the doxology in Poemandres 31.

From Aion to Kosmos. The suggestion is that 'the cosmic order' - Kosmos - is the work of Aion who/which is the source of, provides, 'the exemption from death' and the continuance of materia/substantia, the cyclic return and renewal.

4.

jumelle. διπλοῦς. As noted in my commentary on Poemandres 14, "The much underused and descriptive English word *jumelle* - from the Latin *gemellus* - describes some-thing made in, or composed of, two parts, and is therefore most suitable here, more so than common words such as 'double' or twofold."

psyche. ψυχή. Avoiding the usual translation of 'soul' which imposes various, disputable, religious and philosophical meanings (including modern ones) on the text. A useful summary of the use of ψυχή from classical to Greco-Roman times is given in DeWitt Burton: *Spirit, Soul, and Flesh: The Usage of Πνεῦμα, Ψυχή, and Σάρξ in Greek Writings and Translated Works from the Earliest Period to 225 AD* (University of Chicago Press, 1918).

Theos is presenced in perceivration... The term 'presenced' expresses the esoteric meaning of the text better than something such as "theos is in perceivration", especially given what follows: a description of the layers of being, of the whole, complete, cosmic, Body having within it other bodies, other layers or types of being, such as Kronos.

Within, it is filled; outside, it is enclosed ... a vast, fully-formed, life. The suggestion is that it - the cosmic Body - is enclosed, encircled, by psyche which fills the cosmos with Life.

It is possible to understand this mystically as an allusion to the difference between what is esoteric and what is exoteric, with 'within' referring to an inner/esoteric perception and understanding, and 'outer' as referring to the exoteric. That is, the exoteric understanding is of something vast, fully-formed, complete, and living (μέγα καὶ τέλειον ζῶον) while the inner understanding is of living beings who, "replete with psyche", are connected to theos through perceivration. The exoteric perception is also described in the preceding "unchanging and undecaying" aspect of the heavens, with the esoteric referring to the "changeable and decayable" nature of living things on Earth.

5.

Necessitas. Although the Latin 'Necessitas' is a suitable alternative for the Greek, a transliteration (Ananke) is perhaps preferable (although less readable), because even if what is meant is not 'wyrd' - qv. Ἀνάγκης, the primordial goddess of incumbency, of wyrd, of that which is beyond, and the origin of, what we often describe as our Fate as a mortal being [cf. Empedocles, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, Diels-Kranz, 31, B115] - English terms such as 'necessity' and 'constraint' are somewhat inadequate, vague, especially given what follows: εἴτε

πρόνοιαν εἴτε φύσιν καὶ εἴ τι ἄλλο οἶεται ἢ οἰήσεται τις.

Thus the term requires contextual interpretation.

physis. φύσις. An important theme/principle in the Poemandres tractate and in Aristotle, and a term which suggests more than what the English terms Nature - and the 'nature' or 'character' of a thing or person - denote. In respect of Aristotle, qv. Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015α, quoted above in respect of my use of the term quidditas.

What physis denotes is something ontological: a revealing, a manifestation, of not only the true nature of beings but also of the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being.

activity. For ἐνέργεια here since the term 'energy' is - given its modern and scientific connotations - inappropriate and misleading.

crafting. See the note on δύναμις δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἰών above.

descend down. In respect of ἐκπεσῆ, cf. Basil of Caesarea, Epistulae, Γλυκερίω: ἐκπεσῆ δὲ καὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ μετὰ τῶν μελῶν σου καὶ τῆς στολῆς.

changelement. μεταβολή. I have here chosen 'changelement' in preference to 'change' since changelement (coming into English use around 1584) is more specific than 'change', suggesting variation, alteration, development, unfolding, transmutation.

Inactive is thus a vacant nomen. ἀργία γὰρ ὄνομα κενόν ἐστι. The unusual English word nomen - a direct borrowing from the Latin - is more appropriate than 'word' since nomen can mean a name and also a designation, for what is suggested is that in respect of someone who crafts, creates, things - theos - and what is created, brought-into-being, the designation and the name 'inactive' are not there. A suitable simile might be that of the second personal name (nomen) of a Roman citizen which designated their *gens* and, later, their status. Thus theos has no gens because theos is unique, and the status of theos cannot be compared to that of any other being because the status of theos is also unique.

In respect of ποιέω, I prefer 'create' rather than the somewhat prosaic 'make'.

6.

I am inclined to agree with Scott - *Hermetica*, Volume I, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1924, p.210 - that after the end of the first paragraph of section 6 [For every being there is a coming-into-being ... not independent of him but rather comes-into-being because of him] the tractate should be divided. Indeed, there might even have been a melding of two different tractates (or two different authors) given the contrast between the first and the second part.

undecayable. ἀκήρατος. That is, a privation of κηραίνω: decay, spoiled, perish. Undecayable is more apt here than 'undefiled' or 'pure' especially as Thomas More, in 1534 in his A Treatise On The Passion, wrote of "the infinite perfection of their undecayable glory."

eldern. For παλαιός. The Middle English forms of eldern include elldern and eldrin, and the etymology is 'elder' plus the suffix 'en'. In comparison to this rather evocative English word, alternatives such as 'ancient' seem somewhat prosaic.

7.

Observe also the septenary cosmos ... separate aeonic orbits. Nock - who as Copenhaver et al - renders αἰών as 'eternity' translates this passage as: Vois aussi la hiérarchie des sept cieux, formés en bon ordre suivant une disposition éternelle, remplissant, chacun par une différente, l'éternité.

phaos. As in my Poemandres - and for reasons explained there - a transliteration of φῶς, using the Homeric φάος. To translate simply as 'light' obscures the elemental nature of phaos.

no fire anywhere. As in the Poemandres tractate (qv. sections 4, 5, et seq.) not 'fire' in the literal sense but fire as an elemental principle. In the Poemandres tractate - which describes the origins of beings - Fire plays an important role, as at section 17,

"those seven came into being in this way. Earth was muliebral, Water was lustful, and Fire maturing. From Æther, the pneuma, and with Physis bringing forth human-shaped bodies. Of Life and phaos, the human came to be of psyche and perceiviation; from Life - psyche; from phaos - perceiviation; and with everything in the observable cosmic order cyclic until its completion."

fellowship. The meaning of φιλία here is debatable, as usual renderings such as 'love' and 'friendship' seem somewhat inappropriate given the context. It is possible it refers to a principle such as the one suggested by Empedocles where it is the apparent opposite of νεῖκος, qv. the mention of Empedocles by Isocrates (Antidosis, 15.268) - Ἐμπεδοκλῆς δὲ τέτταρα, καὶ νεῖκος καὶ φιλίαν ἐν αὐτοῖς - and fragments such as 31, B35 and 31, B115 (Diels-Kranz: Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker) with νεῖκος implying 'disagreement' and φιλότης something akin to 'fellowship'.

The contrast between νεῖκος and φιλότης is also mentioned - interestingly in regard to the source of motion - by Aristotle in Metaphysics, Book 12, 1072a:

Ἐμπεδοκλῆς φιλίας καὶ τὸ νεῖκος.

archon and hegemon. I follow the MSS which have ἄρχων καὶ ἡγέμων. Since both ἄρχων and ἡγέμων have been assimilated into the English language (ἄρχων c. 1755 and ἡγέμων c. 1829) and retain their original meaning it seemed unnecessary to translate them.

prodromus. πρόδρομος. Another Greek word assimilated into the English language (c. 1602 and appearing in a translation of Ovid's Salmacis and Hermaphroditus) and which retains the meaning of the Greek here: a forerunner, a precursor; a moving ahead and in front of.

the Earth amid them all. I incline toward the view that τήν τε γῆν μέσσην τοῦ παντός does not mean that 'the Earth is at the centre of the universe' (or something similar) - since κόσμος is not directly mentioned - but rather that the Earth is in the midst of - among - all, the whole, (παντός) that exists.

foundation. I take the sense of ὑποστάθμη here to be 'foundation' rather than implying some sort of 'sediment', gross or otherwise.

nurturer. τιθήνη.

deathless, deathful. γν. Poemandres 14: θνητὸς μὲν διὰ τὸ σῶμα, ἀθάνατος δὲ διὰ τὸν οὐσιώδη ἄνθρωπον. As there, I take the English words from Chapman's *Hymn to Venus* from the Homeric Hymns: "That with a deathless goddess lay a deathful man."

travelling. ὑποστάθμη. The context suggests 'travelling', and 'going around or about' in a general sense, rather than 'circling' in some defined astronomical sense.

8.

all in motion. In a passage critical of Plato and in respect of motion, psyche and the heavens, Aristotle in his *Metaphysics* wrote: τὸ αὐτὸ ἑαυτὸ κινεῖν: ὕστερον γὰρ καὶ ἅμα τῷ οὐρανῷ ἢ ψυχῇ, ὥς φησίν. (Book 12, 1072a)

in every way, a unity. cf. sections 10 and 11 of the Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς tractate (IV) with their mention of μονάς.

hastiness. ταχυτής. To translate as either 'speed' or 'velocity' is to leave the text open to misinterpretation, since the concept of speed/velocity as a measure (precise or otherwise) of the time taken to travel a certain distance was unknown in the ancient world.

10.

devoid of logos. γν. Poemander 10. As there, ἄλογος is simply 'without/devoid of or lacking in logos'. It does not necessarily here, or there, imply 'irrational' or 'unreasoning'. It might, for example, be referring to how logos is explained in texts such as Poemandres where distinctions are made between logoi, such as pneuma logos and phasma logos.

In addition, I follow the MSS which have only καὶ τοῦ ἀλόγου.

presence life. ἔμψυχος. That is, are living; have life; embody, are animated by, life; and thus are not lifelessly cold.

psyche of itself [...] the creator of deathless being. Although the Greek wording is somewhat convoluted the meaning is that while psyche is the "cause of the life" of beings which are animated with life, it is the creator of deathless life who is the cause of all life.

What then of the living that die and the deathless ones? I follow the emendation of Tiedemann who has ἀθάνατων in place of θνητῶν.

11.

if not One, the theos. The phrase εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός occurs in Mark 10.18 and Luke 18.19. I have translated literally in an attempt to preserve the meaning, lost if one translates as The One God.

Theos therefore is One. I have omitted the following γελοιότατον - "most absurd" - as a gloss. In respect of 'One' here - εἷς - what is implied is not the numeral one but rather "not composed of separate parts", complete of itself, the opposite of 'many', and so on. That is, an undivided unity.

divinity-presenced. θεϊότης. This word imputes the sense of 'the divine (made) manifest' or less literally 'divine-ness' whence the usual translation of 'divinity'. I have opted for divinity-presenced to express something of its original meaning and its uncommonality.

12.

He creates all things. I have omitted the following ἐν πολλῷ γελοιότατον as an untranslatable gloss.

otiose. καταργέω. Since otiose implies more than being 'idle' or 'unoccupied' it is apt, implying as it does "having no practical function; redundant; superfluous".

13.

no one really exists without producing... Following the emendations of Nock, who has σε μηδὲν ποιοῦντα μὴ δυνάμενον εἶναι.

apprehend. νοέω. To apprehend also in the sense of 'discover'.

this is Life; this is the beautiful, this is the noble; this is the theos. ἔστι δὲ τοῦτο [...] ζωή, τοῦτο δὲ ἐστὶ τὸ καλόν, τοῦτο δὲ ἐστὶ τὸ ἀγαθόν, τοῦτό ἐστιν ὁ θεός. A succinct expression of the main theme of the tractate and of one of the main themes of the hermetic weltanschauung.

14.

enosis. ἔνωσις. A transliteration given that it is a mystical term with a particular meaning and describes something more than is denoted by the ordinary English word 'union'. It was, for example used by Plotinus, by Maximus of Constantinople, and was part of the mystic philosophy attributed to Pseudo-Dionysius, The Areopagite - qv. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, Series Graeca. vol IV, 396A. 1857 - and denoted, for Plotinus, a desirable ascent (ἄνοδος) and a 'merging with The One', and for both the Areopagite and Maximus of Constantinople a self-less mystical experience of God.

15.

eikon. εἰκὼν. Another mystical term requiring contextual interpretation, cf. Poemandres 31, regarding which I wrote in my commentary: "I have transliterated εἰκὼν as here it does not only mean what the English words 'image' or 'likeness' suggest or imply, but rather it is similar to what Maximus of Constantinople in his Mystagogia [Patrologiae Graeca, 91, c.0658] explains. Which is of we humans, and the cosmos, and Nature, and psyche, as eikons, although according to Maximus it is the Christian church itself (as manifest and embodied in Jesus of Nazareth and the Apostles and their successors and in scripture) which, being the eikon of God, enables we humans to recognize this, recognize God, be in communion with God, return to God, and thus find and fulfil the meaning of our being, our existence."

My dear Hermes. Omitting the following δεισιδαίμων ὥς ἀκούεις as a gloss.

occurrences. πάθη. I interpret this not in some anthropomorphic way - as 'passions' - but metaphysically (as akin to πάθημα), and thus as occurrences, events, happenings, that here regularly occur to Kosmos and which change and renew it despite (or perhaps because of) the change it undergoes. cf. Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 1, 982b: οἷον περὶ τε τῶν τῆς σελήνης παθημάτων καὶ τῶν περὶ τὸν ἥλιον καὶ ἄστρα καὶ περὶ τῆς τοῦ παντὸς γενέσεως.

the cyclic a turning. The meaning here of στροφή is problematic. Given the context, my suggestion is 'turning' in the sense of a change that is positive and

possibility evolutionary, as πάθη can lead to positive change, in humans, in Nature, and in things.

16.

polymorphous. παντόμορφος. As for the rest of the sentence, vis-a-vis 'form', there is no adequate, unambiguous, word to re-present μορφή given how, for example, the English term 'morph' has acquired various meanings irrelevant here and given that the English term 'form' has associations with Plato when used to translate ἰδέα.

without-form. ἄμορφος.

kind. For ἰδέα. To avoid confusion with 'form' and because it is apposite here.

17.

incorporeal kind. In respect of ἀσώματος, cf. the comment about Socrates and Plato in Placita Philosophorum by Pseudo-Plutarch: τὸν θεὸν τὴν ὕλην τὴν ἰδέαν. ὁ δὲ θεὸς νοῦς ἐστὶ τοῦ κόσμου, ὕλη δὲ τὸ ὑποκείμενον πρῶτον γενέσκει καὶ φθορᾷ, ἰδέα δ' οὐσία ἀσώματος ἐν τοῖς νοήμασι καὶ ταῖς φαντασίαις τοῦ θεοῦ. (1.3)

mountains which appear in depictions. I have chosen 'depictions' because depiction could refer to paintings on vases or to wall-paintings or to some other medium or art-form where mountains might be depicted, and it is not clear from the context which is meant.

18.

φαντασία. Not here simply 'appearance' in the ordinary sense of the term but a 'making visible' such that it is apprehended by us in a particular way, as a re-presentation of what it actually is. Hence: "an incorporeal representation apprehends what is lain otherwise."

19.

urge your psyche to go to... The whole passage is interesting and evocative, with psyche here signifying 'spirit' as in "let your spirit wander to other places" and thus invoking something akin to what we now might describe as conscious imagination.

go to any land. Following the MSS rather than the emendation Nock accepts which is εἰς Ἰνδικὴν. There seems to me no justification for jarringly introducing India here.

Ocean. Ὠκεανός. That is, a sea beyond the Mediterranean, such as the Atlantic.

Aether. cf. Poemandres 17, ἐκ δὲ αἰθέρος τὸ πνεῦμα ἔλαβε, where I noted in my commentary: "It is best to transliterate αἰθήρ - as Æther - given that it, like Earth, Air, Fire, Water, and pneuma, is an elemental principle, or a type of (or a particular) being, or some-thing archetypal."

nor the vortex. οὐχ ἡ δίνη. Presumably δίνη here refers to the celestial movement of the planets and stars as observed from Earth.

burst through. cf. Poemandres 14: ἀναρρήξας τὸ κράτος τῶν κύκλων, "burst through the strength of the spheres."

The Entirety. Even though 'universe' is implied, I have refrained from using that English word given its modern astronomical and cosmological connotations, and have instead opted for a literal translation of ὅλος.

ordered system. κόσμος here as 'the ordered system' just described: the land, ocean, Sun, the heavens, the bodies of the stars.

20.

purposes. νοήματα.

21.

enclose your psyche in your body. cf. section I of tractate VII where enclosing the psyche in the body is also mentioned.

indulging the body and rotten. φιλοσώματος here implies 'indulging the body' rather than 'loving the body' just as κακός implies 'rotten', 'base', rather than some abstract, disputable 'evil' or (vide Nock) "le vice suprême."

the numinous. τὸ θεῖον. In other words, 'the divine'.

its own (way). Following the MSS which have ἰδία, omitted by Nock.

eikon. Tentatively reading οὐδὲν γάρ ἐστιν ὃ οὐκ εἰκὼν θείου, which is not altogether satisfactory. The MSS have εἰκόνι. Nock emends to οὐδὲν γάρ ἐστιν ὃ οὐκ ἔστιν (there is nothing that it is not) which seems somewhat at odds with the preceding "to be completely rotten is..." and with theos/the numinous being evident, presenced, in τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, ἡ εὐδαιμονία.

Regarding eikon, qv. the note in the commentary on section 15.

22.

Speak softly. εὐφήμησον is a formulaic phrase (cf. Tractate XIII:8, ὦ τέκνον, καὶ εὐφήμησον καὶ διὰ τοῦτο οὐ καταπαύσει τὸ ἔλεος εἰς ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ) suggesting "speak softly" and with reverence.

Περὶ νοῦ κοινοῦ πρὸς Τάτ

To Thoth, Concerning Mutual Perceivation

Tractate XII

ο ο ο

Introduction

While the first few sentences of the twelfth tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum have some similarity to what Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, wrote in a polemic a century or two later [1], the rest of the twelfth tractate - with its mention of the Ἀγαθὸς Δαίμων (the Noble Daimon), with its echo of Heraclitus, with its mention that "some mortals are deities with their mortal nature close to divinity," and with its themes of ψυχή (psyche) and ἀνάγκη (wyrð, 'necessity', 'fate') - is ineluctably part of Greco-Roman paganism, where by the term paganism I personally - following Cicero [3] - mean "an apprehension of the complete unity (a cosmic order, κόσμος, mundus) beyond the apparent parts of that unity, together with the perceivation that we mortals - albeit a mere and fallible part of the unity - have been gifted with our existence so that we may perceive and understand this unity, and, having so perceived, may ourselves seek to be whole, and thus become as balanced (perfectus), as harmonious, as the unity itself." [3] Furthermore, this unity derives from 'the theos', the primary divinity, who gifted we mortals with life, and is manifest in - presenced by - other divinities, by daimons [4], and by what we have come to describe as Nature, that is, as the natural world existing on Earth with its diversity of living beings.

Furthermore, although, as with several other tractates, the name of Τάτ (Thoth) appears in the title, there is nothing in the text, or in the other texts of the Corpus, which points to native Egyptian influence; a lack of influence supported

by the recent scholarly edition of the ancient *Book of Thoth* edited by Jasnow and Zauzich [5], and by the earlier work of A-J. Festugiere [6].

ooo

[1] *Epistula de Decretis Nycaenae Synodi*, II, 3f, and IV, 22ff.

[2] "Neque enim est quicquam aliud praeter mundum quod nihil absit quodque undique aptum atque perfectum expletumque sit omnibus suis numeris et partibus [...] ipse autem homo ortus est ad mundum contemplandum et imitandum - nullo modo perfectus, sed est quaedam particula perfecti." M. Tullius Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, Liber Secundus, xiii, xiv, 37

[3] The quotation is from my 2014 essay *Education And the Culture of Patheism*, and paraphrases what Cicero wrote in Book II (xiii and xiv) of his *De Natura Deorum*.

As I noted in the aforementioned essay,

"it is my considered opinion that the English term 'balanced' (a natural completeness, a natural equilibrium) is often a better translation of the classical Latin *perfectus* than the commonly accepted translation of 'perfect', given what the English word 'perfect' now imputes (as in, for example, 'cannot be improved upon'), and given the association of the word 'perfect' with Christian theology and exegesis (as, for example, in suggesting a moral perfection)."

[4] A δαίμων was considered to be a divinity who undertook to protect places 'sacred to the gods' or who - following the deliberations of a particular deity or of various deities - undertook to intercede in the lives of mortals by, for example, bringing them good fortune or misfortune. It was thus a tradition in ancient Greece and Rome to, at a meal, toast with wine the Ἀγαθὸς Δαίμων in the hope that he would bring them good fortune. Similarly, the Romans especially would offer a toast to the Ἄγνωστος Θεός (the Unknown Theos) and/or to the Ἄγνωστος Δαίμων (the Unknown Daemon) in the hope of not offending a deity or daimon whose name they did not know.

To translate δαίμων as 'demon' - as some do - is misleading, and can lead to a retrospective reinterpretation of the text given what the English term 'demon' now imputes as a result of over a thousand years of Christianity.

[5] Richard Jasnow & Karl-Theodore Zauzich, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of Thoth: A Demotic Discourse on Knowledge and Pendant to the Classical Hermetica*. Volume 1: Text. Harrassowitz, 2005.

[6] A.J. Festugière, *La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*, 4 volumes. J. Gabalda, 1944-1954

Translation

[1] Perceiveration, Thoth, is of the quidditas of theos, if there is a quidditas of theos, and if so then only theos completely understands what that quidditas is. Perceiveration is thus not separated from the quiddity of theos but rather expands forth, as does the light of the Sun, with this perceiveration, in mortals, theos so that some mortals are deities with their mortal nature close to divinity.

For the noble daimon spoke of deities as deathless mortals and of mortals as deathful deities, while in living beings deprived of logos perceiverance is their physis.

[2] Where psyche is, there also is perceiveration just as where Life is there also is psyche. But in living beings deprived of logos, psyche is Life empty of perceiverance while perceiveration is the patron of the psyche of mortals labouring for their nobility. For those deprived of logos it co-operates with the physis of each, while for mortals it works against that.

Every psyche presented in a body is naturally rotted by pleasure and pain for in that mixtion of a body the pleasure and the pain boil as profluvia into which the psyche is immersed.

[3] Whatever psyches perceiveration governs it manifests its own resplendence, working as it does against their predispositions. Just as an honourable physician painfully uses cautery or a knife on a body seized by sickness so does perceiveration distress psyche, extracting from it that pleasure which is the genesis of all psyche's sickness.

A serious sickness of psyche is neglect of the divine from whence prognostications and thence all rottenness and nothing noble. Yet perceiveration can work against this to secure nobility for psyche as the physician does for soundness of body.

[4] But the psyche of mortals who do not have perceiveration as their guide suffer the same as living beings deprived of logos, for when there is co-operation with them and a letting-loose of yearnings they are dragged along

by their cravings to be voided of logos, and - akin to living beings deprived of logos - they cannot stop their anger nor their emotive yearnings nor become disgusted by rottenness.

For such yearnings and anger are overwhelmingly bad. And on those ones, the theos - avenger, confutant - will impose what custom demands.

[5] Father, if that is so, then your previous discourse regarding Meiros seems at risk of being altered. For if it is indeed Meiros-decreed for someone to be unfaithful or desecrate what is sacred or be otherwise bad, then why is that person punished when they have been constrained by Meiros to do the deed?

My son, all that is done is Meiros-decreed with nothing corporeal independent of that. For neither nobility nor rottenness are produced by accident. It is Meiros-decreed that they having done what is bad are afflicted which is why it was done: to be afflicted by what afflicts them.

[6] But for now let the discourse not be about badness or Meiros; they are spoken about elsewhere. Instead, let us discourse about perceiviation; what it is able to do and how it varies. For mortals, it is a particular thing while for living beings deprived of logos it is something else. Also, in those other living beings it does not produce benefits. But because it can control the irritable, the covetous, it is not the same for everyone with it being appreciated that some of those persons are reasonable while others are unreasonable.

All mortals are subjected to Meiros as well as to geniture and changement, which are the origin and the consummation of Meiros,

[7] with all mortals afflicted by what is Meiros-decreed, although those gifted with sentience who - as mentioned - are governed by perceiviation are not afflicted in the same way as others. Because they are distanced from rottenness, they are not afflicted by the rotten.

What, father, are you then saying? That the unfaithful one, that the killer, and all other such ones, are not bad?

My son, the one gifted with sentience will, though not unfaithful, be afflicted as if they had been unfaithful just as, though not a killer, they will as if they had killed. It is not possible to avoid geniture nor the disposition of changement although the one of perceiviation can avoid rottenness.

[8] I heard that from of old the noble daimon spoke of - and would that he had written it for that would have greatly benefited the race of mortals since he alone, my son, as first-born divinity beholding everything, certainly gave voice to divine logoi - but, whatever, I heard him to say that all that exists is one, particularly conceptible things.

We have our being in potentiality, in activity, in Aion, whose perceivance is noble as is his psyche, and with this as it is, there is nothing separable among what is conceptible. Thus perceivance, Archon of everything and also the psyche of theos, can do whatever it desires.

[9] Therefore you should understand, relating these words to your previous question when you asked about Meiros. For if, my son, you diligently eliminate disputatious argument you will discover that perceivance - psyche of theos - does in truth rule over Meiros and Custom and everything else. There is nothing he is unable to do: not placing a mortal psyche over Meiros, nor, if negligent of what comes to pass, placing it under Meiros. And of what the noble daimon said, these were the most excellent about all this.

How numinous, father; and how true, how beneficial.

[10] And now, can you explain this to me. You said that perceivance in living beings deprived of logos is in accordance with their physis and in consort with their cravings. Yet the cravings of living beings deprived of logos are, I assume, somatic, and if perceivance co-operates with the cravings and if the cravings of those deprived of logos are somatic then is not perceivance also somatic, in alliance with the somatic?

Excellent, my son. A good question which I have to answer.

[11] Everything incorporeal when corporified is somatical, although it is properly of the somatic. For all that changes is incorporeal with all that is changed corporeal. The incorporeal is changed by perceivance, with changeability somatic. Both the changing and the changed are affected, with one leading, the other following. If released from the corporeal, there is release from the somatic. In particular, my son, there is nothing that is asomatic with everything somatic with the somatic being different from the somatical. For one is vigorous, the other non-active. The corporeal, in itself, is vigorous, either when changed or when not changing, and whichever it is, it is somatic, However, the incorporeal is always acted upon which is why it is somatical.

But do not allow such denotata to vex you, for vigour and the somatic are the same, although there is nothing wrong in using the better-sounding denotatum.

[12] Father, that was a clear answer that you gave.

Take note, my son, of the two things that theos has favoured mortals with, over and above all other deathful living beings: perceivance and logos, equal in value to deathlessness, and if they use those as required then there is no difference between them and the deathless. And when they depart from the corporeal they will be escorted by both to the assembly of the gods and the fortunate ones.

[13] And yet, father, do other living beings not have language?

No, my son, they have sounds, and language is quite different from sounds. Language is shared among all mortals while each kind of living being has its own sounds.

And also, father, among mortals for each folk have a different language.

Yes, my son, different but since mortal nature is One then language is also One, for when interpreted they are found to be the same whether in Egypt or in Persia or in Hellas. Thus it seems, my child, that you are unaware of the significance and the merit of language.

That hallowed divinity, the noble daimon, spoke of psyche in corporeality, of perceivation in psyche, of logos in perceivation, of perceivation in the theos, and of the theos as the father of those.

[14] For logos is eikon of perceivation, perceivation that of theos, with corporeality that of outward form, and outward form that of psyche. The finest part of Substance is Air. Of Air, psyche. Of psyche, perceivation. Of perceivation, theos, with theos encompassing all things and within all things; with perceivation encompassing psyche, psyche encompassing Air, and Air encompassing Substance.

Necessitas, forseeing, and physis, are implements of Kosmos, and of the arrangement of Substance, and whatever is apprehended is essence with that essence of each their ipseity. Of the corpora that exist, each is a multiplicity, and since the ipseity of combined corpora is the changement of one corpus to another they always retain the imputrescence of ipseity.

[15] Yet in other combined corpora there is for each of them an arithmos, for without arithmos it is not possible for such a bringing together, such a melding, such a dissolution, to come-into-being. Henads beget and grow arithmos and, on its dissolution, receive it into themselves.

Substance is One, and the complete cosmic order - a mighty theos and eikon of and in unison with a mightier one - is, in maintaining the arrangements and the purpose of the father, replete with Life. And through the paternally given cyclic return of Aion there is nothing within it - in whole or in part - which is not alive.

For nothing of the cosmic order that has come-into-being is - or is now or will be - necrotic since the father has determined that Life shall be there while it exists. And thus, because of Necessitas, it is divine.

[16] Thus, how - my son - in that eikon of all things with its repletion of Life can there be necrosis? For necrosis is putritude and putritude is perishment. How then is it possible for any portion of what is not putrid be be putrid or for

anything of theos to perish?

Therefore, father, do not the living beings - who have their being there - not perish?

Speak wisely, my son, and do not be led away by the denotata of being-becoming. For, my son, they do not perish but as combined corpora are dissolved with such a dissolving not death but the dissolution of the melding, and dissolved not so as to perish but for a new coming-into-being. For what is the vigour of Life if not change?

What then, of Kosmos, does not change? Nothing, my child.

[17] Does the Earth seem to you, father, to not change?

No, my son. But she is alone in that there are many changes but also stasis. For would it not be illogical if the nourisher - she who brings-forth everything - never changed? It is not possible for she, the bringer-forth, to bring-forth without being changed. It is illogical for you to enquire if the fourth parsement is inactive, since an unchanging corpus is indicative of inactivity.

[18] You should therefore understand that what exists of Kosmos is everywhere changing, either growing or declining, and that what is changing is living with all that lives not, because of Necessitas, the same. For Kosmos, in the entirety of its being, is not changeable even though its parts can be changeable, with nothing putrefiable or perishable, although such denotata can confuse we mortals. For geniture is not Life but rather alertness, nor is changement death but rather a forgetting.

Since this is so, Substance, Life, Pneuma, Psyche, Perceivation, are all deathless, with every living being some combination of them.

[19] Because of perceivation all living beings are deathless, and most certain of all is that mortals are, for they - receptive to theos - can interact with theos. For only with this living being does theos commune in nightful dreams and daylight auguration, forewarning what is possible through birds, through entrails, through the movements of air, and through trees of Oak. And thus do mortals profess to know what was past, what is now, what will be.

[20] Observe, my son, that every other living being inhabits a certain part of the world; in water for those of the water, on dry land for those on land, and above the ground for those of the air. But mortals employ them all; land, water, air, fire. They observe the heavens, and touch it through their senses, and theos encompasses and is within all such things, for he is Change and Capability.

Thus, my son, it is not difficult to apprehend theos.

[21] If you are disposed to consider him, then perceive the arrangement of Kosmos and how that arrangement is well-ordered. Perceive Necessitas in what is apparent and the foreseeing in what has come-into-being and what is coming-into-being. Perceive Substance replete with Life, and the great, the influentive, theos together with all the noble and the beautiful divinities, daimons, and mortals.

But those, father, are actuosities.

Yet, my son, if they are only actuosities then by whom - other than theos - are they actuose? Or do you not know that just as aspects of the world are the heavens, the land, the Water, and the Air, then in the same way his aspects are deathlessness, blood, Necessitas, Foreseeing, Physis, Psyche, Perceivation, and that the continuance of all these is what is called nobility? And that there is not anything that has come-into-being or which is coming-into-being that is or will be without theos?

[22] He is within Substance, then, father?

If, my son, Substance was separate from theos then where, to what place, would you assign it? To some heap that is not actuose? But if it is actuose, then by whom is it actuose? And we spoke of actuosities as aspects of theos.

So who then brings life to living beings? Who deathlessness to the deathless? Who change to those changed? And if you say Substance or corpus or essence, then understand that they also are actuosities of theos, so that the substantiality is the actusosity of Substance, corporeality the actusosity of corpora, and essentiality the actusosity of essence. And this is theos, All That Exists.

[23] For in all that exists there is no-thing that he is not. Therefore, neither size, nor location nor disposition, nor appearance, nor age, are about theos. For he is all that exists; encompassing everything and within everything.

This, my son, is the Logos, to be respected and followed. And if there is one way to follow theos, it is not to be bad.

ooo

Commentary

Title.

Περὶ νοῦ κοινοῦ πρὸς Τάτ. To Thoth, Concerning Mutual Perceivation.

1.

perceivation. As with my other translations of Corpus Hermeticum texts I translate νοῦς not as 'mind' but as perceivation/perceiverance, qv. my commentary on Poemandres, 2.

quidditas. οὐσία. Here, as with tractates VI and XI, 'essence' in respect of theos is not an entirely satisfactory translation given what the English term essence often now imputes. Quidditas is post-classical Latin, from whence the English word quiddity, and requires contextual interpretation. As in tractate VI, one interpretation of quidditas is ontological, as 'the being of that being/entity', with such quidditas often presenced in - and perceived by we mortals via or as - φύσις (physis). Which interpretation has the virtue of avoiding assumptions as to whether the author is here presenting something similar to the Stoic weltanschauung or to other ancient weltanschauungen.

understands. In respect of οἶδεν as 'understand' rather than 'know' qv. 1 Corinthians 14:16, ἐπειδὴ τί λέγεις οὐκ οἶδεν: "since he does not understand what you say." Furthermore, in Plato, Meno, 80e 'understanding' and 'understand' make more sense than the conventional 'knowing' and 'know':

ὁρᾷς τοῦτον ὡς ἐριστικὸν λόγον κατάγεις ὡς οὐκ ἄρα ἔστιν ζητεῖν ἄνθρωπῳ οὔτε ὃ οἶδε οὔτε ὃ μὴ οἶδε; οὔτε γὰρ ἂν ὃ γε οἶδεν ζητοῖ οἶδεν γὰρ καὶ οὐδὲν δεῖ τῷ γε τοιούτῳ ζητήσεως οὔτε ὃ μὴ οἶδεν οὐδὲ γὰρ οἶδεν ὅτι ζητήσει.

Do you realize what a contestable argument you introduce? That a mortal cannot inquire either about what he understands or about what he does not understand? That he cannot inquire about what he understands because he understands it with an inquiry thus not necessary; and that he cannot inquire about what he does not understand because he does not understand what he should inquire about.

quiddity of theos. οὐσιότητος τοῦ θεοῦ. Using the word quiddity here not as a

synonym of quidditas but as a synonym of 'quidditativity', where quidditative is "of or relating to the essential quidditas of some-thing", in this case theos.

mortal nature. ἀνθρωπότης. I incline toward the view that the neutral term 'mortal nature' is appropriate here, given what the English word 'humanity' now so often implies; a neutral term suggested not only by the scholia to the first verses of Orestes by Euripides:

κατασκευὴν ποιούμενος ὁ ποιητὴς τῆς ἰδίας προτάσεως τῆς ὅτι πάντα φέρει τὰ δεινὰ ἢ ἀνθρωπότης, ἐπιφέρει ὅτι καὶ αὐτοὶ οἱ μακάριοι καὶ ὀλβιοὶ δόξαντες ἄνθρωποι οὐκ ἄμοιροι συμφορῶν καὶ παθῶν γεγόνασιν· ἐξ ἐνὸς δὲ τοῦ Ταντάλου καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους παραδηλοῖ. τὸν Τάνταλον δὲ καὶ οὐκ ἄλλον τῇ ὑποθέσει προσείληφε διὰ τὸ ἐξ ἐκείνου τοῦ γένους καὶ τὸν Ὀρέστην κατὰγεσθαι

but also by *De Sancta Trinitate Dialogus* of Athanasius (Migne, *Patrologiæ Græcæ*, 28, 1115), with the first verse of the Orestes expressing what is meant and implied:

Οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν δεινὸν ὧδ' εἰπεῖν ἔπος οὐδὲ πάθος οὐδὲ ξυμφορὰ θεήλατος, ἧς οὐκ ἂν ἄραιτ' ἄχθος ἀνθρώπου φύσις.

There is nothing that can be described, no suffering, and nothing sent by the gods, which is so terrifyingly strange that mortal nature cannot endure it.

the noble daimon. Ἀγαθὸς Δαίμων. The daimon who can bring good fortune (health, wealth, happiness, honour) and other benefits to mortals and who thus is considered to be noble. As mentioned in the Introduction, a daimon is not a 'demon'.

deathless...deathful. For these in respect of ἀθάνατος and θνητὸς qv. my commentary on Poemandres 14, tractate VIII:1, and tractate XI:7ff.

The phrase spoken by the Ἀγαθὸς Δαίμων is similar to one attributed to Heraclitus:

ἀθάνατοι θνητοί, θνητοὶ ἀθάνατοι, ζῶντες τὸν ἐκείνων θάνατον, τὸν δὲ ἐκείνων βίον τεθνεῶτες. (Fragment 62, Diels-Krantz)

The deathless are deathful, the deathful deathless, with one living the other's dying with the other dying in that other's life.

deprived of logos. ἄλογος. As at Poemandres 10 and tractate XI:10, a literal translation suggested by the context which thus avoids rather awkward expressions such as "animals without reason" and "irrational animals", and

which might also suggest not only various other meanings of logos such as "lacking (the faculty of) speech, lacking in sentience," but also that such living beings have not been gifted by theos with logos:

τὸ ἐν σοὶ βλέπον καὶ ἀκοῶν, λόγος κυρίου, ὁ δὲ νοῦς πατὴρ θεός. οὐ γὰρ διίστανται ἀπ' ἀλλήλων· ἔνωσις γὰρ τούτων ἐστὶν ἡ ζωή

Then know that within you - who hears and sees - is logos kyrios, although perceivance is theos the father. They are not separated, one from the other, because their union is Life. (Poemandres 6)

perceivance is their physis. Reading ὁ νοῦς ἡ φύσις. Here φύσις implies their being - the type of being (the 'character') they have, and are - and thus means their quidditas, which quidditas is in contrast to that of theos, deities, and mortals.

2.

psyche. A transliteration, as in my translations of other tractates. It is possible to read the line as referring to personifications: "Where Psyche is, there also is Perceivance just as where Life is there also is Psyche." Classically understood, psyche is the anima mundi, the power that animates - gives life to and which orders - the world.

in living beings deprived of logos, psyche is Life. On first reading there seems to be a contradiction between what follows - ἡ ψυχὴ ζωὴ ἐστὶ κενὴ τοῦ νοῦ, [in living beings deprived of logos] psyche is Life empty of perceivance - and the preceding ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἀλόγοις ζώοις ὁ νοῦς ἡ φύσις ἐστὶν, which states that "in living beings deprived of logos perceivance is their physis." The sense of the Greek therefore seems to suggest that the perceivance of living beings deprived of logos is a vacuous, empty, one: they perceive but it does not benefit them in the same manner as perceivance benefits mortals because there is no understanding of, no rational apprehension of, what is perceived.

mixtion. σύνθετος. Mixtion is more appropriate here in such a metaphysical text than either 'composite' or 'compound', meaning as mixtion does compounded, combined; the condition or state of being mixed, melded, or composed of various parts.

profluvia. χυμός. That is, the bodily 'humours', anciently named as blood, phlegm, choler (χολέρα), and bile. Since the English word 'humour' now often suggests an entirely different meaning, I have chosen profluvia - from the Latin profluvium - in order to try and convey something of the meaning of the Greek, qv. Coleridge: "The same deadly sweats - the same frightful Profluvium of burning Dregs, like melted Lead - with quantities of bloody mucus from the Coats of the Intestines." *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1956. Volume II, 911: Letter dated 8th Jan.

immersed. βαπτίζω. Cf. tractate IV:3: καὶ ἐβαπτίσαντο τοῦ νοός, "and were immersive with perceivation."

3.

cautery or a knife. καίων ἢ τέμνων. Qv. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 848-850,

ὅτω δὲ καὶ δεῖ φαρμάκων παιωνίων,
ἥτοι κέαντες ἢ τεμόντες εὐφρόνως
πειρασόμεσθα πῆμ' ἀποστρέψαι νόσου

Whomsoever needs a healing potion
By a burning-out or a well-judged cutting-away
I shall seek to defeat the sickness of that injury.

neglect of the divine. ἀθεότης. The usual translation, atheism, seems to me to impose a particular and rigid meaning on the text given the association the word atheism now has with Christianity and in modern philosophy. The phrase 'neglect of the divine' expresses a more Hellenistic view, qv. the term ἀθεράπεντος and also Plutarch, who wrote:

Οὐκοῦν καὶ περὶ ὧν ὁ λόγος, ἡ μὲν ἀθεότης κρίσις οὔσα φαύλη τοῦ
μηδὲν εἶναι μακάριον καὶ ἄφθαρτον εἰς ἀπάθειάν τινα δοκεῖ τῇ
ἀπιστίᾳ τοῦ θείου περιφέρειν, καὶ τέλος ἐστὶν αὐτῇ τοῦ μὴ νομίζειν
θεοὺς τὸ μὴ φοβεῖσθαι, *De Superstitione*, 165b

Thus we return to our topic, neglect of the divine, which is the bad decision that nothing is hallowed or everlasting, which with its disbelief in the divine seems to lead to a type of apathy with the result that there is no fear of divinity since it does not exist.

4.

for when there is co-operation with them...voided of logos. The Greek here is somewhat obscure, although the meaning seems to be along the following lines: when perceivation co-operates with a serious sickness such as neglect of the divine then yearnings, desires, are given free reign so that those mortals, haplessly carried away by their cravings, become just like animals, voided of what makes them human.

what custom demands. In respect of νομός the term 'law' - with all its modern and Old Testament associations (as in 'the law of God') - is inappropriate since the Greek term implies what it is the customary thing to do. Hence, "what custom demands."

5.

Meiros. While μείρομαι here is conventionally understood as referring to 'fate', given the variety of meanings attributed to that term - a useful summary of classical usage is given in Book I, chapter XXVII of *Placita Philosophorum* attributed to the Pseudo-Plutarch - it seems apposite to suggest an alternative, especially as the text apparently does not provide a satisfactory answer to the question which Thoth goes on to ask: if 'fate' does compel someone to do something bad then why are they punished?

The mention of ἀνάγκης - 'Necessity', Ananke - in what follows (section 14: ἀνάγκη δὲ καὶ ἡ πρόνοια καὶ ἡ φύσις ὄργανά ἐστι τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τῆς τάξεως τῆς ὕλης) might indicate the Heraclitean sense of μείρομαι, as summarized by the Pseudo-Plutarch,

Ἡράκλειτος πάντα καθ' εἰμαρμένην, τὴν δ' αὐτὴν ὑπάρχειν καὶ ἀνάγκην.

Yet the immediate context - ἔλεγχον ὁ θεὸς ἐπέστησε τὸν νόμον - might seem to suggest θέσφατον (divine decree), as for example in Sophocles:

"εἴ τι θέσφατον πατρὶ χρησιμοῖσιν ἱκνεῖθ' ὥστε πρὸς παίδων θανεῖν."
Oedipus at Colonus, 969-970

However, given that what follows - Εἰμαρμένης γὰρ πάντα τὰ ἔργα [...] καὶ χωρὶς ἐκείνης οὐδὲν ἐστι τῶν σωματικῶν - I have chosen to use a transliteration, *Meiros*, based on the personification *Moros* in Hesiod's *Theogony*:

νύξ δ' ἔτεκεν στυγερόν τε Μόρον καὶ Κῆρα μέλαιναν καὶ Θάνατον,
τέκε δ' Ὕπνον, ἔτικτε δὲ φῶλον Ὀνειρώων (211-212)

And Night gave birth to odious *Moros*, to darksome *Kir* and to Death,
and also brought-into-being *Hypnos* and the folk of Dreams.

While the transliteration *Meiros* has the undoubted advantage - as with *logos*, *theos*, *physis*, καὶ τὰ λοιπά - of requiring contextual interpretation and thus avoiding whatever presumptions the reader might have in respect of the meaning of the English term 'fate', it has the disadvantage of not having, in English, an appropriate suffix such as, in respect of fate, -ed allowing as that does εἰμαρτός to be translated by 'fated'. The only solution - somewhat awkward as it is - is to translate such a word by a term such as 'Meiros-decreed' (or *Meiros-appointed*) so that the phrase εἰ δ' ἄρα τις οὗτος εἰμαρτός ἥκει χρόνος (Plutarch, Alexander, 30.6) would approximate to "if indeed a *Meiros* appointed moment has now arrived."

unfaithful. The sense of μοιχεύω is not stridently moralistic, as the English term adultery - with all its Old Testament associations - now often still denotes and

has for centuries denoted with its implication of 'sin'. Rather, the sense is more anciently pagan: of marital unfaithfulness, of a personal (and thus dishonourable) betrayal, as in Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1374a, συγγενέσθαι ἄλλ' οὐ μοιχεῦσαι (not unfaithful in the matter of [sexual] intercourse). Similarly in Aristophanes:

ὁ δ' ἄλούς γε μοιχὸς διὰ σέ που παρατίλλεται. (*Plutus*, 170)

it will be because of you if the unfaithful one is caught, and their head shaved.

In addition, in origin the Anglo-Norman word *adulterie* - derived as it was from the Latin *adulterium* (adulteration, contaminating or debasing something) - simply meant marital unfaithfulness without the later religious associations such as voiced by Thomas More in his 1532 work *The Confutacyon of Tyndales Answer*: "wedlokke [...] whyche god hym selfe bothe blessed and commaunded in paradyse and whyche holy scripture commendeth where it sayth that wedlokke is honorable where the bedde is vndefyled wyth auowtry." (ccli iii)

what is bad. Reading τὸ κακὸν and not τὸ καλόν.

6.

geniture and changement. γενέσει καὶ μεταβολῇ. In respect of *geniture*, qv. my commentary on tractate XI:2, that "the unusual English word *geniture* expresses the meaning of γένεσις here: that which or those whom have their genesis (and their subsequent development) from or because of something else or because of someone else."

In respect of *changement*, as I noted in a comment on tractate XI:4, "I have here chosen 'changement' in preference to 'change' since *changement* (coming into English use around 1584) is more specific than 'change', suggesting variation, alteration, development, unfolding, transmutation."

7.

gifted with sentience. ἔλλογος. The Greek term occurs in the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle where he discusses the views of Eudoxus:

εὐδοξος μὲν οὖν τὴν ἡδονὴν τὰγαθὸν ᾧετ' εἶναι διὰ τὸ πάνθ' ὁρᾶν ἐφιέμενα αὐτῆς καὶ ἔλλογα καὶ ἄλογα (1172b.10)

Eudoxus considered that delight was the beneficent since his perception was that all, sentient or not sentient, sought it.

In a comment on this passage from Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas wrote:

quod Eudoxus existimabat delectationem esse de genere bonorum,

quia videbat quod omnia desiderant ipsam, tam rationalia scilicet homines, quam irrationalia, scilicet bruta animalia. (*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, Book X, l. 2 n. 2)

where the contrast, as in Aristotle, is between those gifted with sentience and those lacking sentience, but with Aquinas adding that the latter are 'dumb' animals (*brutis animalibus*), a difference between humans and animals that he considers in detail in his *Summa Theologiae* (*Prima Secundae, Quaestiones 6-17*).

killer. φονεὺς. To use the English word 'murderer' as a translation of the Greek carries with it relatively modern connotations that in my opinion are inappropriate, given that the word 'murder' can impute the sense of "the deliberate and unlawful killing of a human being" and "the action of killing or causing destruction of life, regarded as wicked and morally reprehensible irrespective of its legality."

The classical sense is evident, for example, in Sophocles:

φονέα σε φημι τάνδρὸς οὗ ζητεῖς κυρεῖν (*Oedipus Tyrannus*, 362)

I said you are the killer and thus the man you seek

κάνταῦθ' Ἀπόλλων οὔτ' ἐκεῖνον ἥνυσεν
φονέα γενέσθαι πατρὸς οὔτε Λαῖον
τὸ δεινὸν οὐφοβεῖτο πρὸς παιδὸς θανεῖν (*Oedipus Tyrannus*, 720-702)

So, in those days, Apollo did not bring about, for him,
That he slay the father who begot him - nor, for Laius,
That horror which he feared - being killed by his son.

Thus the choice is between two relatively neutral terms: killer, and slayer. Neither of which imputes the moralistic or legal sense of "unlawful killing" or of the act being "wicked and morally reprehensible." Instead, it is a statement of fact.

the one gifted with sentience will, though not unfaithful, be afflicted... just as, though not a killer, they will as if they had killed. An interesting passage which might be taken to mean that those gifted with sentience - who presumably are also, as the tractate states, "governed/guided by their perceivration" - have the ability because of such things to know, understand, to intuit, what killing and unfaithfulness mean and imply (especially in terms of affliction) as if they themselves had done such things. That is, they have empathy, and thus can avoid doing what is bad.

disposition. See the note regarding ποιότης in section 23 below.

the noble daimon spoke of...would that he had written it. This seems to allude to an aural tradition, perhaps (qv. my introduction to tractate III) an ἱερός Λόγος, which was never written down, with the suggestion that what is being recounted in this tractate is such a tradition.

first-born divinity. πρωτόγονος θεός. While some assume that this refers to something Egyptian - for example, to the deity Khnum - I incline toward the view that it may be (i) a reference to an Orphic tradition, given that there is an Orphic poem which beings Πρωτόγονον καλέω διφυῆ μέγαν αἰθερόπλαγκτον, or (ii) more probably a term still in general use in Hellenic culture given it that was, for example, an epithet of the goddess Persephone, and given that it occurs in the commentary on Plato's Timaeus by Proclus.

divine logoi. θείους λόγους. Cf. τοὺς λόγους διδάσκων and σοφίας λόγους in Poemandres 29. There, the logoi are the various forms (or emanations) of the logos, and include the pneumal logos, the phaomal logos, and the logos kyrios.

I [...] thus became a guide to those of my kind, informing them of the logoi - of the way and the means of rescue - and engendered in them the logoi of sapientia, with the celestial elixir to nurture them. (Poemandres 29)

conceptible things. νοητὰ σώματα. That is, objects - things, materia, 'bodies' - which can be conceived of, which are conceptible, rather than having been physically seen, qv. the 'atoms' of Democritus: ἔτεῃ δὲ ἄτομα καὶ κενόν. See also Sextus Empiricus: οἱ γὰρ ἀτόμους εἰπόντες ἢ ὁμοιομερείας ἢ ὄγκους ἢ κοινῶς νοητὰ σώματα πάντων τῶν ὄντων κατώρθωσαν πῇ δὲ διέπεσον (Adversus Mathematicos, X, 252).

We have our being in potentiality, in activity, in Aion. ζῶμεν δὲ δυνάμει καὶ ἐνεργείᾳ καὶ Αἰῶνι. In respect of Aion, qv. tractate XI:3,

πηγὴ μὲν οὖν πάντων ὁ θεός, οὐσία δὲ ὁ αἰών, ὕλη δὲ ὁ κόσμος,
δύναμις δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἰών, ἔργον δὲ τοῦ αἰῶνος ὁ κόσμος, γενόμενος
οὐποτε, καὶ ἀεὶ γινόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος·

The foundation of all being is theos; of their quidditas, Aion; of their substance, Kosmos. The craft of theos: Aion; the work of Aion: Kosmos, which is not just a coming-into-being but always is, from Aion.

nothing separable. οὐδὲν διαστατόν. As noted in respect of διαστατός in the commentary on tractate IV:1, "what is not meant is 'dimension', given what the term 'dimension' now imputes scientifically and otherwise."

Archon. Cf. the MS reading ἄρχων καὶ ἡγέμων (archon and hegemon) in tractate XI:7. Since ἄρχων has been assimilated into the English language and

retained (c. 1755) its original meaning (ruler, governor, regent) it seems unnecessary to translate the term.

perceivration...whatever it desires. Cf Poemandres 12: ὁ δὲ πάντων πατὴρ ὁ Νοῦς ὦν ζωὴ καὶ φῶς... Perceivration, as Life and phaos, father of all...

9.

Numinous. θεῖος. As at tractate IV:6 I have opted for the English word numinous - which dates from 1647, derived from the classical Latin *numen* - to express the meaning of θεῖος here.

10.

somatic. πάθος. The English word somatic - from the Greek σῶμα - means "of or relating to the body; physical, corporeal". As in tractate VI:2 the sense of πάθος here is one of physicality, as in being physically afflicted or affected such that a 'living being deprived of logos' cannot control or affect the affliction, in this instance their cravings. As such, the English word 'passion' is inappropriate here as a translation of πάθος because it implies strong or deep feelings or emotions generally in human beings and thus is somewhat anthropomorphic, especially as a distinction is being made, as in sections 2 and 5, between mortals and those living beings, such as animals, who lack logos, which logos together with perceivration, are - as mentioned in section 12 - the two most precious gifts theos has given to mortals: ὅτι δύο ταῦτα τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ὁ θεὸς παρὰ πάντα τὰ θνητὰ ζῶια ἔχαρίσατο τὸν τε νοῦν καὶ τὸν λόγον, σότιμα τῇ ἀθανασίᾳ.

in alliance with the somatic. Reading συγχρηματίζων with the MSS and not the emendation συγχρωτίζων.

11.

corporeal, incorporeal. σῶμα, ἀσώματος. To try and express at least something of the meaning of the Greek here - which is somewhat metaphysically obscure - I have occasionally resorted to obsolete forms of those two English terms, such as 'corporified' (from corporify) implying "having a material or a bodily form".

In respect of the corporeal and the incorporeal, see tractates VIII and XI. In VIII one of the main themes is the corporeal: "It is regarding psyche and the corporeal that we now must speak..." In XI:22 it is stated that

οὐδὲν γὰρ ἀόρατον, οὐδὲ τῶν ἀσωμάτων· νοῦς ὁρᾶται ἐν τῷ νοεῖν, ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῷ ποιεῖν

nothing is unperceivable, not even the incorporeal, with
perceivration evident through apprehension, theos through creation.

somatical. παθητά. The sense is of being affected by, or subject to, what is somatic. As what follows - καὶ κυρίως αὐτὰ ἐστὶ πάθη - attempts to explain, and as is made clear later on in this section (διαφέρει δὲ πάθος παθητοῦ) somatical should not be confused with somatic.

changes, changed. Given the context, the various senses of κίνησις here are change, not motion - moving, move - in the physical sense as at tractate XI:8, πάντα δὲ πλήρη ψυχῆς καὶ πάντα κινούμενα, τὰ μὲν περὶ τὸν οὐρανόν, τὰ δὲ περὶ τὴν γῆν, all are replete with psyche, all in motion, some around the heavens with others around the Earth.

vigour. ἐνέργεια. Qv. Poemandres 14 and 15. The English terms energy and energize have too many modern, irrelevant, connotations, in respect of the science of physics and otherwise.

12.

perceiviation and logos. Omitting - with Patrizi - the following τὸν δὲ προφορικὸν λόγον ἔχει as a gloss.

deathlessness. In respect of this unusual English word, qv. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *The Soul's Travelling* (IX),

"And as they touch your soul, they borrow
Both of its grandeur and its sorrow,
That deathly odour with which the clay
Leaves on its deathlessness away."

denotata, denotatum. προσηγορία here implies more than 'name'. That is, a terminology; a specialized vocabulary, in this case one related to metaphysics (qv. πλανώμενος τῇ προσηγορίᾳ τοῦ γινόμενου in section 16). Hence the translations 'denotata' and denotatum (singular) to suggest this.

13.

And yet, do other livings not have language. τὰ γὰρ ἄλλα ζῶια λόγῳ οὐ χρᾶται. While λόγος here is generally taken to mean 'speech', given what follows with its mention of animals making 'sounds' and the exposition regarding the different languages spoken by mortals, the translation 'language' is more apt, as in being able to communicate, to say something specific the meaning of which can be explained and understood by diverse others. A usage of λόγος as for example in the following exchange between Oedipus and the Chorus:

Οἰδίπους:

οἷσθ' οὖν ἃ χρῆζεις.

Χορός:

οἶδα.

Οἰδίπους:

φράζε δὴ τί φής.

Χορός:

τὸν ἐναγῆ φίλον μήποτ' ἐν αἰτία σὺν ἀφανεῖ λόγῳ σ' ἄτιμον βαλεῖν.

Oedipus:

Do you know what it is that you so desire?

Chorus:

I do know.

Oedipus:

Then explain what you believe it to be.

Chorus:

When a comrade is under oath, you should never accuse him because of unproved rumours and brand him as being without honour.

(Oedipus Tyrannus, vv. 653-657)

folk. ἔθνος. Since the English term 'nation' now implies things which the Greek word does not - such as a modern political State - it is inappropriate here. A suitable alternative to folk would be 'people'.

mortal nature, Qv. section 1.

one. εἷς. It is probable that this refers to a metaphysical concept such as described in tractate XI:11,

καὶ ὅτι μὲν ἔστι τις ὁ ποιῶν ταῦτα δῆλον· ὅτι δὲ καὶ εἷς,
φανερῶτατον· καὶ γὰρ μία ψυχὴ καὶ μία ζωὴ καὶ μία ὕλη. τίς δὲ
οὗτος; τίς δὲ ἂν ἄλλος εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός; τίνι γὰρ ἄλλῳ ἂν καὶ πρέποι
ζῶια ἔμψυχα ποιεῖν, εἰ μὴ μόνῳ τῷ θεῷ; εἷς οὖν θεός καὶ τὸν μὲν
κόσμον ὠμολόγησας ἀεὶ εἶναι καὶ τὸν ἥλιον ἕνα καὶ τὴν σελήνην μίαν
καὶ θειότητα μίαν, αὐτὸν δὲ τὸν θεὸν πόστον εἶναι θέλεις

It is evident someone is so creating and that he is One; for Psyche is one, Life is one, Substance is one. But who is it? Who could it be if not One, the theos? To whom if

not to theos alone would it belong to presence life in living beings? Theos therefore is One, for having accepted the Kosmos is one, the Sun is one, the Moon is one, and divinity-presented is one, could you maintain that theos is some other number?

psyche in corporeality. The context is indicative of σώματι here referring to corporeality in general; that is, the quality or state of being corporeal; bodily form or nature; materiality.

14.

eikon. εἰκὼν, qv. my commentary on Poemandres 21 and 31, and also see tractate VIII:2 and tractate XI:15.

outward form. ἰδέα. To translate here simply as 'form' (or idea) may give the impression that the ἰδέα of Plato may be meant with the text thus interpreted in accord with his philosophy and especially with what has been termed his 'theory of forms'. However, since the reference here is to corporeality in the context of perceivization as εἰκὼν of theos, a more metaphysical sense is suggested. Hence, my interpretation as 'outward form', which thus leaves open the question as to whether or not there is any correlation with 'the theory of forms'.

substance. ὕλη. That is, the materia of 'things' and living beings. Qv. Poemandres 10 and tractate III:1.

Air. ἀήρ. Air as a fundamental element, hence the capitalization as with the preceding Substance.

necessitas. ἀνάγκη. In myth, Ananke was the ancient goddess of wyrd, thus having power over Meiros ('fate') and of what is considered necessary for mortals (such as death), hence the translation of 'necessity'. As mentioned in my commentary on tractate XII:5, although the Latin 'Necessitas' is a suitable alternative for the Greek, a transliteration (Ananke) is perhaps preferable although less readable.

Necessitas, foreseeing, and physis, are implements of Kosmos. Qv. tractate XII:5 where a similar expression occurs:

συνέχει δὲ τοῦτον ὁ αἰὼν, εἴτε δι' ἀνάγκην εἴτε πρόνοιαν εἴτε φύσιν
καὶ εἴ τι ἄλλο οἶται ἢ οἰήσεται τις

Aion maintains this through necessitas or through foreseeing or through physis, or through whatever other assumption we assume

foreseeing. πρόνοια. Foreseeing includes such arts as prophecy.

apprehended. Cf. Poemandres 3: νοῆσαι τὴν τοῦ των φύσιν, to apprehend the physis of beings; that is to discern, discover, their being, their relation to other beings, and to Being.

corpus, corpora. I have here used a Latin term for σῶμα (*corpus*, plural *corpora*) in order to try to give some intimation of the meaning of the text (the Greek is somewhat obscure), and to avoid using the rather prosaic terms 'body' and 'bodies', and to thus suggest technical terms which expound and befit a metaphysical *weltanschauung*, implying as they do here 'materia' in general; the stuff, the material, that exists in the Universe, and how such *corpora* including mortals relate to theos.

15.

arithmos. I have detailed the reasons for transliterating ἀριθμός in my commentary on tractate IV:10. In essence, the translation 'number' does not express the metaphysical meaning here, qv. Aristotle *Metaphysics*, Book XIII, 1080b.20 and 1083b.10 et seq.

In addition, Proclus (in his Στοιχείωσις θεολογική, propositions 113f) wrote of ἀριθμός and ἐνάδες (*henads*) as essential parts of a cosmogony involving the gods, with Proclus equating ἐνάδες with those gods (*op.cit.*, propositions 114ff),

εἰ γὰρ τῶν ἐνάδων διττὸς ὁ ἀριθμός, ὡς δέδεικται πρότερον, καὶ αἱ μὲν αὐτοτελεῖς εἰσιν αἱ δὲ ἐλλάμπεις ἀπ' ἐκείνων, τῷ δὲ ἐνὶ καὶ τάγαθῷ συγγενῆς καὶ ὁμοφυῆς ὁ θεῖος ἀριθμός, ἐνάδες εἰσὶν αὐτοτελεῖς οἱ θεοί. (114)

There is also an interesting passage in a fragment of the commentary on Aristotle by Andronicus of Rhodes where *psyche* is said to have been described as ἀριθμός:

ἀριθμὸν γὰρ ἐκάλουν φησὶ 'τὴν ψυχὴν ὅτι μηδὲν ζῶον ἐξ ἀπλοῦ σώματος ἀλλὰ κατὰ τινὰς λόγους καὶ ἀριθμοὺς κραθέντων τῶν πρώτων στοιχείων. (Themistii in libros Aristotelis De anima paraphrasis, XXXII, 23)

Regarding ἀριθμός in tractate IV:10, the relevant part is:

μονὰς οὓσα οὖν ἀρχὴ πάντα ἀριθμὸν ἐμπεριέχει, ὑπὸ μηδενὸς ἐμπεριεχομένη, καὶ πάντα ἀριθμὸν γεννᾷ ὑπὸ μηδενὸς γεννωμένη ἐτέρου ἀριθμοῦ.

The Monas, since it is the origin, enfolds every *arithmos* without itself being enfolded by any, begetting every *arithmos* but not begotten by any.

henads. ἐνάδες. A transliteration in common use since the concept of the ἐνός - the Unity, often equated with μονάς - is metaphysical and has various interpretations in Plato, Iamblichus, Proclus, and others.

cosmic order. κόσμος. Cf. Poemandres 7.

a mighty theos. In respect of the term μέγας θεός it is interesting to note that frescoes in a Minoan settlement in Akrotiri on the island of Santorini depict η μεγάλη θεά (the mighty goddess) among women holding bunches of flowers and a woman holding a net which, given the presence of birds in the fresco, is possibly for catching birds as gifts for the goddess.

The term μέγας θεός also occurs in Acts 19:17 in reference to the Temple of Artemis - μεγάλης θεᾶς Ἀρτέμιδος ἱερὸν - with Artemis mentioned again in v.28, Μεγάλη ἡ Ἀρτεμις Ἐφεσίων (Powerful is Artemis of the Ephesians).

cyclic return. Qv. tractate XI:2, ἀποκατάστασις καὶ ἀνταποκατάστασις, cyclic return and renewal.

while it exists. Referring to the 'cosmic order' and thus to Kosmos, eikon of a more mighty divinity.

16.

the denotata of being-becoming. Qv. the comment in section 11 regarding denotata and denotatum.

17.

nurturer. τιθήνη. Cf. tractate XI:7, τροφὸν καὶ τιθήνην, nourisher and nurturer.

fourth parsement. τέταρτον μέρος. By a parsement - partiment, from the Latin partimentum - is meant the fundamental (the basic, elemental, primal) component or principle of 'things' as understood or as posited in Hellenic times. Here Earth is described as the fourth part, the other three being Air, Water, and Fire. Cf. Poemandres 8.

18.

alertness. αἴσθησις. Alertness as in being perceptively aware of one's surroundings. Cf. Poemandres 5.

pnuema. πνεῦμα. A transliteration for reasons explained in my commentary on the text of Poemandres 5. In sum, the usual translation of 'spirit' is too restrictive and has too many modern and Christian associations. The various senses of πνεῦμα in classical times are summarized in DeWitt Burton, *Spirit, Soul, and Flesh: The Usage of Πνεῦμα, Ψυχή, and Σάρξ in Greek Writings and Translated Works from the Earliest Period to 225 AD* (University of Chicago Press, 1918).

19.

Therefore all living beings [...] perceiv[er]ation. Reading διὰ τὸν νοῦν and not δι' αὐτόν.

20.

capability. δύναμις. Not 'strength' or 'power' per se, but rather having the capacity, the capability, to do - to change, to craft, to bring-into-being - anything. Cf. δύναμις δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἰὼν in tractate XI: 3,

πηγὴ μὲν οὖν πάντων ὁ θεός, οὐσία δὲ ὁ αἰὼν, ὕλη δὲ ὁ κόσμος,
δύναμις δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἰὼν, ἔργον δὲ τοῦ αἰῶνος ὁ κόσμος, γενόμενος
οὐποτε, καὶ ἀεὶ γινόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος· διὸ οὐδὲ φθαρῆσεται ποτε
αἰὼν γὰρ ἄφθαρτος οὐδὲ ἀπολεῖται τι τῶν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, τοῦ κόσμου
ὑπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος ἐμπεριεχομένου.

The foundation of all being is theos; of their quidditas, Aion; of their substance, Kosmos. The craft of theos: Aion; the work of Aion: Kosmos, which is not just a coming-into-being but always is, from Aion. Thus it cannot be destroyed since Aion is not destroyable nor will Kosmos cease to be since Aion surrounds it.

21.

influencive. κινέω. That is, to affect things, to set things in motion, to cause change.

actuosities. ἐνέργειαι. The sense of the Greek here is of (often vigorous) activity or occurrences either natural or which result from the actions of divinities or daimons. To try and convey something of this, I have chosen the English term 'actuosities' rather than 'energies' which - given what the English term 'energy' now often imputes - does not in my view express the metaphysical meaning here. The English word actusosity derives from the classical Latin actuosus, with the adjective actuose occurring in a 1677 book by Theophilus Gale: "Ἐνεργεῖν, as applied to God, notes his actuose, efficacious, and predeterminate concurrence in and with althings." (The Court of The Gentiles. Part III, London, 1677).

A more recent usage was by Ferrarin in chapter 8 - Aristotle's De anima and Hegel's philosophy of subjective spirit - of his book *Hegel and Aristotle* (Cambridge University Press, 2001) where he wrote: "Hegel appropriates and transforms the meaning of *energeia* to define spirit. Spirit is actusosity..."

aspects. Reading μέρη ἐστὶ not μέλη ἐστὶ.

blood. Reading καὶ αἷμα with the MSS. In the metaphysical context of the tractate, blood as an 'aspect of theos' makes sense.

22.

All That Exists. τὸ πᾶν. Literally, 'the all', but metaphysically implying 'all that exists', that is, the Universe.

23.

disposition. ποιότης. As in section 7, not signifying here 'quality' but rather 'disposition,' qv. ποιός, what kind, nature, type, character.

What is being enumerated - οὔτε μέγεθος οὔτε τόπος οὔτε ποιότης οὔτε σχῆμα οὔτε χρόνος - are not abstractions (such as 'time') but rather mortal-type attributes and appellations that are irrelevant in respect of theos.

respected and followed. Given the metaphysical - not religious - tone and content of the tractate, I incline toward the view that προσκύνει καὶ θρήσκει here does not imply a Christian-type reverence or worship or even being religious, but rather respect and following, as various Hellenic weltanschauungen or philosophies were respected and followed.

Ερμού του τρισεγγίστου προς τον υιόν Τάτ
εν όρει λόγος απόκρυφος περί παλιγγενεσίας και σιγής επαγγελίας

On A Mountain:
Hermes Trismegistus To His Son Thoth,
An Esoteric Discourse Concerning Palingenesis
And The Requirement of Silence

Tractate XIII

ooo

Translation

[1] When, father, you in the Exoterica conversed about divinity your language was enigmatic and obscure. There was, from you, no disclosure; instead, you said no one can be rescued before the Palingenesis. Now, following our discussion as we were passing over the mountain I became your supplicant, inquiring into learning the discourse on Palingenesis since that, out of all of them, is the only one unknown to me, with you saying it would be imparted to me when I became separated from the world.

Thus I prepared myself, distancing my ethos from the treachery in the world. Therefore - by explaining it either aloud or in secret - rectify my insufficiencies since you said you would impart Palingenesis to me.

Trismegistus, I am unknowing of what source a mortal is begotten and from what sown.

[2] My son, noetic sapientia is in silence, with the sowing the genuinely noble.

Father, that is completely impenetrable. So, of whom dispersed?

Of, my son, the desire of theos.

Father, of what kind then the begotten? For I do not share in such a quidditas and such a perceivitation.

Those begotten of theos are other than theos: young but entirely whole, mixon of all abilities.

Father, you speak enigmatically to me, not in the language of a teacher to a pupil.

My son, this emanation is not taught; rather, it is presented by and when the theos desires.

[3] Father, while you speak of what is impractical and forced, I on my part seek what is straightforward. Was I produced as a foreign son of the paternal emanation? Do not repine me, father: I am a rightful son. Relate - plainly - the way of palingenesis.

My son, what is there to say? All that can be told is this: I saw an unshaped vista, brought-into-being through the generosity of theos, of me setting forth to a deathless body, and now I am not that before because engendered by perceivization.

This matter is not taught: not through that shaped part through which is seeing. Thus and for me there is no concern for the initial mixturous form. It is not as if I am biochrome and have tactility and definity: I am a stranger to them. You, my son, now observe me with your eyes and directly see my physicality and perceptible form. And yet, my son, I am now not understandable with those eyes.

[4] Father, you have stung the heart, causing no minor distraction, for I cannot now perceive myself.

Would that you, my son, would - while not asleep - go beyond yourself as those who sleepfully dream.

Inform me also of this: who is the essentiator of the Palingenesis?

Through the desire of theos: The Mortal One, child of theos.

[5] Father, what you have now presented has silenced me, with a forsaking of what was previously in my heart <...> since I perceive that your stature and your likeness are still the same.

In that you have been deceived, for the form of the deathful alters every day: changed by the seasons, it grows then withers and so deceives.

[6] What then - Trismegistus - is the actuality?

My son: the imperturbable, the indistinguishable, the un-complexioned, the figureless, the steadfast, the unadorned, the revealed, the self-perceiving, the unwaveringly noble, the immaterial.

Father, I am completely confused. Just when I considered you were engendering learning in me, the perceptibility of my apprehension was obstructed.

Thus it is, my son. It ascends, as Fire does, and descends, as Earth does, and

flows, as Water does, and is neumæos as is Air. But how can you apprehend through perception what is insubstantial, what is not flowing, what is unmixturous, what is undissolved; that which is only apprehensible through influence and actusity, requiring someone able to apprehend that bringing-into-being within theos?

[7] Father, am I then deficient?

Not so, my son. Go within: and an arriving. Intend: and an engendering. Let physical perceptibility rest, and divinity will be brought-into-being. Refine yourself, away from the brutish Alastoras of Materies.

Alastoras are within me, then, father?

Not just a few, my son, but many and terrifying.

I do not apprehend them, father.

My son, one Vengeress is Unknowing; the second, Grief. The third, Unrestraint; the fourth, Lascivity. The fifth, Unfairness; the sixth, Coveter. The seventh, Deceit; the eighth, Envy. The ninth, Treachery; the tenth, Wroth. The eleventh, Temerity; the twelfth, Putridity.

In number, these are twelve but below them are numerous others who, my son, compel the inner mortal - bodily incarcerated - to suffer because of perceptibility. But they absent themselves - although not all at once - from those to whom theos is generous, which is what the Way and Logos of Palingenesis consists of.

[8] Henceforward, speak quietly, my son, and keep this secret. For thus may the generosity of theos toward us continue.

Henceforward, my son, be pleased, having refinement through the cræfts of theos to thus comprehend the Logos.

My son, to us: arrivance of Knowledge of Theos. On arrival: Unknowing is banished. My son, to us: arrivance of Knowledge of Delightfulness: on arriving, Grief runs away to those who have the room.

[9] The influence invoked following Delightfulness is Self-Restraint: a most pleasant influence. Let us, my son, readily welcome her: arriving, she immediately pushes Unrestraint aside.

The fourth invoked is Perseverance who is influxious against Lascivity. Which Grade, my son, is the foundation of Ancestral Custom: observe how without any deliberation Unfairness was cast out. My son, we are vindicated since Unfairness has departed.

The sixth influence invoked for us - against Coveter - is community. With that departed, the next invocation: Actualis, and thus - with Actualis presenced - does Deceit run away. Observe, my son, how with Actualis presenced and Envy absent, the noble has been returned. For, following Actualis, there is the noble, together with Life and Phaos.

No more does the retribution of Skotos supervene, for, vanquished, they whirlingly rush away.

[10] Thus, my son, you know the Way of Palingenesis. By the Dekad brought-into-being, geniture of apprehension was produced, banishing those twelve; and by this geniture we are of theos.

Thus whomsoever because of that generosity obtains divine geniture, having gone beyond physical perceptibility, discovers that they consist of such, and are pleased.

[11] With a quietude, father, engendered by theos, the seeing is not of the sight from the eyes but that through the noetic actus of the cræft. I am in the Heavens; on Earth; in Water; in Air. I am in living beings, in plants; in the womb, before the womb, after the womb. Everywhere.

But speak to me about how the retributions of Skotos - which are twelve in number - are pushed aside by ten influences. What is that Way, Trismegistus?

[12] My son, this body which we have passed beyond is constituted from the circular Zodiac which is composed of beings, twelve in number and of the same physis, yet polymorphous in appearance so as to lead mortals astray. The difference between them, my son, becomes one when they act <...> Temerity united with Wroth, and indistinguishable.

It is probably correct to say that all of them withdraw when pushed away by those ten influences: that is, by the Dekad. For, my son, the Dekad is an effector of psyche, with Life and Phaos a unity there where the arithmos of the Henad is brought forth from the pneuma. Thus it is reasonable that the Henad contains the Dekad and the Dekad the Henad.

[13] Father, I observe All That Exists, and myself, in the perceivance.

My son, this is the Palingenesis: to no more present the body in three separations, through this disclosure regarding Palingenesis, which I have written about for you alone so as not to be rouners of all these things to the many but instead to whomsoever theos himself desires.

[14] Inform me, father, if this body - constituted of such cræfts - is liable to dissipation.

Speak quietly and do not talk of deficiencies or you shall be in error with the eye of your perceivation disrespectful. The perceptible body of physis is far away from the quidditas of geniture, for one is dissipative, the other is not-dissipative; one is deathful, the other deathless.

Do you not know that you are engendered of theos, as a child of The One, as am I?

[15] Father, my inclination is for the laudation of the song you said you heard from those influences when you reached the Ogdoad.

Just as, my son, Poemandres divined about the Ogdoad. It is noble of you to hasten to leave that dwelling for you are now refined. Poemandres, the perceivation of authority, did not impart to me anything other than what is written, understanding that I would apprehended the entirety; hearing what I was inclined to, observing the entirety, and entrusting me to presence the beautiful. Thus do all those influences within me chant.

Father, I desire to hear them so that I might apprehend.

[16] Be quiet my son: now hear that most fitting laudation, the song of Palingenesis which I had chosen not to openly divulge except to you at your completion and which is not taught but concealed through silence.

Thus, my son, on your feet in a place open to the air look respectfully to the Southwind as Helios descends, as at the ascending and toward the Eastwind.

Be quiet my son.

Logos Δ. The Esoteric Song

[17] Let every Physis of Kosmos favourably listen to this song.
Gaia: be open, so that every defence against the Abyss is opened for me;
Trees: do not incurvate;
For I now will sing for the Master Artisan,
For All That Exists, and for The One.

Open: you Celestial Ones; and you, The Winds, be calm.
Let the deathless clan of theos accept this, my logos.
For I shall sing of the maker of everything;
Of who established the Earth,
Of who affixed the Heavens,

Of who decreed that Oceanus should bring forth sweet water
To where was inhabited and where was uninhabited
To so sustain all mortals;
Of who decreed that Fire should bring light
To divinities and mortals for their every use.

Let us all join in fond celebration of who is far beyond the Heavens:
That artisan of every Physis.

May the one who is the eye of perceivration accept this fond celebration
From my Arts.

[18] Let those Arts within me sing for The One and for All That Exists
As I desire all those Arts within me to blend, together.

Numinous knowledge, from you a numinal understanding:
Through you, a song of apprehended phaos,
Delighted with delightful perceivrance.
Join me, all you Arts, in song.

You, mastery, sing; and you, respectful of custom,
Through me sing of such respect.
Sing, my companions, for All That Exists:
Honesty, through me, sing of being honest,
The noble, sing of nobility.

Phaos and Life: fond celebration spreads from us to you.

My gratitude, father: actusosity of those my Arts.
My gratitude, theos: Artisan of my actuosities;
Through me, the Logos is sung for you.
Through me, may Kosmos accept
Such respectful wordful offerings as this.

[19] Such is what the Arts within me loudly call out. They sing of All That Exists;
they accomplish your desire. From you: deliberations; then to you, from All That
Exists.

Accept from Kosmos - the Kosmos within us - respectful wordful offerings. Life,
recure! Phaos, reveal! Theos, spiritus! For - Breath-Giver, Artisan - it is your
Logos that Perceivration guides.

[20] You are theos. Your mortal loudly calls out: through Fire, through Air,
through Earth, through Water, through Pneuma, through your created beings.

To me, from your Aion, a laudation. And, through your deliberations, I
discovered the repose that I seek. Because of your desire, I perceived.

[21] Father, I also have assigned the laudation you spoke of to my Kosmos.

My son, speak of "in the apprehended."

In the apprehended I am able to do, father. For me, through your song and your laudation, a more numinal perceivance. And yet, there is a desire for me to convey from my own heart a laudation to theos.

My son, do not be incautious.

Father, what I behold in the perceivance, I say. It is to theos, to you - essentiator of engenderment - that I, Thoth, convey wordful offerings. Theos, you the Father; you the Kyrios, you the Perceivance, accept the respectful wordful offerings you desire. For, by your deliberations, all is accomplished.

My son, you convey an agreeable offering to theos, father of all. But you should add "through the Logos."

[22] My thanks to you, father, for your advice regarding the invocation.

My son, I am glad that the actuality has borne good fruit, the unrottable produce. Having learned of this from me, profess silence my son about this wonder, revealing to no one the tradition of the Palingenesis, for otherwise we will be regarded as rouners. Each of us has had a sufficiency of interest: I in speaking, you in listening. Through noesis you have obtained knowledge about yourself and our father

ooo

Commentary

Title.

Ερμού του τρισεγίστου προς τον υιόν Τάτ εν όρει λόγος απόκρυφος περί παλιγγενεσίας και σιγής επαγγελίας. On A Mountain: Hermes Trismegistus To His Son Thoth, An Esoteric Discourse Concerning Palingenesis And The Requirement of Silence.

Thoth. As in other tractates I translate Τάτ by Thoth, avoiding the conventional *Tat* which, in English, has a colloquial meaning inappropriate here. As to which 'Thoth' is meant, the consensus is that in this and some other tractates it refers to the son (possibly biologically or more probably metaphorically) of Hermes

Trismegistus who himself was named by the Greeks as Thoth, with the Τάτ of some other tractates being a scribal corruption of the name Thoth.

Esoteric Discourse. λόγος απόκρυφος. While 'esoteric' is an apt translation in regard to απόκρυφος, 'discourse' is not entirely satisfactory in respect of λόγος since it could be here interpreted to mean 'disclosure' or 'explanation'. However, given what follows in section 1 - πυθομένου τὸν τῆς παλιγγενεσίας λόγον μαθεῖν...παραδιδόναι μοι - 'discourse' seems appropriate.

Palingenesis. Rather than ascribe a particular meaning to παλιγγενεσία - such as 'rebirth' or 'regeneration' - I have chosen the English word palingenesis (from the Latin palingenesia) with that term explained by what follows in this particular discourse, qv. vv. 12 and 13.

Requirement. The sense of ἐπαγγελία here, given what is discussed in this tractate, is 'requirement' rather than the strident 'command' or what is implied by the rather vague word 'promise'.

1.

Father. The Greek ὦ πάτερ - literally 'my father' - is a polite form of address, akin to the English 'sir'. Similarly, ὦ τέκνον - 'my son' - is a polite reply. Given the esoteric nature of the text, a possible interpretation here of ὦ πάτερ would be 'Master', and of ὦ τέκνον 'my pupil'.

in the Exoterica. Ἐν τοῖς γενικοῖς. Since the term γενικῶν λόγων occurs in tractate X it is reasonable to assume that γενικός here refers to the same thing although the meaning of the term is moot given that no details are provided in this tractate nor in tractate X, nor in Stobaeus (Excerpts, III, 1 and VI, 1) where the terms also occurs. While most translators have assumed that it refers to 'generic' things or 'generalities' and thus (by adding λόγοι) have opted for an expression such as 'General Discourses', and given that a transliteration - such as genikois or genikoi - is awkward, I have in respect of the γενικοὶ opted for exoterica (from the Latin via the Greek τὰ ἐξωτερικά) with the meaning of "exoteric treatises designed for or suitable to the generality of disciples or students," with the plausible suggestion thus being that there are exoteric Hermetic treatises and esoteric Hermetic treatises, with Reitzenstein describing these other treatises as διεξοδικοί λόγοι (R.A. Reitzenstein. *Poimandres*. Teubner, Leipzig. 1904. p.118) a distinction he also mentioned in his later work *Die Hellenistischen Mysterien Religionen*.

passing over the mountain. I follow the MSS and read μεταβάσεως rather than the emendation καταβάσεως, taking the sense of μεταβάσεως here as "passing over" - walking on and over - the mountain. There seems no need for the emendation - which implies a descent from the mountain - with its possible suggestion of something more symbolic, more religious or mystical, having

occurred, as for example might be implied in the Gospel of John with the juxtaposition of κατέβη and ἀνέβη in chapter one vv.12-13, with Thomas Aquinas writing:

"Sed non vacat a mysterio, quod in Capharnaum descendit, et postmodum Ierosolymam ascendit. Nisi enim descendisset primum, non competisset ei ascendere: quia, ut dicitur Eph. IV, 10, qui descendit, ipse est et qui ascendit." *Super Evangelium S. Ioannis lectura*, Caput II, Lectio 1

That he descended to Capernaum and then ascended to Jerusalem is not without its mystery since if he did not first descend he would not have been able to then ascend, for as has been related (Eph. IV, 10) "The one who descended is the same as the one who ascended."

the discourse on palingenesis. The Greek word translated here as 'discourse' is λόγος, as in the title.

imparted to me. παραδίδωμι carries the sense here of 'handing down' - of transmitting, disclosing - some ancestral teaching or wisdom; a disclosing from master to pupil.

separated from the world. In respect of ἀπαλλοτριόω what is implied is not 'alienated' from (which has too many modern connotations) the world (κόσμος), but rather 'separate' - distanced - from the world, from worldly things, as a mystic is often 'otherworldly' and may seem to be - to others, and to themselves - a stranger in the world.

distancing my ethos. Reading ἀπηλλοτριώσα (with Parthey, et al) not the emendation of Nock (ἀπηνδρείωσα) with φρόνημα here suggestive of one's character and especially of one's "way of thinking", one's weltanschauung: that is, the 'spirit' or ethos which guides one's way of life.

treachery. ἀπάτης. Personified in Hesiod's Theogony as a child of Night (Νύξ) along with "darksome Kir and Death" - Κῆρα μέλαιναν καὶ Θάνατον - and Nemesis, Νέμεσις.

rectify my insufficiencies. τὰ ὑστερήματα ἀναπλήρωσον. An alternative, literal, translation would be "supply what is needed."

since you said you would impart Palingenesis to me. Given the somewhat unusual phrasing here - οἷς ἔφη μοι παλιγγενεσίας παραδοῦναι, which led Nock to add γένεσιν after παλιγγενεσίας - it seems that παλιγγενεσίας is the title given to a particular doctrine or esoteric theory rather than just a term such as 'rebirth'. Hence my capitalization.

what source ... what sown. The metaphysical context - and the reply - suggests that both μήτρας and σπορᾶς are meant metaphorically rather than literally

(womb, seed).

mortal. As in other tractates I translate ἄνθρωπος as 'mortal' rather than as 'man'. Which here - as in other tractates - suits both the Hellenic context, of mortals contrasted with the immortal theos and the immortal theoi, and the metaphysical context of immortality being possibly attainable by select mortals.

2.

noetic sapientia. For a variety of reasons, I have used the term *noetic sapientia* to denote σοφία νοερὰ.

i) The metaphysical terms νοῦς νοερός, νοῦς οὐσιώδης, and νοῦς ζωτικός occur in Proclus, qv. *Procli Diadochi In Platonis Timaeum Commentari*, Volume 5, Book 4, 245-247; *Procli in Platonis Parmenidem Commentaria*, II 733 and IV 887. Interestingly, Proclus associates νοερός with the three 'septenary planets' Mercury, Venus, and the Sun.

Here, σοφία νοερὰ may well suggest a particular hermetic principle which requires contextual interpretation.

ii) As noted in my commentary on Poemandres 29 - where I used the Latin *sapientia* in respect of σοφία - in some contexts the English word 'wisdom' does not fully reflect the meaning (and the various shades) of σοφία, especially in a metaphysical (or esoteric) context given what the English term 'wisdom' now, in common usage and otherwise, often denotes. As in the Poemandres tractate *sapientia* (for σοφία) requires contextual - a philosophical - interpretation, as Sophia (for σοφία) does in tractate XI where it is there suggestive, as with Aion, Kronos, and Kosmos, of a personified metaphysical principle.

iii) In respect of νοερός, the English word 'intellectual' has too many irrelevant modern connotations, with phrases such as 'intellectual wisdom' and 'the wisdom that understands' - for σοφία νοερὰ - unhelpful regarding suggesting a relevant philosophical meaning. Hence the use of the term 'noetic' which suggests a particular type of apprehension - a perceiviation - whereby certain knowledge and a particular understanding can be ascertained.

Thus, *noetic sapientia* implies that the knowledge and understanding that is noetically acquired transcends - or at least is different from - that acquired both (a) through observation of and deductions concerning phenomena and (b) through the use of denotatum whereby beings are given 'names' and assigned to abstractive categories with such naming and such categories assumed to provide knowledge and understanding of the physis of those beings. [In respect of physis, qv. the comment on φύσεως μιᾶς in section 12.]

In addition, given what follows - ἐν σιγῇ, 'in silence' - such knowledge and understanding does not require nor depend upon words whether they be spoken

or written or thought. Hence, the 'source' of mortals is in, can be known and understood through, the silence of noetic sapientia.

genuine. In respect of ἀληθινός as 'genuine', cf. Poemandres 30, ἀληθινὴ ὅρασις.

noble. Regarding ἀγαθός as 'noble/nobility/honour', qv. my commentary on Poemandres 22 and my essays *Concerning ἀγαθός and νοῦς in the Corpus Hermeticum* and *Cicero On Summum Bonum*.

of whom dispersed. To express the meaning of the Greek, to avoid gender bias and because of the following παῖς, I have here used the plural rather than the singular, those avoiding expressions such as "I do not share/he does not share" and "he that is begotten of theos." This also has the advantage of avoiding a misapprehension such as "the begotten one will be different, a god, a son of god."

the desire of theos. In respect of θέλημα here, qv. v.18, συνάσατε τῷ θελήματί μου πᾶσαι αἱ ἐν ἐμοὶ δυνάμεις.

quidditas. οὐσία. As at tractates XI:2 and VI:1, quidditas is a more appropriate translation of οὐσία rather than either 'essence' or 'substance'. Quidditas is post-classical Latin, from whence the English word quiddity, and here as in those tractates should be understood as a philosophical term requiring contextual interpretation. One possible interpretation of quidditas here as at VI:1 is 'the being of that being/entity', with such quidditas often presented in - and perceived via or as - φύσις (physis).

such a perceiviation. I have followed the MSS and translated καὶ τῆς νοητῆς, omitted by Nock et al. In respect of νοητῆς, cf. Plutarch on the views of Krantor of Soli regarding psyche: μιγνύντι τὴν ψυχὴν ἐκ τε τῆς νοητῆς καὶ τῆς περὶ τὰ αἰσθητὰ δοξαστῆς φύσεως (De Anima Procreatione in Timaeo, 1).

In respect of νοῦς as perceiviation/perceivance, qv. my commentary on the Poemandres tractate.

entirely whole. τὸ πᾶν ἐν παντί. A literal translation - "the all in all" - does not in its blandness (and the fact that "all in all" is a colloquialism) convey the meaning of the Greek, which considering what follows is suggestive of "entirely whole."

mixture of all abilities. ἐκ πασῶν δυνάμεων συνεστώς. Mixture - a variant spelling of mixtion, meaning melded, compounded, combined, composed of - is most suitable for συνεστώς given the metaphysical matters discussed.

a teacher to a pupil. ὃ τέκνον and ὃ πάτερ not here literally referring to how a father should converse with his son but rather to a teacher instructing a pupil,

with the pupil expecting the teacher to explain matters clearly rather than by means of riddles.

emanation. I incline toward the view that γένος (which is literally, 'kind', species, race, folk, breed) is used here as a technical term which - given what follows, ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀναμυμήσκεται, and the fact that it is not feasible for one mortal to impart knowledge about it to another mortal - here implies a particular 'emanation' of theos; a knowing of which one has to, as Hermes goes on to describe, experience for it to be properly understood. Such 'emanations of theos' are described in the Poemandres tractate where they are symbolized by a septenary system and the two "immortal" (acausal) realms which await for mortals beyond those seven spheres, with knowledge of these emanations being acquired by the ἀνοδος (anados, the upward journey) from the deathful realms to the realms of the deathless.

The term emanation also has the advantage of connotating the literal meaning of γένος since an 'emanation' is derived from a particular kind, breed, or lineage.

presenced. The term 'presenced' is from the noun 'presencing' (derived from the Latin praesentia) and means "the action or process of making some-thing manifest and/or present and/or established."

ἀναμυμήσκω is a very interesting word to use and one which has a variety of meanings depending on context, and thus does not always impute something to do with either 'mind' or with 'memory' as those English terms are now often understood with their implications of those 'things' having some sort of an existence 'somewhere' - in the case of 'memory' as a faculty of the 'mind' - and/or as quantifiable 'things'.

In the world of ancient heroes and warriors, as evoked by Homer, it is simply a 'mentioning' of something:

ὦ φίλ', ἐπεὶ δὴ ταῦτά μ' ἀνέμνησας καὶ ἔειπες,
φασὶ μνηστῆρας σῆς μητέρος εἵνεκα πολλοὺς
ἐν μεγάροις ἀέκητι σέθεν κακὰ μηχανάσθαι

My friend - since you have, in speaking to me, mentioned this,
There are indeed rumours of many suitors for your mother being in your home
Against your will who are plotting to do you harm.

(Homer, The Odyssey, Book III, 321-323)

In Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles it implies a 'seeing again' of things past:

ἀλλ' ἐγὼ σαφῶς
ἀγνώτ' ἀναμνήσω νιν. εὔ γὰρ οἶδ' ὅτι
κάτοιδεν, ἦμος τῷ Κιθαιρῶνος τόπῳ,

ὁ μὲν διπλοῖσι ποιμνίοις, ἐγὼ δ' ἐνί,
ἐπλησίαζον τῷδε τάνδρῃ τρεῖς ὅλους
ἔξ ἥρος εἰς ἀρκτοῦρον ἐκμήνους χρόνους

But I shall bring light
Upon those things which are now unknown. For well do I know
That he will see again that region of Cithaeron when he
With a double flock and I with one
Were neighbours and comrades for three entire six month
Durations from Spring to Arcturus.

(1131-1137)

In this tractate, the implication of ἀναμιμνήσκω is of theos - literally, given the definite article, τοῦ θεοῦ, *the* theos - presencing in the mortal (and thus gifting them with) the required understanding/knowledge of the emanation, just as theos has gifted mortals with sentience, cf. θεοῦ δωρεᾶς in IV:5, ἐλλόγιμος in tractate XI:7 and Asclepius 16, "Prouisum cautumque est, quantum rationabiliter potuisset a summo deo, tunc cum sensu, disciplina, intellegentia mentes hominum est munerare dignatus. Hisce enim rebus, quibus ceteris antestamus animalibus."

3.

unshaped. ἄπλαστον. A privation of πλάσσω, hence 'without invention, pretence, form; not manufactured, unadorned, unfashioned, without shape.' Cf. the irony of Lucian in *De Morte Peregrini* 10, πηλὸς γὰρ ἔτι ἄπλαστος ἦν καὶ οὐδέπω ἐντελὲς ἄγαλμα ἡμῖν δεδομιούργητο, for he was then formless clay with that glorious depiction not yet complete.

What is unshaped (form-less) is the vista - the view - seen, with there being no need, in my view, to impute that Hermes is here speaking of having had a 'vision', mystical, prophetic, or otherwise, given that a 'vision' is not by its nature of what is 'form-less' but of some-thing or some-things perceived and which therefore, being seen, have form or forms, qv. the mention of οὐδὲ τῷ πλαστῷ τούτῳ στοιχείῳ and of εἶδος which follow.

through the generosity of theos. ἐξ ἐλέου θεοῦ. Literally, "from the generosity of theos." Considering the metaphysical context, I incline toward the view that ἐλέος here is neither mercy - qv. Oedipus Tyrannus 672, ἐποικτίρω στόμα ἐλεινόν οὗτος δ' ἐνθ' ἂν ἡ στυγήσεται - nor 'pity' (cf. Oedipus Tyrannus 180, νηλέα δὲ γένεθλα πρὸς πέδῳ θαναταφόρα κεῖται ἀνοίκτως) but rather 'generosity' in the sense of Matthew 12:7, τί ἐστὶν Ἐλεος θέλω καὶ οὐ θυσίαν, "I seek generosity and not sacrifice" with such 'generosity' (of deed and spirit) not exactly the same as what the word 'compassion' now implies, given the post-Hellenic and especially the contemporary connotations of the word 'compassion'.

setting forth ... engendered by perceivation. καὶ ἐμαυτὸν ἐξελέλυθα εἰς ἀθάνατον σῶμα, καὶ εἰμι νῦν οὐχ ὁ πρίν, ἀλλ' ἐγεννήθην ἐν νῶ. This passage is usually interpreted in a way which suggests that Hermes is describing some kind of ancient 'astral travel' where he goes "out of himself" and thence "into" a deathless body, ἀθάνατον σῶμα (in respect of θάνατος and ἀθάνατος as deathful and deathless, qv. my commentary on Poemandres 14 and on vv. 1 and 2 of tractate XI).

However, I take the passage more literally, especially given the phrase εἰμι νῦν οὐχ ὁ πρίν, "now I am not the/that before," and the mention of having been produced/engendered/grown by perceivation. That is, Hermes has "seen" - intuitively perceived, had an insight into - what deathlessness means and implies and is not the person he was before, having acquired (or been given, by theos) the gift of understanding that perceivation engenders, for as mentioned in tractate IV:4

βάπτισον σεαυτὴν ἢ δυναμένη εἰς τοῦτον τὸν κρατῆρα, ἢ πιστεύουσα ὅτι ἀνελεύσῃ πρὸς τὸν καταπέμψαντα τὸν κρατῆρα, ἢ γνωρίζουσα ἐπὶ τί γέγονας. ὅσοι μὲν οὖν συνῆκαν τοῦ κηρύγματος καὶ ἐβάπτισαντο τοῦ νοός, οὗτοι μετέσχον τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τέλειοι ἐγένοντο ἄνθρωποι, τὸν νοῦν δεξάμενοι

If you have strength enough, immerse yourself in the chaldron
Should you accept you can ascend -
Having discovered how you came-into-being -
To the one who dispatched down that chaldron.
The many who understood that declaration and were immersive with perceivation
Gained a certain knowledge, becoming more complete mortals
Through having received the perceivation

shaped part. A direct contrast with the previous use of πλάσσω in respect of what was seen.

thus and for me there is no concern for the initial mixturous form. διὸ καὶ ἡμέληταί μοι τὸ πρῶτον σύνθετον εἶδος. What there is no concern for is the causal form (εἶδος) of the mortal body, mixturous and formful as it is (in respect of mixturous, qv. the note on *mixture* in v. 2) and given that such an initial form will, by palingenesis, be changed.

not as if. Reading οὐχ ὅτι with the MSS; literally, "not as though." Cf. John 6:46 οὐχ ὅτι τὸν πατέρα ἐώρακέν τις.

biochrome ... definity. I take κέχρωσμαι καὶ ἀφὴν ἔχω καὶ μέτρον, ἀλλότριος δὲ τούτων εἰμί metaphorically, not literally, with (i) κέχρωσμαι implying not colour per se but rather biochromy, the natural or the apparent (observed) colouration of living beings, and (ii) μέτρον suggestive not of "measure" but rather of 'definity' in reference to 'indefinity' (from the noun indefinitude) and thus implying, in this context, 'beyond being definable' by ordinary, causal, means

such as 'measure' and 'weight' and 'determinability' and 'definement'.

and directly see my physicality and perceptible form. While various emendations have been suggested for the readings of the MSS here, including δέ εἰμι between ὅ τι δέ and κατανοεῖς, the general meaning seems clear: to directly see or fix or to concentrate one's eyes, one's gaze on (ἀτενίζω) the outward form (εἶδος) which here is the body, the physical appearance, the physicality of the person.

But, as Hermes goes on to explain - οὐκ ὀφθαλμοῖς τούτοις θεωροῦμαι νῦν - what is so observed by the physical eyes does not provide an understanding - a perception, a seeing - of what he is now as a result of the "unshaped vista" that he, through the generosity of theos, saw of himself "setting forth to a deathless body." In respect of θεωρέω, cf. John 4:19, λέγει αὐτῷ ἡ γυνή, Κύριε, θεωρῶ ὅτι προφήτης εἶ σύ, "the woman said to him: Sir, I deem you are a prophet."

4.

Father, you have stung the heart, plunging me into no minor distraction, for I cannot now perceive myself. Εἰς μανίαν με οὐκ ὀλίγην καὶ οἴστρησιν φρενῶν ἐνέσεισας, ὦ πάτερ· ἐμαυτὸν γὰρ νῦν οὐχ ὁρῶ.

My translation is quite different from previous ones - such as Copenhaver's "you have driven me quite mad, father, and you have deranged my heart. Now I do not see myself" - for the following reasons.

i) Does μανία, in the context of this particular tractate, equate to what the English terms 'mania' and 'madness' now denote, as for example - in the case of mania - in 'obsessive need or enthusiasm', 'mood disorder', and - in the case of madness - 'mental illness', psychosis, lack of restraint, uncontrollable fury, uncontrollable mental turmoil, or even in the colloquial sense of 'cool' or quirkily interesting?

It is my considered opinion that it does not, but rather denotes what is suggested by Acts 26:24-25 especially given the use there of μαίνομαι,

Ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ ἀπολογουμένου ὁ Φῆστος μεγάλη τῇ φωνῇ φησὶν Μαίνῃ, Παῦλε· τὰ πολλὰ σε γράμματα εἰς μανίαν περιτρέπει. ὁ δὲ Παῦλος Οὐ μαίνομαι, φησὶν, κράτιστε Φῆστε, ἀλλὰ ἀληθείας καὶ σωφροσύνης ῥήματα ἀποφθέγγομαι.

Speaking up for himself, Festus, in a very loud voice, said: "Paul, you are distracted. Your extensive learning has brought you to distraction." But Paul replied: "Noble Festus, I am not beside myself for the words I have spoken are restrained and truthful."

ii) In respect of οἷστροισιν I am rather reminded of the usage of οἷστρομα in Oedipus Tyrannus, 1318,

οἷμοι μάλ' αὖθις: οἷον εἰσέδου μ' ἅμα κέντρων τε τῶνδ' οἷστρομα καὶ μνήμη κακῶν

as do the stings of those goads, and the recalling of those troubles, pierce me

where the transitive senses of *goad* include "to cause annoyance or discomfort; to spur someone on, or 'to sting' or to prod someone to provoke them into responding."

Thus, with φρήν taken as a metaphor for the heart, one has the contextually apposite *stung the heart*, rather than completely out of context phrases such as "mind frenzy" or "mad".

iii) ἔμαυτὸν γὰρ νῦν οὐχ ὁρῶ. Not a literal 'cannot see' but rather 'cannot comprehend who or what I - as a being - am,' as a consequence of what Hermes has just said about his own being. Hence, *I cannot now perceive myself*.

go beyond. In respect of διεξελήλυθας, not here implying to "pass through", or "come out" (of yourself) but "go - or pass - beyond" (yourself) as those sleepfully dreaming often in their dreams travel far beyond where they are sleeping.

essentiator. The entity, person, or divinity, who essentiate; that is, who is the genesis of, who is the essence of, and who gives being to - who 'authors' and who fashions - the Palingenesis. Which 16th century English word expresses the meaning here of the Greek term γενεσιουργός. Cf. δημιουργός - 'artisan' - in Poemandres 24.

The Mortal One, child of theos. Ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ παῖς, ἄνθρωπος εἷς, θελήματι θεοῦ. In respect of ἄνθρωπος εἷς, literally, *Essentialist Mortal*. That is, the primatial, or 'archetypal', human being. In respect of Ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ παῖς, cf. v. 2: τοῦ θελήματος τοῦ θεοῦ...ὁ γεννώμενος θεοῦ θεὸς παῖς, with παῖς not restricted to 'son' but implying the child - and hence the children, the youthful - of *the* theos, with the conventional translation here of 'son of god' imposing a particular meaning on the text and thus inviting as it may unwarranted comparisons with aspects of Christian theology.

5.

silenced. In regard to ἀφασίαν, qv. Euripides, Helen, 548-9,

ὥς δέμας δείξασα σὸν ἑκπληξιν ἡμῖν ἀφασίαν τε προστίθης

I am mortified, silenced, by you imposing such a bodily appearance upon me

in my heart <...> since I perceive. It is possible that Reitzenstein's assumption - in *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen*. Teubner, Leipzig, 1927 - of a lacuna here is correct, although it is perhaps more probable to interpret what Thoth has just said - that he perceives the stature and the features of Hermes are still the same - accounts for him "forsaking what was previously in his heart," because he now believes that Hermes was speaking metaphorically in regard to being a stranger to "tactility and definitivity." Which is why, after the reply from Hermes, Thoth goes on to ask τί οὖν ἀληθές ἐστιν (what, then, is the actuality) and then, after the reply from Hermes, says Μέμνηνα ὄντως.

the seasons. As elsewhere, χρόνος is not some abstract 'time' but rather the duration or durations between certain observable events or changes, often measured by such things as the phases of the moon or by the appearance or disappearance of constellations or certain stars in the night sky. Here, it refers to the seasons of Nature and how, over the seasons, mortals - and crops - grow then wither.

6.

What then - Trismegistus - is the actuality? Τί οὖν ἀληθές ἐστιν, ὦ Τρισμέγιστε. In respect of ἀλήθεια I have - as in translations of other Hermetic tractates, such as Poemandres 31 and XI:1 - eschewed the conventional translation of 'truth' (with its implication of some abstract, impersonal, and disputable, meaning) in favour of a contextual interpretation, mindful as I am of John 18:38 - τί ἐστιν ἀλήθεια, Quid est veritas? - which well expresses a Greco-Roman sentiment.

The English term is derived from the classical Latin *actualis* and, in this context, refers to what is real, what has actual being or is a demonstrable fact.

the un-complexioned...the unmaterial. There are two ways of construing what follows. As an impersonal list of philosophical attributes - such as formless, colourless - or metaphorically as personal qualities associated with or relevant to the quest for palingenesis, and while most translators have chosen the first option I incline toward the view that, given the personal context - of what Hermes has said, "directly see my physicality," and about how "the form of the deathful alters every day" - they signify personal qualities. These personal qualities, such as τὸ ἀσχημάτιστον and τὸ ἀσώματον are echoed in the *De Imaginibus Oratio* of Iohannes Damascenus (written c. 730 CE) when he enumerates the qualities of God.

Here, and for example,

i) *the un-complexioned.* τὸ ἀχρώματον, γν. ἄχρους, the opposite of εὐχρους, cf. Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, Book VIII, 1.41 ὡς εὐχρώωτεροι ὀρώντο ἢ πεφύκασιν. An alternative to 'un-complexioned' would be 'hueless'.

ii) *the figureless*. τὸ ἀσχημάτιστον. That is, of no particular physique. Qv. Iohannes Damascenus, *De Imaginibus Oratio* I: 4. (Migne, Patrologia Graeca, 94). Cf. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, Book VIII, 3.59, sunt inornata et haec: quod male dispositum est, id ἀνοικονόμητον, quod male figuratum, id ἀσχημάτιστον quod male collocatum.

iii) *the unadorned*. τὸ γυμνόν. Not literally 'naked' or unclothed, but a metaphor for 'unadorned'.

iv) *the revealed*. τὸ φαῖνον. While the literal sense here is problematic - cf. Herodotus, II, 71.1, χαυλιόδοντας φαῖνον, and Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus* 1229, τὰ δ' αὐτίκ' εἰς τὸ φῶς φανεῖ, "soon to be exposed to the light" - what seems to be suggested metaphorically is 'the visible', 'the (already) revealed', and thus someone who is conspicuously (luminously) open and honest and has nothing to hide that might, to their detriment, be exposed. Cf. τὸν ἐπιτάξαντα πῦρ φανῆναι in v. 17 and the quotation there from Plato, *Timaeus*, 39b.

v) *the self-perceiving*. τὸ αὐτῷ καταληπτόν. That is, the self-apprehended, the self-aware, person.

vi) *the unwaveringly noble*. τὸ ἀναλλοίωτον ἀγαθόν. Qv. τὸ ἀγαθόν, ἀγαθόν, ὕμναι in v. 18.

vii) *the unmaterial*. τὸ ἀσώματον. The personal sense is well-expressed in a 14th century translation of 'De Proprietatibus Rerum' in which the qualities of an angel are explained: "inasmuch as he is farre from the bondage of earthly matter, insomuch he is the more perfect in contemplation of spirituall and unmateriall thinges." (Book I, ii. ii. 60). In respect of the term as applied to God, qv. Iohannes Damascenus, *De Imaginibus Oratio* I: 4. Cf. Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, V, 15, 1-4,

Vetus atque perpetua quaestio inter nobilissimos philosophorum agitata est, corpusne sit vox an incorporeum. Hoc enim vocabulum quidam finxerunt proinde quod Graece dicitur ἀσώματον. Corpus autem est quod aut efficient est aut patiens; id Graece definitur τὸ ἦτοι ποιοῦν ἢ πάσχον. Quam definitionem significare volens, Lucretius poeta ita scripsit: Tangere enim aut tangi, nisi corpus, nulla potest res.

I am completely confused. Μέμνηνα ὄντως. Just as in v. 4, the context does not support Thoth saying - even rhetorically - something such as "I have gone mad" or "I am really deranged" considering what the English words "mad" and "deranged" now impute. The sense here - given what follows, ἐνεφράχθησαν αἱ αἰσθήσεις τούτου μου τοῦ νοήματος - is rather of being completely confused, befuddled, and thus lost because of what Hermes has just said. Cf. John 10:20, Δαιμόνιον ἔχει καὶ μαίνεται τί αὐτοῦ ἀκούετε - "why listen to him? He bears a

daemon and is not himself" - with its suggestion that not only is the person completely confused but also that it is not him who is speaking (or, more probably, not he who is ranting) but the daemon he carries around and thus is "possessed" by.

the perceptibility of my apprehension was obstructed. ἐνεφράχθησαν αἱ αἰσθήσεις τούτου μου τοῦ νοήματος. Although the Greek is somewhat obscure, the general sense is that his perception - his understanding - of what he thought Hermes was explaining is now gone, having been obstructed, lost, because of his confusion.

and flows, as Water does, and is neumæos as is Air. The meaning here of ὑγρός and σύμπνοος are uncertain, with the context, the mention of elemental Fire, Earth, Water, and Air, perhaps indicative of them being technical (esoteric) hermetic terms rather than having their normal (exoteric) meaning of 'moist/wet' and 'breathing together' respectively.

i) In regard to ὑγρός, qv. Poemandres 4, where the context - ἀφάτως τετραγμένην καὶ καπνὸν ἀποδι δοῦσαν - implies flowing, Cf. Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 314 - ταῦτ' ἄρ' ἐποίουν ὑγρᾶν Νεφελᾶν στρεπταιγλᾶν δάιον ὁρμάν - where clouds are described as flowing and in their flowing-moving obscure the brightness (of the day).

ii) In regard to σύμπνοος, qv. Περὶ Εἰμαρμένης attributed to Plutarch - τὸ φύσει διοικεῖσθαι τόνδε τὸν κόσμον σύμπνοον καὶ συμπαθῇ αὐτὸν αὐτῷ ὄντα (574e) - literally meaning that the Kosmos is συμπαθῇ with itself and mutually breathing (σύμπνοος), with the implication that it is a wholistic living being. Hence, here - given such a conjectured esoteric meaning as "breathfully connected" - a suitable interpretation of καὶ σύμπνοον ὡς ἀήρ would be *and is as breathfully connected as Air*, with 'breath' indicative of πνεῦμα as described in Poemandres 5 and XII:18.

However, a better alternative might be to provide a suitable technical term, open to interpretation, to express whatever esoteric meaning of σύμπνοος is conjectured, with my suggestion being neumæos, from the medieval Latin neumæ using the suffix -os derived from the Greek -ός, with one possible interpretation therefore being 'something' possibly pertaining to πνεῦμα', giving thus the translation *and is neumæos, as is Air*.

insubstantial. τὸ μὴ σκληρόν does not imply the literal what "is not hard" but rather the metaphorical what is 'insubstantial', whose form is thus not solid, not firm, but non-substantial and which therefore cannot be correctly known through touch and sight.

unmixturous. The meaning of ἀσφίγγωτος is unclear since it occurs only here, with suggestions ranging from 'not fastened', 'not bound', 'not tight', and 'loose'. However, I am inclined to accept Scott's emendation of ἀσύνητον - qv. τὸ

πρῶτον σύνθετον εἶδος (the initial mixturous/composed form) in v. 3 - giving thus unmixturous, not composite.

undissolved. Reading διαλυόμενον with Parthey et al.

actusosity. ἐνέργεια. Qv. tractate XII:21. The English term actusosity derives from the classical Latin actuosus and expresses the Greek here better than the word 'energy' given the modern connotations of that word. The meaning is of (often vigorous) activity or occurrences either natural or which result from the actions of divinities or daimons or mortals.

that bringing-into-being within theos. τὴν ἐν θεῷ γένεσιν. Cf. Poemandres 26, ἐν θεῷ γίνονται. Both imply a "uniting with theos" to thus 'become-of' what is no longer mortal but rather both deathless and 'of theos'.

7.

Refine yourself. As often in other hermetic tractates - qv. Poemandres 10, 22, and VI:3 - καθαρός signifies not just the literal 'physically clean' but being 'refined' in terms of appearance, behaviour, manners, cleanliness, speech, learning, and thought.

brutish. Given the metaphysical context, and the contrast with καθαρός, ἄλογος implies more than 'irrational' or 'unreasonable'. The sense is of the unrefined, the uncultured, the brutish.

alastoras. Since the Greek word τιμωρία is specific and personal, implying vengeance, retribution, and also a divine punishment, it seems apposite to try and keep, in English, the personal sense even though no specific deeds or deeds are mentioned in the text, but especially because of what follows: Τιμωροὺς γὰρ ἐν ἑμαυτῷ ἔχω, ὧ πάτερ. Hence my interpretation, "the brutish alastoras of Materies," using the English term alastoras - singular, *alastor*, from the Greek ἀλάστωρ, an avenging deity, and also a person who avenges certain deeds. Qv. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 1497-1508.

materies. ὕλη. A variant form of the Latin *materia*, thus avoiding the English word 'matter' which now has connotations, derived from sciences such as Physics, that are not or may not be relevant here. In addition, the term requires contextual, metaphysical, interpretation, for as used here it may or may not be equivalent to the ὕλη of Poemandres 10, of III:1, καὶ τὰ λοιπά. Hence why I have here chosen 'materies' rather than - as in those other tractates - 'substance'.

unknowing. In respect of ἀγνοέω here, 'unknowing' is a more suitable English word than 'ignorance', given its meaning, usage (past - as in the *Cloud of*

Unknowing - and present) and given the context. Cf. Poemandres 27, ἀγνωσίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ, and Poemandres 32, ἐν ἀγνοίᾳ τοῦ γένους.

Vengerisse. A personification here in respect of one of the alastoras, rather than impersonally assumptive words such as 'torment/punishment' which in my opinion do not fully express the ethos of the Greek. *Vengerisse* is an alternative spelling of *Vengeress*: a woman who exacts vengeance, who does deeds of retribution; from the Latin *vindicare* via the Anglo-Norman *venger* whence the word *vengeance*. The spelling *vengerisse* occurs in Chaucer's 1374 translation of *De Consolatione Philosophiae*.

The personifications which follow - ἄγνοια, ἀκρασία, κ.τ.λ. - designate (i) the particular deed or deeds that the alastor in question has arrived to avenge, and/or (ii) the character trait or traits which has or have drawn that particular alastor to a person in order to torment them and exact vengeance, retribution.

In the case of ἄγνοια, the suggestion therefore seems to be that this is wilful unknowing, born out of arrogance.

Unrestraint. ἀκρασία. In relation to a person, the Greek means 'lack of control' and thus implies someone who cannot restrain themselves and thus who is self-indulgent; and it is somewhat unfortunate that some translators have opted here to use the word 'incontinence' given what that English word imputes in medical terms.

Unfairness. In respect of δίκη as fairness, and personified as a goddess, cf. Hesiod, Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι, 213-218,

σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης, μὴδ' ὕβριν ὄφελλε:
ὕβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῶ βροτῶ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς
215 ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύναται, βαρύθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς
ἐγκύρσας ἄτησιν: ὁδὸς δ' ἐτέρηφι παρελθεῖν
κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει
ἐς τέλος ἐξελθοῦσα: παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω

You should listen to Fairness and not oblige Hubris
Since Hubris harms unfortunate mortals while even the more fortunate
Are not equal to carrying that heavy a burden, meeting as they do with Mischief.
The best path to take is the opposite one: that of honour
For, in the end, Fairness is above Hubris
Which is something the young come to learn from adversity.

Putridity. The Greco-Roman sense of κακία is personal, not abstract, imputing rottenness: a rotten, putrid, bad physis (character, nature, disposition). This bad physis is revealed by personal deeds, such as cowardice, malice, corruption, depravity, and hubris.

inner mortal. ἐνδιάθετον ἄνθρω. In respect of ἐνδιάθετος, an alternative to 'inner' would be 'enclosed', with the Greek word occurring in relation to Stoic philosophy where a distinction was sometimes made (qv. Theophilus of Antioch) between λόγος ἐνδιάθετος (the inner or 'esoteric' logos) and λόγος προφορικός (the outer or 'exoteric' logos).

incarcerated. The Greek word used, δεσμωτήριον, is interesting as it does not imply a 'prison' as the word prison is mostly conceived of today, a large building in which people are confined together. Composed as the Greek is from δεσμός (bonds, shackles) and τηρέω (watch, guard) it signifies a place where a person is guarded and shackled, as for example in medieval dungeons. Occurring as the word does in conjunction with σῶμα (body) and ἀναγκάζω (compel, using force including torture) the suggestion seems to be of the alastoras tormenting or torturing a person while that person is confined, incarcerated, within their mortal body. Cf. John 3:24, βεβλημένος εἰς τὴν φυλακὴν, which implies a forceful 'throwing' or a hurling into a guarded cage, not "cast into prison."

generous. Qv. the comment on ἐξ ἐλέου θεοῦ in v. 3.

which is what the way and logos of Palingenesis consists of. καὶ οὕτω συνίσταται ὁ τῆς παλιγγενεσίας τρόπος καὶ λόγος. Literally, "and thus consists the way and logos of the Palingenesis." Since the meaning of λόγος here is a matter of conjecture, I have transliterated it, although I incline toward the view that here it is used as a metaphysical term as in the Poemandres, as for example in v. 9, λόγῳ ἑτέρου Νοῦν δημιουργόν, "whose logos brought forth another perceiviation," and as in Cyrilli Epistula Tertia ad Nestorium:

μονογενὴς τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος ὁ ἐξ αὐτῆς γεννηθεὶς τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς ὁ ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ θεὸς ἀληθινός τὸ φῶς τὸ ἐκ τοῦ φωτός ὁ δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο τὰ τε ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ τὰ ἐν τῇ γῇ

only-offspring of the logos of theos, born from the essence [οὐσία] of the father, genuine theos from genuine theos, the phaos from the phaos, by whom all things in heaven and on Earth came into being

8.

Speak quietly...and keep this secret. σιώπησον...καὶ εὐφήμησον. Not a literal 'keep silent and do not say anything' since it is a formulaic phrase, with εὐφημέω suggestive of 'speak softly/quietly' due to either religions reverence (cf. VIII:5, XIII:8, κ.τ.λ.) or personal politeness/deference, and with σιωπάω suggestive of 'keep secret'.

Henceforward be pleased. The English word 'rejoice' - in respect of χαίρω - is

unsuitable here given the preceding εὐφημέω, and the association of the word with Christian worship past and present where it implies 'exult' and show/feel 'great joy'.

having refinement through the Cræfts of theos. ἀνακαθαίρο μενος ταῖς τοῦ θεοῦ δυνάμεσιν. Regarding καθαρός as implying 'refinement', qv. the comment on v. 7.

Cræft - the older spelling, meaning, and pronunciation of craft - is, when so spelled, appropriate in reference to the use of δύναμις in this tractate, implying as it does, in an exoteric context, what the terms strength/power/force denote, while implying in an esoteric context (as often in this tractate) a particular Arte, the application of particular abilities, skills, and knowledge, especially abilities, skills, and knowledge learned in the traditional manner from a master or from a mistress of the Arte or Arts in question. In this esoteric sense, theos is the Master Craftsman, with Palingenesis being a Cræft, an Arte, that can be taught and learned. A Cræft is thus - for an individual - an ability, a capability, while it can also be, in respect of others, influential.

Thus, in this and other tractates the context can suggest alternatives such as 'influence' - qv. v. 9 in respect of the Alastoras, and tractate III:3 - or 'capability', qv. XI:3 and XII:20.

The word cræft also has the advantage of implying the plural, such as in the expression "the Cræft of theos."

comprehend. Considering the preceding σιῶπησον the sense of ἀρθρόω here is not the literal 'articulate' the logos (by means of words spoken) but rather to be able to articulate it interiorly, clearly, and thus comprehend it for oneself.

arrivance. In respect of the unusual - but metaphysically appropriate - English word 'arrivance', cf. Luke 19:10, ἦλθεν γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ζητῆσαι καὶ σῶσαι τὸ ἀπολωλός, "the arrivance of the Son of Man was to seek and to save what was lost."

knowledge. γνῶσις. Cf. Poemandres 26, τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ ἀγαθὸν τέλος τοῖς γνῶσιν ἐσχηκόσι, and also γνῶσις ἀγία in v. 18 here, where the Greek might usefully be transliterated as gnosis.

knowledge of Delightfulness. Cf. v. 18: διὰ σοῦ τὸ νοητὸν φῶς ὑμῶν χαίρω ἐν χαρᾷ νοῦ, through you, a song of apprehended phaos, delighted with delightful perceivance.

9.

influxious. Derived from 'influxion' - one of which meanings is 'influence' - and denoting a powerful influence, as in the 17th century book *England's Teares For*

The Present Warres by James Howell, "the Moon hath an influxious power."

Grade. βαθμός. It is possible that this is a technical - esoteric - term which could also be translated as 'degree' indicative as the term seems to be of some mystical progression by a supplicant or initiate. However, the tractate does not provide any evidence as to what such a progression was from and to, or what the other grades might have been.

Ancestral Custom. δικαιοσύνη. The meaning is not 'righteousness', which imposes abstract theological meanings (mostly derived from the Old and New Testaments) on the text, but rather 'respectful of custom', of dutifully doing one's duty toward both the gods and other mortals. This Hellenic - this personal - meaning derives from understanding δίκη personified as the goddess of both Fairness *and of* Tradition (Ancestral Custom) with 'fairness' a more apt description of the word δίκη, given that terms such as justice and judgement have acquired, over millennia, abstract (and often legalistic) meanings which are not relevant to either the culture of ancient Hellas or to the Hellenic milieu of the Corpus Hermeticum. The Tradition, the ancestral custom, of ancient Hellas - with the attendant mythology and legends - was recounted by Hesiod in Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι (Works and Days) and in Θεογονία (Theogony).

Qv. δικαιοσύνη μου, τὸ δίκαιον ὕμνει δι' ἐμοῦ in v. 18.

vindicated. In respect of ἐδικαιώθημεν (qv. δικαίω) what is not implied is 'made righteous' or 'made pure' - which are meanings derived from Christian exegesis, cf. ὁ δίκαιος δικαιοσύνην ποιησάτω ἔτι, Revelation 22:11 - but rather 'vindicated', justified, and in this case because Unfairness was *in absentia*, having fled with there thus being no need for any further deliberations.

community. κοινωνέω imputes the sense of 'sharing in common or in partnership', that is, a community of shared interests, which is the opposite of individual covetousness.

With that departed. Referring to the departure of Coveter, the personification here of covetousness.

Actualis. A borrowing from the Latin root to personify 'actuality', qv. the comment in v. 6 on τί οὖν ἀληθές ἐστιν ὧ Τρισμέγιστε.

the noble has been returned. However τὸ ἀγαθὸν is interpreted - whether as the conventional 'the good', or as I interpret depending on context, 'the noble', 'the highest nobility', 'the honourable' - the literal meaning of πεπλήρωται here - denoting "τὸ ἀγαθὸν is completed", "τὸ ἀγαθὸν has been fulfilled", "τὸ ἀγαθὸν is full" - is somewhat obscure, especially if one compares it to an apposite context such as John 3:29,

ὁ ἔχων τὴν νύμφην νυμφίος ἐστίν· ὁ δὲ φίλος τοῦ νυμφίου, ὁ ἐστηκώς

καὶ ἀκούων αὐτοῦ, χαρᾷ χαίρει διὰ τὴν φωνὴν τοῦ νυμφίου. αὕτη οὖν
ἢ χαρὰ ἢ ἐμὴ πεπλήρωται

He who has an espousess is the spouse, and the friend of the spouse - who stands by him and listens - is joyous with joy because of his words. Hence, my own joy is complete.

In tractate IV:4, πληρώω is also apposite,

Καὶ ποῦ αὐτὸν ἰδρύσατο.
Κρατῆρα μέγαν πληρώσας τούτου κατέπεμψε δοῦς κήρυκα καὶ
ἐκέλευσεν αὐτῷ κηρύξαι ταῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων καρδίαις τάδε...

Where, then, was it placed?

In that large repleteful chaldron which was dispatched down with an envoy assigned to declaim to the hearts of mortals...

Thus, I am inclined to consider that here the usage is metaphorical, suggestive of τὸ ἀγαθὸν having been completed (i) as in restored, returned to the person before the intervention of "the brutish Alastoras of Materies", who undermined, replaced, or who sought to replace τὸ ἀγαθὸν with such things as Grief, Unrestraint, Lascivity, and Putridity; or (ii) as in, as a gift from theos, completing - refining - the mortal by removing what was detrimental to τὸ ἀγαθὸν and thus to Palingenesis, with this completing - refining - returning them to the necessary state of being, as does the ἄνοδος described in the Poemandres tractate.

phaos. φάος. As with φῶς - qv. Poemandres, κ.τ.λ. - a transliteration since I am inclined to avoid the vague English word 'light' which word now implies many things which the Greek does not or may not; as for instance in the matter of over a thousand years of New Testament exegesis, especially in reference to the gospel of John. A transliteration requires the reader to pause and consider what *phaos* may, or may not, mean, suggest or imply, especially as φάος metaphorically (qv. Iliad, Odyssey, Hesiod, etcetera) implies the being, the life, 'the spark', of mortals, and, generally, either (i) the illumination, the light, that arises because of the Sun and distinguishes the day from the night, or (ii) any brightness that provides illumination and thus enables things to be seen. In addition, as noted in Poemandres 21 and perhaps relevant here,

φῶς καὶ ζωὴ ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατήρ, ἐξ οὗ ἐγένετο ὁ Ἄνθρωπος

phaos and Life are the theos and the father from whence the human came into being

skotos. σκότος. Given the following τιμωρία and what has preceded, I have personified σκότος here (as Hesiod personified Darkness as Erebus) since it is implausible for 'darkness', understood as absence of light, to punish or seek vengeance.

they whirlingly rushed away. I incline toward the view that in respect of ἐκπέτομαι what is meant is not a literal 'flying away' but a metaphor for 'rushing away' or hastily fleeing. Similarly in respect of ροίζω which suggests a whirling about in confusion as they flee; cf. Poemandres 11, δινῶν ροίζω, spinning them around.

Thus concludes what is apparently the initiation into the secret mystery of Palingenesis which began in v. 6 with "thus it is, my son. It ascends, as Fire does, and descends, as Earth does..."

10.

the Dekad brought-into-being. τῆς δεκάδος παραγινομένης. Given that δεκάς is a metaphysical term of the Way of Palingenesis as that Way is explained in this tractate, I have used the transliteration Dekad rather than 'decad'.

geniture of apprehension. νοερά γενεσις. Literally, a birthing of apprehension, of the ability to apprehend beyond what the alastoras signify in respect of our mortal nature. As in tractates VI and XI, geniture expresses the contextual meaning of γενεσις here: that which or those whom have their genesis (and their subsequent development) from or because of something else or because of someone else. Here, this 'something else' is the Dekad which produces this particular birthing. In respect of geniture, XI:2 may provide some metaphysical context:

Ἄκουε, ὦ τέκνον, ὡς ἔχει ὁ θεὸς καὶ τὸ πᾶν. θεός, ὁ αἰὼν, ὁ κόσμος, ὁ χρόνος, ἡ γενεσις. ὁ θεὸς αἰῶνα ποιεῖ, ὁ αἰὼν δὲ τὸν κόσμον, ὁ κόσμος δὲ χρόνον, ὁ χρόνος δὲ γενεσιν. τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ ὡς περ οὐσία ἐστὶ [τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, ἡ εὐδαιμονία,] ἡ σοφία· τοῦ δὲ αἰῶνος ἡ ταυτότης· τοῦ δὲ κόσμου ἡ τάξις· τοῦ δὲ χρόνου ἡ μεταβολή· τῆς δὲ γενέσεως ἡ ζωὴ καὶ ὁ θάνατος

Hear then, my son, of theos and of everything: theos, Aion, Kronos, Kosmos, geniture. Theos brought Aion into being; Aion: Kosmos; Kosmos, Kronos; Kronos, geniture. It is as if the quidditas of theos is actuality, honour, the beautiful, good fortune, Sophia. Of Aion, identity; of Kosmos, arrangement; of Kronos, variation; of geniture, Life and Death.

banishing those twelve. The aforementioned alastoras, such as Grief and Lascivity.

by this geniture we are of theos. ἐθεώθημεν τῇ γενέσει. Cf. θεωθῆναι in Poemandres 26. As there, this does not mean or imply mortals become 'divinized' or 'deified' - "made into gods" - but rather it means θέωσις in the Hellenic, hermetic, sense of being mystically (re)united with theos but still being mortal, human, because there is and cannot be any partaking of, any participation in, the essence, the quidditas - οὐσία - of theos, a sense well

expressed centuries later by Maximus of Constantinople:

τῆς ἐπὶ τῷ θεωθῆναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον μυστικῆς ἐνεργείας λήψεται
πέρας κατὰ πάντα τρόπον χωρὶς μόνης δηλονότι τῆς πρὸς αὐτὸν κατ'
οὐσίαν ταυτότητος. Quæstiones ad Thalassium de Scriptura Sacra,
XXII [Migne, Patrologiae Graeca, 90, c.0318]

the end of the opus mysterium of human beings becoming of Theos can be in all
ways except one, namely that of having the identity of His Essence

That is, Palingenesis means that mortals become *of* theos, not that they become theos or theoi. This may well explain the reading of the MSS, ἐθεωρήθημεν, amended by Nock (after Reitzenstein) to ἐθεώθημεν. For it is possible that the hermetic θέωσις implied, in practice, a contemplative type of life; a style of life hinted at in v. 2 - "noetic sapientia is in silence" - and in v. 7 when Hermes says to Thoth, "Go within: and an arriving. Intend: and an engendering. Let physical perceptibility rest, and divinity will be brought-into-being." Cf. Ἀκλινῆς γενόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ in v. 11.

that generosity. The definite article - *the* generosity - points to the meaning: not ἔλεος per se but rather the generosity of theos who gifts this geniture.

they consist of such. The MSS have συνιστάμενος - Nock, συνιστάμενον - and although some emendations have been proposed, including the addition of νοητῶν (ἐκ νοητῶν) and Reitzenstein suggesting a lacuna between γνωρίζει and ἐκ τούτων, what is referred to seems obvious: they consist of, are composed from, such things that are of - are derived from - theos.

11.

quietude engendered by theos. Ἀκλινῆς γενόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ. With ἀκλινής understood metaphorically, cf. σοφία νοερά ἐν σιγῇ in v. 2.

the seeing is not of... In respect of φαντάζομαι, cf. XI:18, κεῖται γὰρ ἄλλως ἐν ἄσωμάτῳ φαντασίαι.

through the noetic actus of the cræft. τῇ διὰ δυνάμεων νοητικῇ ἐνεργείᾳ. In respect of 'cræft', cf. ἀνακαθαίρομενος ταῖς τοῦ θεοῦ δυνάμεσιν in v. 8. In regard to noetic, qv. the comment on σοφία νοερά in v. 2. In respect of actus, qv. the comment on ἐνέργεια in v. 6.

The metaphysical content of this statement, important both in respect of what immediately follows - which bears comparison with XI:18-19 (see below) - and in respect of understanding Palingenesis, has been somewhat lost in previous translations such as "with the mental energy that comes through the powers" and "with the energy the Mind gives me through the powers."

What is meant is that there is a specific type of apprehension which is vivifying, which does not depend on what is seen directly by the eyes, and which is a cræft, a capability, an ability, an influencing, arising from the generosity of theos and from that quietude engendered by theos. Thoth then goes on to describe what this apprehension involves: ἐν οὐρανῷ εἰμι, ἐν γῇ, ἐν ὕδατι, ἐν ἀέρι...

I am in the Heavens; on Earth; in Water... Everywhere. ἐν οὐρανῷ εἰμι, ἐν γῇ, ἐν ὕδατι, ἐν ἀέρι...πανταχοῦ. Regarding this, and the aforementioned type of apprehension, cf. tractate XI:18-19,

ἔνια δὲ τῶν λεγομένων ἰδίαν ἔννοιαν ἔχειν ὀφείλει· οἷον ὃ λέγω νόησον. πάντα ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ θεῷ. οὐχ ὥς ἐν τόπῳ κείμενα (ὁ μὲν γὰρ τόπος καὶ σῶμά ἐστι, καὶ σῶμα ἀκίνητον, καὶ τὰ κείμενα κίνησιν οὐκ ἔχει)· κεῖται γὰρ ἄλλως ἐν ἄσωμάτῳ φαντασίαι. νόησον τὸν περιέχοντα τὰ πάντα καὶ νόησον ὅτι τοῦ ἄσωμάτου οὐδὲν ἐστι περιοριστικόν, οὐδὲ ταχύτερον, οὐδὲ δυνατώτερον· αὐτὸ δὲ πάντων καὶ ἀπεριόριστον καὶ ταχύτατον καὶ δυνατώτατον.

καὶ οὕτω νόησον ἀπὸ σεαυτοῦ, καὶ κέλευσόν σου τῇ ψυχῇ εἰς Ἰνδικὴν πορευθῆναι, καὶ ταχύτερόν σου τῆς κελεύσεως ἐκεῖ ἔσται. μετελθεῖν δὲ αὐτῇ κέλευσον ἐπὶ τὸν ὠκεανόν, καὶ οὕτως ἐκεῖ πάλιν ταχέως ἔσται, οὐχ ὥς μεταβάσῃ ἀπὸ τόπου εἰς τόπον, ἀλλ' ὥς ἐκεῖ οὔσα. κέλευσον δὲ αὐτῇ καὶ εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀναπτῆναι, καὶ οὐδὲ πτερῶν δεηθήσεται. ἀλλ' οὐδὲ αὐτῇ οὐδὲν ἐμπόδιον, οὐ τοῦ ἡλίου πῦρ, οὐχ ὁ αἰθήρ, οὐχ ἡ δίνη, οὐχὶ τὰ τῶν ἄλλων ἀστέρων σώματα· πάντα δὲ διατεμοῦσα ἀναπτῆσεται μέχρι τοῦ ἐσχάτου σώματος. εἰ δὲ βουληθείης καὶ αὐτὸ ὅλον διαρρήξασθαι καὶ τὰ ἐκτός εἶ γέ τι ἐκτὸς τοῦ κόσμου θεάσασθαι, ἔξεστί σοι.

Some of the matters spoken of require a certain apprehension, so consider what I say: everything is in the theos but not as if lying in a particular place - since the place is a body and also immovable and what is lain does not move - but an incorporeal representation apprehends what is lain otherwise.

Thus apprehend what embraces everything and apprehend that the incorporeal has no boundary, that nothing is swifter, nothing as mighty, since the incorporeal is boundless, the swiftest, the mightiest.

And apprehend this about yourself and so urge your psyche to go to any land and, swifter than that urging, it will be there. Likewise, urge it to go to the Ocean and again it will be swiftly there without passing from place to place but as if already there.

Urge it to go up into the heavens and it will be there without the need of any wings. Indeed, nothing will impede it: not the fire of the Sun nor Aether, nor the vortex, nor the bodies of the other stars, but - carving through them all - it will go as far as the furthest body. Should you desire to burst through The Entirety and observe what is

beyond - if indeed there be anything beyond that ordered system - then it is possible for you.

What is that Way? As in vv. 7 and 10, an alternative here for τρόπος would be Art.

12.

dwelling. σκήνος. The Greek word has been variously interpreted, as 'shelter', 'tent', and, in the New Testament, has been understood metaphorically to mean 'tabernacle' in reference to the body (2 Corinthians 5.1, 5.4). Here, what seems to be suggested, as Hermes later explains, is the deathful body as a temporary dwelling place for what is deathless.

passed beyond. διεξέρχομαι. Passed beyond as in the previous "I am in the Heavens; on Earth; in Water..." and as in the "go beyond yourself as those who sleepfully dream" of v. 4.

zodiac. ζωοφόρος. Literally, τοῦ ζωοφόρου κύκλου implies "the life-bearing circle", referring to the personifications of the zodiacal constellations with the heavens understood as an abode of various divinities, qv. *Hymn to King Helios Dedicated to Sallust*, Πολὺν δὲ πρὸς οἷς ἔφην πλῆθος ἔστι περὶ τὸν οὐρανὸν θεῶν, οὓς κατενόησαν οἱ τὸν οὐρανὸν μὴ παρέργως μηδὲ ὥσπερ τὰ βοσκήματα θεωροῦντες. τοὺς τρεῖς γὰρ τετραχῆ τέμνων διὰ τῆς τοῦ ζωοφόρου κύκλου πρὸς ἕκαστον αὐτῶν κοινωνίας τοῦτον αὐθις τὸν ζωοφόρον εἰς δώδεκα θεῶν δυνάμεις διαιρεῖ καὶ μέντοι τούτων ἕκαστον εἰς τρεῖς, ὥστε ποιεῖν ἕξ ἐπὶ τοῖς τριάκοντα. (IV, 148c).

Cf. *De Mundo*, ὧν μέσος ὁ ζωιοφόρος καλούμενος κύκλος ἐγκάρσιος διὰ τῶν τροπικῶν διέζωσται. (Bekker, Aristoteles Opera Omnia, I, 392a)

composed of beings, twelve in number. Omitting the redundant ἀριθμῶν.

same physis. φύσεως μιᾶς. As in other tractates I have transliterated φύσις since in the Hermetica physis is a metaphysical principle or attribute whose meaning goes beyond, but can include, what the English terms 'nature' or 'character' - of a thing or person - denote, as the Poemandres tractate makes clear and where physis is, several times, personified, as for example in v. 14,

ἅμα δὲ τῇ βουλῇ ἐγένετο ἐνέργεια καὶ ὥικησε τὴν ἄλογον μορφήν ἣ δὲ φύσις λαβοῦσα τὸν ἐρώμενον περιεπλάκη ὅλη καὶ ἐμίγησαν ἐρώμενοι γὰρ ἦσαν

Then, his want and his vigour realized, and he within that image devoid of logos, Physis grasped he whom she loved to entwine herself around him so that, as lovers,

they were intimately joined together.

polymorphous. παντόμορφος. Cf. XI:16, ἐπεὶ οὖν ὁ κόσμος παντόμορφος γέγονεν.

difference. διαζυγή. Literally, division, separation, cf. Euripides, Troades, 669 - ἄλλ' οὐδὲ πῶλος ἦτις ἂν διαζυγῇ τῆς συντραφείσης - and διάζευξις (disunion).

effector of psyche. ψυχογόνος. The 16th century English word *effector* (from the Latin word used by Cicero) is someone or some-thing who or which engenders or produces some-thing. As in other tractates, I have transliterated ψυχή as 'psyche' so as not to impose a particular meaning on the text. Whether what is meant is *anima mundi* - or some-thing else, such as the 'soul' of a human being, or a personification - is a question of contextual interpretation. However interpreted, it is an important, a primal, principle in this and other hermetic tractates, and might imply here the original, ancient Greek, sense of 'spark' (or breath) of life; of that 'thing' (or being) which (or who) animates beings making them 'alive'.

with Life and Phaos a unity there where the arithmos of the henad is brought forth from the pneuma. ζωὴ δὲ καὶ φῶς ἡνωμέναι εἰσὶν ἔνθα ὁ τῆς ἐνάδος ἀριθμὸς πέφυκε τοῦ πνεύματος. Since this expression is important to understanding the metaphysics described in the tractate it deserves some attention.

i) In respect of Life and Phaos, qv. v. 9.

ii) I have transliterated ἀριθμός here since the context suggests it implies more than the English word 'number' understood as a particular abstraction representing the quantity of 'things'; qv. Aristotle, ἄλλος δέ τις τὸν πρῶτον ἀριθμὸν τὸν τῶν εἰδῶν ἓνα εἶναι, ἔνιοι δὲ καὶ τὸν μαθηματικὸν τὸν αὐτὸν τοῦτον εἶναι (Metaphysics, Book XIII, 1080b.20). Given such a distinction - and the discussion regarding ἀριθμός and Pythagoras in Book XIII, 1083b.10 et seq, and given the occurrence of ἀριθμός with μονάς in tractate IV,

μονὰς οὕσα οὖν ἀρχὴ πάντα ἀριθμὸν ἐμπεριέχει, ὑπὸ μηδενὸς ἐμπεριεχομένη, καὶ πάντα ἀριθμὸν γεννᾷ ὑπὸ μηδενὸς γεννωμένη ἐτέρου ἀριθμοῦ...

Just as the Monas, since it is the origin, enfolds every arithmos without itself being enfolded by any, begetting every arithmos but not begotten by any...

ἀριθμός is suggestive of a metaphysical (and/or of an esoteric, hermetic) principle or attribute - such as being an effluvium, or an emanation, of theos/monas/The One - whose outward (esoteric) appearance or representation is often assumed to be a particular 'numerical' quantity. As to whether or not what is suggested in the tractate regarding ἀριθμός is indicative of the metaphysics of Pythagoras, or represents a similar but different mystical

tradition, is an interesting question.

In terms of mystical tradition, there is a subtle difference between effluvia and emanations, with emanation often understood in the sense of some-thing proceeding from, or having, a source; as for example in theological use where the source is considered to be theos or some aspect of a divinity or God. Effluvium, however, has (so far as I am aware) no theological connotations and accurately describes a particular perceivization: a flowing of what-is, sans the assumption of a primal cause, and sans a division or a distinction between 'us' – we mortals – and some-thing else, be this some-thing else theos, God, a divinity, the numinous, or some assumed, ideated, cause, essence, origin, or form. Effluvia presence, manifest - or can presence and manifest in sentient beings such as ourselves, via for example a Way such as Palingenesis - the divine, the numinous.

iii) I have translated ἐνός as 'henad' - avoiding the prosaic translation 'unit' - given the metaphysical context, the aforementioned comparison with IV:10, the equivalence of ἐνός and μονάς, and also the following, from tractate XII:15,

ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις συνθέτοις πᾶσι σώμασιν ἀριθμὸς ἐκάστου ἐστί.
χωρὶς γὰρ ἀριθμοῦ σύστασιν ἢ σύνθεσιν ἢ διάλυσιν ἀδύνατον
γενέσθαι· αἱ δὲ ἐνάδες τὸν ἀριθμὸν γεννῶσι καὶ αὖξουσιν καὶ πάλιν
διαλυόμενον εἰς ἑαυτὰς δέχονται, καὶ ἡ ὕλη μία.

Yet in other combined corpora there is for each of them an arithmos, for without arithmos it is not possible for such a bringing together, such a melding, such a dissolution, to come-into-being. Henads beget and grow arithmos and, on its dissolution, receive it into themselves.

iv) As in other tractates, I have transliterated πνεῦμα (as pneuma) since, as with ψυχή - κ.τ.λ. - it is suggestive here of a particular metaphysical (and/or of an esoteric, hermetic) attribute, requiring contextual interpretation consistent with what is currently understood of Greco-Roman mysticism and metaphysics. The usual translation of 'spirit' can impose Christian, modern philosophical and other contemporary, meanings on the text.

13.

All That Exists. τὸ πᾶν. Literally, 'the all', but metaphysically implying 'all that exists', that is, the Universe, the Kosmos. Qv. the Cantio Arcana (Esoteric Song) of vv. 17-18, and also XII:22-23 where the term is synonymous with theos.

τοῦτο ἐστὶν ὁ θεός, τὸ πᾶν. ἐν δὲ τῷ παντὶ οὐδὲν ἐστὶν ὃ μὴ ἔστιν ὁ θεός· ὅθεν οὔτε μέγεθος οὔτε τόπος οὔτε ποιότης οὔτε σχῆμα οὔτε χρόνος περὶ τὸν θεόν ἐστι· πᾶν γὰρ ἐστί, τὸ δὲ πᾶν διὰ πάντων καὶ περὶ πάντα.

this is theos, All That Exists. For in all that exists there is no-thing that he is not.

Therefore, neither size, nor location nor disposition, nor appearance, nor age, are about theos. For he is all that exists; encompassing everything and within everything

When the context merits it, and to avoid awkward phraseology, I have sometimes translated τὸ πᾶν as Kosmos, as at vv. 18 and 19.

the perceiviation. τῷ νοί. Which perceiviation was mentioned in v. 11: "the seeing is not of the sight from the eyes but that through the noetic actus of the cræft. I am in the Heavens; on Earth; in Water; in Air..."

In effect, this perceiviation is of theos, and thus (i) of perceiving that 'all that exists' - including ourselves - are emanations of theos, or (ii) of perceiving that 'all that exists', including ourselves, are effluvia and thus presence, manifest - or can presence and manifest, via for example the Way of Palingenesis - the divine, the numinous, with theos thus understood as the artisan who crafted ourselves and every-thing else:

Ἐπειδὴ τὸν πάντα κόσμον ἐποίησεν ὁ δημιουργός, οὐ χερσὶν ἀλλὰ λόγῳ, ὥστε οὕτως ὑπολάμβανε ὡς τοῦ παρόντος καὶ αἰεὶ ὄντος καὶ πάντα ποιήσαντος καὶ ἐνὸς μόνου, τῇ δὲ αὐτοῦ θελήσει δημιουργήσαντος τὰ ὄντα (Tractate IV:1)

Because the artisan crafted the complete cosmic order not by hand but through Logos you should understand that Being as presential, as eternal, as having crafted all being, as One only, who by theosis formed all that is.

Which metaphysical understanding is not only rather lost in conventional translations of ἐμαυτὸν ἐν τῷ νοί such as "I see myself in Mind," but which also introduce an abstraction, an ἰδέα, 'the mind', which detracts from an appreciation of emanations of theos and effluvia of the numinous.

No more to present the body in three separations. τὸ μηκέτι φαντάζεσθαι εἰς τὸ σῶμα τὸ τριχῇ διαστατόν. Or, less literally, "no more to present the body in three separate ways." And 'no more' because the perceiviation is of 'all that exists' as either emanations of theos (the One) or presencings of the divine, the monadic numinous.

i) *to present.* That is, to present - to show - in a particular manner. In respect of φαντάζεσθαι, cf. Aeschylus, Agamemnon,

μηδ' ἐπιλεχθῆς
Ἀγαμεμνονίαν εἶναί μ' ἄλοχον.
φανταζόμενος δὲ γυναικὶ νεκροῦ 1500
τοῦδ' ὁ παλαιὸς δριμὺς ἀλάστωρ
Ἀτρέως χαλεποῦ θοινατῆρος
τόνδ' ἀπέτεισεν

τέλεον νεαροῖς ἐπιθύσας.

But do not add to those words that it was me who was the mistress of Agamemnon
Since the wife of this corpse presents herself here
As that most ancient fierce Avenger.
It is Atreus, he of that cruel feast,
Who, in payment for that, has added to his young victims
This adult one.

ii) *separations*. As noted in my commentary on tractate IV:1, what is not meant by διαστατός is 'dimension', given what the term 'dimension' now imputes scientifically and otherwise. What is expressed in IV:1 may also be relevant here:

τοῦτο γάρ ἐστι τὸ σῶμα ἐκείνου, οὐχ ἄπτόν, οὐδὲ ὁρατόν, οὐδὲ
μετρητόν, οὐδὲ διαστατόν, οὐδὲ ἄλλωι τινὶ σώματι ὅμοιον· οὔτε γὰρ
πῦρ ἐστὶν οὔτε ὕδωρ οὔτε ἀήρ οὔτε πνεῦμα, ἀλλὰ πάντα ἀπ' αὐτοῦ.

That Being has no body that can be touched or seen or measured or which is separable or which is similar to any other body: not of Fire or Water or of Pneuma even though all such things are from that Being.

Thus, to translate τὸ μηκέτι φαντά ζεσθαι εἰς τὸ σῶμα τὸ τριχῇ διαστατόν as something like "no longer to picture the three-dimensional body" is to introduce two fairly recent, and unnecessary, abstractions: that of to picture/visualize - as if in some-thing denoted by the term 'mind' - and that of 'three-dimensions'. Whereas what the Greek expresses is relatively simple and suitable to the milieu of Greco-Roman mysticism: of not seeing, of not representing, the body in three particular ways. What these three separate ways are is open to interpretation, but the context suggests in terms of physicality, of psyche, and of pneuma.

through this disclosure. Although 'disclosure' seems apposite, λόγος could be translated here - as in the title - as 'discourse'.

Between τὸ τριχῇ διαστατόν and διὰ τὸν λόγον, Nock et al indicate a lacuna, although it is possible to make some sense of what is here rather obscure Greek. [An overview of some of the problems here - in the context of the meaning of the following διάβολος - is given by Anna Van den Kerchove, *La voie d'Hermès: Pratiques rituelles et traités hermétiques*, Brill (Leiden), 2012, pp.100-4]

written about for you alone. Reading ὃν εἰς σὲ μόνον ὑπεμνηματισάμην with Reitzenstein et al, and taking ὑπεμνηματισάμην to refer to 'writing about' Palingenesis.

rouner. διάβολος. In regard to the Old English word *rouner* - denoting a person who whispers secrets or who spreads rumours in a secretive, disruptive,

manner - qv. the Prologue of the 14th century *Cloud Of Unknowing*,

Fleschely janglers, opyn preisers and blamers of hemself or of any other, tithing tellers, rouners and tutilers of tales

Also, cf. 2 Timothy 3:3, ἄστοργοι, ἄσπονδοι, διάβολοι, ἀκρατεῖς (unloving, unforgiving, rouners, unrestrained) where mention is made of ἀκρατής, which in this tractate is personified as one of the Alastoras.

I take the following τοῦ παντὸς as referring to keeping the silence - the secrets - as mentioned in v. 22, rather than as referring to the preceding τὸ πᾶν.

the many. τοὺς πολλούς. It is possible to take this pejoratively and thus as referring to 'plebal outsiders', to 'the masses', the plebeians.

but instead to whomsoever theos himself desires. Reading ἀλλ' εἰς οὓς ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸς θέλει with Reitzenstein. The text is obscure to the point of being corrupt, with various emendations having been proposed, and thus my translation is somewhat conjectural.

14.

Speak quietly. Qv. v. 8

constituted of such cræfts. Such cræfts as Palingenesis, and thus such abilities as a cræft confers.

disrespected. ἀσεβεῖσθαι. Qv. Lysias, Funeral Oration, 2.7,

Ἀθηναῖοι ἡγησάμενοι ἐκείνους μὲν εἴ τι ἡδίκουν, ἀποθανόντας δίκην ἔχειν τὴν μεγίστην τοὺς δὲ κάτω τὰ αὐτῶν οὐ κομίζεσθαι ἱερῶν δὲ μαινομένων τοὺς ἄνω θεοὺς ἀσεβεῖσθαι

the Athenians considered that if those ones had done harm then their death was the greater punishment, with those in the realms below not being attended to, and - with their consecrated places defiled - the gods above were being disrespected

Also, cf. Poemandres 23,

τοῖς δὲ ἀνοήτοις καὶ κακοῖς καὶ πονηροῖς καὶ φθονεροῖς καὶ πλεονέκταις καὶ φονεῦσι καὶ ἀσεβέσι πόρρωθέν εἰμι

I keep myself distant from the unreasonable, the rotten, the malicious, the jealous, the greedy, the bloodthirsty, the hubriatic

the quiddity of geniture. τῆς οὐσιωδοῦς γενέσεως. A metaphysical expression

which, in context, signifies that the essentiality, the realness, of the particular bringing-into-being that is Palingenesis - with its perception of effluvia (or of emanations of theos) and of the mortal being 'all that exists' - is far removed from the physis that ordinary perception associates with the physical body.

engendered of theos. θεὸς πέφυκας. That is, reborn through Palingenesis because of theos. The following καὶ τοῦ ἐνὸς παῖς provides the necessary context. In respect of Palingenesis signifying becoming *of* theos (as a child is *of* the parent) and not becoming theos or theoi, qv. the comment on v. 6, "by this geniture we are of theos." Cf. φύσει μὲν πέφυκας θεός (Josephus Hymnographicus, *Feast of Saint Basilissa*, Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, 105, 1120) and δόξης γέμων θεός πέφυκας (Joannes Geometra, *Carmina Varia*, Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, 106, 997)

15.

song. ὕμνος. Not a 'hymn' in the Christian sense (which the word hymn now so often imputes) but rather celebrating the numinous, and theos, in song, verse (ode), and chant.

you said you heard from those influences when you reached the Ogdoad. The Ogdoad - ὀγδοος, the eighth - relates to Poemandres 26, τὴν ὀγδοατικὴν φύσιν, the ogdoadic physis which is beyond the seven spheres, the reaching of which is celebrated in song, ὕμνεῖ σὺν τοῖς οὖσι τὸν πατέρα, which signifies the end of the mortal anados (ἄνοδος) and where the mortal hears 'the influences' - those of The Cræft - who or which are beyond the ogdoad celebrating theos in melodious song, τινων δυνάμεων ὑπὲρ τὴν ὀγδοατικὴν φύσιν φωνῇ τινι ἡδεῖαι ὕμνουσῶν τὸν θεόν.

There are several ways of interpreting the text here and what follows. If one accepts the emendation σου (Nock, after Reitzenstein) then Thoth is asking to hear the song Hermes heard when he reached the Ogdoad, while if one reads, with the MSS, μου, then Thoth is asking for the song Hermes said Thoth would hear when Thoth himself reaches the Ogdoad. In addition, τῶν δυνάμεων in association with either σου ἀκοῦσαι or μου ἀκοῦσαι is awkward, implying "heard from The Cræft" - or, in exoteric terms, "from the (those) Powers/Forces /Influences/" - when whomsoever reaches the Ogdoad, and which inclines one to ask, whose or what influences/powers? Those mentioned, for example, in vv. 8-9, such as Delightfulness, Self-Restraint, and Perseverance? If so, are these influences, collectively, The Cræft itself personified and who thus, through the generosity of theos, enable Palingenesis?

On balance, given the reference to Poemandres 26, I am inclined to accept the emendation σου and take 'the influences' as referring to those of The Cræft, some of whom are personified in vv. 8-9, and which 'influences' are those who in Poemandres 26 are "celebrating theos in melodious song."

divined about the Ogdoad. Taking καθὼς Ὀγδοάδα ὁ Ποιμάνδρης ἐθέσπισε with τέκνον, not with the preceding ἀκοῦσαι τῶν δυνάμεων.

Poemandres, the perceivization of authority. Qv. Poemandres 2, εἰμὶ ὁ Ποιμάνδρης, ὁ τῆς αὐθεντίας νοῦς. As there, the title implies "What (knowledge) I reveal (or am about to reveal) is authentic," so that an alternative translation, in keeping with the hermeticism of the text, would be "I am Poemandres, the authentic perceivization."

and entrusting me to presence the beautiful. καὶ ἐπέτρεψέ μοι ἐκεῖνος ποιεῖν τὰ καλά. While an alternative translation is "and entrusting me to presence the noble," it does not immediately connect to what follows: of beautifully presencing such beautiful things as the esoteric song (ὕμνωδία κρύπτη, cantio arcana) which Hermes proceeds to teach to Thoth.

16.

except to you at your completion. εἰ μὴ σοὶ ἐπὶ τέλει τοῦ παντός. More literally, "except to you at the ending of the whole." That is, at the ending of the initiation into the secret of Palingenesis.

respectfully. That is, reverentially. The sense of προσκυνέω here does not necessarily imply a 'kneeling down' or some sort of what the Greeks (and the Romans) would undoubtedly have described as a 'barbarian adoration' or prostration as if in worship of Helios or of some-thing. It also does not necessarily imply a type of body-bent bowing, a stooping, toward a particular person (cf. Herodotus, I:119.1, ἄρπαγος μὲν ὡς ἤκουσε ταῦτα, προσκυνήσας καὶ μεγάλα ποιησάμενος ὅτι τε ἡ ἀμαρτὰς οἱ ἐς δέον ἐγγόνεε καὶ ὅτι ἐπὶ τύχησι χρηστῆσι ἐπὶ δεῖπνον ἐκέκλητο, ἦε ἐς τὰ οἰκία).

What such respect, in this particular case, involved is unknown although the tractate - with its invocations of Self-Restraint, the imperturbable, the unwaveringly noble, of a contemplative silence, and its declamation of "go within" - is suggestive of a simple, unadorned, silent, respect for the numinous and the divine, as might perhaps be manifest in a slight bowing of the head. Cf. John 4:20 where the type of reverence is also unknown,

οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ προσεκύνησαν· καὶ ὑμεῖς λέγετε ὅτι ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις ἐστὶν ὁ τόπος ὅπου προσκυνεῖν δεῖ.

Our ancestors gave reverence on this mountain but you say that the necessary place of reverence is in Jerusalem.

17.

Logos Δ. The MSS at this point have the heading ὑμνωδία κρύπτη, λόγος Δ. While ὑμνωδία κρύπτη is understandable - Esoteric Song, Cantio Arcana, Secret Chant - the meaning of λόγος Δ is conjectural, with suggestions including The Fourth Song, The Fourth Formula, and the Fourth Discourse, with the obvious implication that there are, or were, four such hermetic songs, formulae, or discourses, with various suggestions as to those other three, such as Poemandres 31, tractate V:10, and Asclepius 41, all of which are relatively short.

every Physis of Kosmos. Among the presencings of the Kosmos described here by their physis are Earth, Trees, the Heavens, Air, and Water.

In respect of Kosmos and physis, qv. tractate XII:14,

ἀνάγκη δὲ καὶ ἡ πρόνοια καὶ ἡ φύσις ὄργανά ἐστι τοῦ κόσμου

Necessitas, foreseeing, and physis, are implements of Kosmos

Gaia. γῆ. Earth as elemental principle, hence the personification here since Earth is being directly, personally, invoked.

open. ἀνοίγνυμι. Cf. Papyri Graecae Magicae, XXXVI. 312ff. The term was often used in both mystic odes and in classical magicae incantations. The Latin *aperio* well expresses the sense, as in "aperire librum et septem signacula eius," (Jerome, Revelation V:5) and "et cum aperuisset sigillum secundum." (Jerome, Revelation VI:3)

μοχλός. Here, not a literal 'bolt' or 'lock' but what prevents (access to) or is a defence against something.

Abyss. ἀβύσσου. This is the emendation of Reitzenstein for the various readings of the MSS. Nock has ὄμβρου which does not make sense here, for why "open what prevents" rain? In respect of ἄβυσσος, qv. tractate III:1.

incurvate. This unusual English term is appropriate here to poetically suggest the sense of the Greek - σείω - which is to bend from side to side as if shaken by an earthquake, by a trembling of the Earth.

Master Artisan. κτίσεως κύριον. 'Founding Lord', or less poetically, Lord of Creation. Theos as creator-artisan is mentioned in Poemandres 9, with the term there, and in tractate IV:1, being δημιουργόν. Qv. also δύναμις δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἰών (the craft of theos: Aion) in tractate XI:3.

clan. κύκλος. Here signifying a particular group, or a particular assembly, of people as in the English expression "the inner circle." Hence, "the clan of

theos".

Sweet water. γλυκὺ ὕδωρ. The sweetness of water suitable to drink. Cf. John 4:10, ὕδωρ ζῶν, the 'living water' - that is, the water of life, ὕδωρ ζωῆς.

bring light to. In respect of φαίνω as 'bringing light', cf. Plato, Timaeus, 39b,

φῶς ὁ θεὸς ἀνῆψεν ἐν τῇ πρὸς γῆν δευτέρᾳ τῶν περιόδων, ὃ δὲ νῦν
κεκλήκαμεν ἥλιον, ἵνα ὅτι μάλιστα εἰς ἅπαντα φαίνοι τὸν οὐρανὸν

theos ignited a light in that second circle from Earth, named now as Helios, so that it could bring light to all of the heavens

fond celebration. Regarding εὐλογία in a neutral way which does not impute the Christian sense of "praise the Lord", qv. Poemandres 22,

παραγίνομαι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ὁ Νοῦς τοῖς ὁσίοις καὶ ἀγαθοῖς καὶ καθαροῖς
καὶ ἐλεήμοσι, τοῖς εὐσεβοῦσι, καὶ ἡ παρουσία μου γίνεται βοήθεια,
καὶ εὐθὺς τὰ πάντα γνωρίζουσι καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἰλάσκονται
ἀγαπητικῶς καὶ εὐχαριστοῦσιν εὐλογοῦντες καὶ ὑμνοῦντες
τεταγμένως πρὸς αὐτὸν τῇ στοργῇ

I, perceivation, attend to those of respectful deeds, the honourable, the refined, the compassionate, those aware of the numinous; to whom my being is a help so that they soon acquire knowledge of the whole and are affectionately gracious toward the father, fondly celebrating in song his position.

my Arts. As at Poemandres 31 - which is also a traditional doxology (δοξολογία) to theos - the sense of δυνάμεων is not 'powers', forces (or something similar and equally at variance with such a laudation) but 'arts'; that is, particular abilities, qualities, and skills. Here, these abilities and skills - the craft - relate to esoteric song; to be able to be an effective laudator in respect of theos and "every Physis of Kosmos."

18.

numinous. ἅγιος. As in the Poemandres tractate and other tractates.

knowledge. As at Poemandres 26, γνῶσις here could be transliterated as gnosis although I incline toward the view that such a transliteration might - given what the term gnosis now imputes, as for example in being a distinct 'spiritual way' - lead to incorrectly imposing modern meanings on the text.

numinal understanding. φωτίζω here implies an understanding given by a divinity, as for example in spiritual enlightenment, something that is not conveyed if a single word such as 'enlightened' is used as a translation. In order to express something of the Greek, I had used the term 'numinal understanding' with numinal implying 'divine' as at tractate III:1,

Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεὸς καὶ θεῖον καὶ φύσις θεία

The numen of all beings is theos: numinal, and of numinal physis.

phaos. As at Poemandres 4ff - and in other tractates - a transliteration of φῶς - using the the Homeric φάος, given that it (like physis) is a fundamental principle of Hermetic weltanschauungen and one which the overused English word 'light', with all its modern and Christian interpretations, does not satisfactorily express.

mastery. Implying mastery over one's self, cf. Chaucer, The Physician's Tale: "Bacus hadde of hir mouth right no maistrie." (v. 58)

respectful of custom. δίκαιος. Not 'righteous', which imposes abstract theological meanings (mostly derived from the Old and New Testaments) on the text, but rather 'respectful of custom', of dutifully doing one's duty (that is, being honourable) toward both the gods and other mortals.

Honesty. ἀλήθεια. Given that those who are urged to sing are personifications, this is not some abstract, disputable, 'truth' but as often elsewhere in classical literature, a revealing, a dis-covering, of what is real as opposed to what is apparent or outer appearance. In personal terms, being honest and truthful.

Through me, may Kosmos accept... δι' ἐμοῦ δέξαι τὸ πᾶν λόγῳ. I take this with the following λογικὴν θυσίαν, and τὸ πᾶν as vocative, and poetically combine the unnecessary λόγῳ with λογικὴν. As punctuated by Nock et al it would with λογικὴν θυσίαν literally be something such as "through me accept in speech All That Exists/the Kosmos, an offering spoken," which - in the context of the song and of theos being τὸ πᾶν, All That Exists/the Kosmos - is distinctly odd.

Here, as in v. 19, translating τὸ πᾶν as Kosmos, rather than 'All That Exists' to elucidate the meaning and avoid awkward phraseology.

respectful wordful offerings. Qv. Poemandres 31. The difficult to translate Greek term λογικὴν θυσίαν implies an offering, and one which is both respectful and conveyed by means of words but which words are of themselves insufficient, inadequate, with the term 'wordful' suggesting such insufficiency as well as doubling for λόγῳ in the previous line.

19.

I take λογικὴν θυσίαν (respectful wordful offerings) as the end of the named, the metaphysical, 'esoteric song' (ὕμνωδία κρύπτη) with what follows - lines 214-235, that is, until the interjection by Thoth - a personal evocation, a chant, to theos - τὸ πᾶν - for acceptance of the offering (the singing of the esoteric

song) followed by a personal request to remain enlightened, followed by an epiphonema which includes sentiments of personal gratitude.

Life, recure. σῶζε ζωή. Recure - from the classical Latin recuro - is an interesting, if neglected, English word and is apposite here implying as it does restore (to health), heal, and preserve. As mentioned in Poemandres 17 regarding Life and Phaos,

ὁ δὲ Ἄνθρωπος ἐκ ζωῆς καὶ φωτὸς ἐγένετο εἰς ψυχὴν καὶ νοῦν, ἐκ μὲν ζωῆς ψυχὴν, ἐκ δὲ φωτὸς νοῦν

Of Life and Phaos, the human came to be of psyche and perceivation; from Life - psyche; from Phaos - perceivation

Theos, spiritus. πνεῦμα θεέ. In respect of πνεῦμα Nock considered it doubtful and noted the suggestion of Keil, πνευμάτιζε, although πνεῦμα θεέ - theos, pneuma (spiritus) - does seem appropriate: theos, 'a breath', a breathing, Pneuma; which breathing imbues beings with life and spirit, with pneuma.

Breath-Giver, Artisan. πνευματοφόρε δημιουργέ. Literally, "Pneuma-Bearing, Artisan." The Master Craftsman whose craft is to make - to construct, to create - living beings.

20.

Because of your desire. Qv. v. 4, θελήματι θεοῦ.

21.

I follow Festugiere and take τῷ σῷ τὴν εὐλογίαν ταύτην λεγομένην as belonging to Thoth, not Hermes.

a more numinal perceivation. Regarding ἐπιφωτιζω, qv. v. 16, γνῶσις ἁγία, φωτισθεὶς ἀπὸ σοῦ and the comment on 'numinal understanding'. As there, what is meant is not some ordinary type of 'illumination' but rather a divinely-inspired or a divinely-given understanding. Here, this understanding has enhanced the perceivation Thoth has acquired.

from my heart. As at v. 4, φρήν as a metaphor for the heart. Which explains the response of Hermes: μὴ ἀσκόπως.

essentiator. Qv. v. 4.

kyrios. A transliteration of the Greek, appropriate here given what terms such as 'Lord' and 'Master' now so often denote, and given Poemandres 6,

Οὕτω γινώθι· τὸ ἐν σοὶ βλέπον καὶ ἀκοῦον, λόγος κυρίου, ὁ δὲ νοῦς
πατὴρ θεός. οὐ γὰρ διίστανται ἀπ' ἀλλήλων· ἔνωσις γὰρ τούτων ἐστὶν
ἡ ζωή

Then know that within you - who hears and sees - is logos kyrios, although
perceivation is theos the father. They are not separated, one from the other,
because their union is Life.

22.

invokation. εὐχομαι. Not 'pray' - which has too many Christian and other
non-Hellenic religious connotations - but invokation, as in appeal to a deity, to
call upon, to offer a laudation or an offering. Qv. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 933,
ἠύξω θεοῖς δείσας ἂν ὧδ' ἔρδειν τάδε, did you invoke the gods because you
feared doing such things?

the unrottable produce. τὰ ἀθάνατα γενήματα. Literally, "the
deathless/immortal produce". Taking ἀθάνατος metaphorically contrasts well
with the preceding 'bearing good fruit'.

the tradition. In respect of παράδοσις, cf. παραδιδόναι μοι in v. 1. As there, the
suggestion is of a disclosing of some ancestral teaching or wisdom; the
disclosing by a teacher or master to a pupil.

rouners. For 'rouner' in respect of διάβολος, qv. v. 13, εἰς δὲ ὑπεμνηματι σάμην
ἵνα μὴ ὧμεν διάβολοι τοῦ παντὸς εἰς τοὺς πολλούς.

noesis. A technical, mystical, term, qv. the comment on 'noetic sapientia' in v. 2.

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All translations by DW Myatt

Christianity, War, Paganism, And Honour

Preface

While David Myatt's post-2012 writings about extremism have (i) been prejudicially rejected by individuals of a particular political persuasion {1} and (ii) ignored, or even prejudicially rejected, by academics who have mentioned him usually in the context of certain unproven allegations, {2} a most interesting and neglected aspect those post-2012 writings concern war, Catholicism, and 'good and evil' in the context of Christianity, Islam, the modern State and his own pagan philosophy of pathei-mathos. {3}

Most interesting, for five reasons. First, because when studied without preconceptions they complement and extend his philosophy of pathei-mathos; second, because they are based on his personal experience of Christianity and Islam; thirdly because they reveal his scholarly knowledge of those subjects; fourthly, because the concept of the numinous is embedded in such writings, {4} and fifthly because they not only compliment his writings about his personal rejection of extremism but elegantly refute the aforementioned prejudicial rejection of his post-2012 writings.

Most of Myatt's writings concerning war, Catholicism, and 'good and evil' are contained in the following texts:

- (i) *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God* which forms part two of his 2013 *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*; {5}
- (ii) the 2018 essay *Persecution And War*; {6}
- (iii) his three part 2019 text *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*; {7}
- (iv) his 2013 book *Understanding And Rejecting Extremism*. {8}

Part One

Good, Evil, and Christianity

Catholicism

Myatt's views about Catholicism are relevant to both his understanding of the religion of Christianity and the development of his philosophy of pathei-mathos, and are summarized in Part One of *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*:

"why does someone who has developed a somewhat paganus weltanschauung – the mystical individualistic numinous way of pathei-mathos – now defend a supra-personal organization such as the Roman Catholic Church? Because I from personal experience appreciate that for all its many faults – recent and otherwise – and despite my disagreement regarding some of its teachings it still on balance does, at least in my fallible opinion, presence – as it has for centuries presenced – aspects of the numinous and which presencing has over centuries, again in my fallible opinion, had a beneficial affect on many human beings."

In Part Two of that text, his personal experience of Catholicism and his understanding and scholarly study of Christianity are evident, as in his comprehensive footnotes to the quotation below and which footnotes are included here for completeness:

<begin quotation>

"Two of the guiding practical principles of living as a Roman Catholic seem to me, on the basis of personal experience and fallible understanding, to be expiation and penance, related as they are to what was termed the Sacrament of Confession – now re-named the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation – and thence related to one of the founding principles of the Roman Catholic Church: that an ordained Priest has the religious authority [1] to give absolution for the "sins" [2] a person has committed, and the authority to specify what penance is required for expiation, but which absolution is dependant on the person making a full and truthful confession and being repentant.

Such personal confession, penance, and expiation, are evidential of how a practising Catholic interacts with the Divine and is thus personally reminded of what is spiritual, eternal, numinous, and beyond the causal everyday world."

ooo

[1] Qv. John 20:22-23,

λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἃν τινων ἀφῆτε τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἀφένται αὐτοῖς ἃν τινων κρατῆτε κεκράτηνται

Receive Halig Spiritus: if you release anyone from their errors, they are released; if you hold onto them, they are held onto.

In regard to the term Spiritus, in my commentary on John 1:31 I wrote:

τὸ πνεῦμα. Almost without exception, since Wycliffe's Bible the Greek here has been translated as "the spirit", although the ASV [the Anglo-Saxon Version] has gast (gast of heofenum), whence the later English word 'ghost'. However, given what the terms 'spirit' and 'ghost' – both in common usage, and as a result of over a thousand years of Christian exegesis – now impute, it is apposite to offer an alternative and one which is germane to the milieu of the Gospels or which at least suggests something of the numinosity presenced, in this instance, via the Gospel of John.

Given that the transliteration pneuma – with its modern association with terms such as pneumatic – does not unequivocally suggest the numinous, I have chosen spiritus, as referenced in respect of gast in *Wright's Anglo-Saxon And Old English Vocabularies*.

In regard to the translation Halig Spiritus, in my commentary on John 5:33 I wrote:

I have here used the Old English word Halig – as for example found in the version of John 17.11 in the Lindisfarne Gospel, 'Du halig fæder' – to translate ἅγιος rather than the later word 'holy' derived as that is from halig and used as it was by Wycliffe in his 1389 translation of this phrase, "in the Hooly Gost", which itself echoes the ASV, "on Halgum Gaste."

The unique phrase *in Halig Spiritus* – in place of the conventional 'with the Holy Spirit' – may thus express something of the numinosity, and the newness, of the original Gospel, especially as the word 'holy' has been much overused, imputes particular meanings from over a thousand years of exegesis, and, latterly in common parlance, has become somewhat trivialized.

[2] As I have noted in several essays, and in my translation of the Gospel of John, I prefer to translate the Greek term ἁμαρτία not by the conventional 'sin' but rather by 'error' or 'mistake'.

As I wrote in the essay *Exegesis and Translation*,

One of the prevalent English words used in translations of the New Testament, and one of the words now commonly associated with revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam, is sin. A word which now imputes and for centuries has imputed a particular and at times somewhat strident if not harsh moral attitude, with sinners starkly contrasted with the righteous, the saved, and with sin, what is evil, what is perverse, to be shunned and shudderingly avoided. One of the oldest usages of the word sin – so far discovered – is in the c. 880 CE translation of the c. 525 CE text *Consolatio Philosophiae*, a translation attributed to King Ælfred. Here, the Old English spelling of syn is used:

þæt is swiðe dyslic & swiðe micel syn þæt mon þæs wenan scyle be Gode

The context of the original Latin of Boethius is *cogitare*, in relation to a dialogue about goodness and God, so that the sense of the Latin is that it is incorrect – an error, wrong – to postulate/claim/believe certain things about God. There is thus here, in Boethius, as in early English texts such as *Beowulf*, the sense of doing what was wrong, of committing an error, of making a mistake, of being at fault; at most of overstepping the bounds, of transgressing limits imposed by others, and thus being 'guilty' of such an infraction, a sense which the suggested etymology of the word syn implies: from the

Latin sons, sontis. Thus, this early usage of the English word syn seems to impart a sense somewhat different from what we now associate with the word sin, which is why in my translation of John, 8.7 I eschewed that much overused and pejorative word in order to try and convey something of the numinous original:

So, as they continued to ask [for an answer] he straightened himself, saying to them: "Let he who has never made a mistake [Αναμαρτητος] throw the first stone at her."

ὥς δὲ ἐπέμενον ἐρωτῶντες αὐτόν, ἀνέκυψεν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὁ ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν πρῶτος ἐπ' αὐτὴν βαλέτω λίθον.

Jesus here is not, in my view, sermonizing about sin, as a puritan preacher might, and as if he is morally superior to and has judged the sinners. Instead, he is rather gently and as a human pointing out an obvious truth about our human nature; explaining, in v.11, that he has not judged her conduct:

ἡ δὲ εἶπεν· οὐδεὶς, κύριε. εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· οὐδὲ ἐγὼ σε κατακρίνω· πορεύου, ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε

[And] she answered, No one, my Lord. Whereupon Jesus replied "Neither do I judge [κατακρίνω] you, therefore go, and avoid errors such as those."

The essay is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2013/04/26/exegesis-and-translation/> and was included as an Appendix to my *Mercvrii Trismegisti Pymander*.

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<end quotation>

Myatt goes on to explain what he means by how 'a practising Catholic interacts with the Divine and is thus personally reminded of what is spiritual, eternal, numinous',

"This personal – and via the Confessional, this priestly – connexion to the Divine, with the attendant penitence, penance, personal expiation, seems to me to have been somewhat neglected when non-Catholics, and even some Catholics, criticize the Roman Catholic Church [...]

That is, such criticism is secular; based on what is temporal, causal, such as some secular law or some personal emotive reaction, with the spiritual – the eternal – dimension to mortal life unconsidered. Which spiritual dimension is for Catholics based on allowing for personal expiation by spiritual means such as confession, penitence, and penance [...]

For judgement according to such a spiritual dimension was, rightly or wrongly, often considered more important than secular recompense and secular punishment."

His argument being that, in judging the actions of a person, "the application of certain spiritual considerations" were, in the past, more important than secular ones because they are based "on the belief in the Eternal Life – in Heaven or in Hell – which awaits all mortals, one portal to such an Eternal Life in Heaven being, according to Catholic faith, the sacrament of confession."

He expands on this in Part Three - *Two Metaphysical Contradictions Of The Modern West* - writing that the expectations of the Catholic Church, as in a letter written by Pope Francis, dated 1^o de enero de 2019, in this era now seem to be:

"that secular justice - as understood and as implemented by the State - has a higher priority than *judicium divinum*, the divine justice of God or of the gods."

For centuries, the Catholic Church taught the primacy of divine justice, and that in his view

"the move toward the change [Pope Francis] suggests is in part at least placatory, in conformity with our epoch with its powerful secular Media and its powerful modern secular States; and second that the religious, the numinous, the spiritual, balance presented for millennia by aspects of the Roman Catholic Church - the devotion to the sacred over and above the secular - is continuing to be lost within the Roman Catholic Church, with *judicium divinum* and the secular justice of some State now apparently considered by the Pope as metaphysically equal."

Such temperate views, based on experience and study, are also evident in his *Questions of Good, Evil,*

Honour, and God where Myatt asks important ethical, philosophical, questions including whether "the definitions and thence the theology and epistemology and the morality of religions, over millennia, enabled more and more of us to avoid doing or causing what is bad," and "does jurisprudence - and thence The State - offer an acceptable alternative" and whether or not we as a species can change without "a belief in some reward or the threat of punishment - be such karmic, eschatological, or deriving from something such as a State."

Good And Evil

In his *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God* Myatt begins his analysis of the Christian answers by asking what is meant by the phrase γινώσκοντες καλὸν καὶ πονηρόν in Genesis 3.5 which is conventionally translated as "knowing good and evil".

He suggests that this presumes a theological ideation such as 'the forces/realm of good' contrasted with 'the forces/realm of evil' as if they have an existence external to us and associated with, in the case of 'evil', an entity

"described in the Hebrew scriptures as a serpent and in LXX as ὄφις, a mythological creature familiar to readers of Hesiod's Theogony and from myths and legends concerning the oracle at Delphi and the Πύθων."

Dissenting, Myatt asks whether,

"in respect of this 'good and evil', might the Greek of LXX - and the Hebrew text - suggest something other than such a theological ideation? That is, how might the Greek text have been understood in its time?"

There follows a lengthy section about (i) the meaning of κάλος and πονηρόν, in respect of which he quotes Homer and Sophocles, and that γινώσκοντες καλὸν καὶ πονηρόν might suggest some contrast between what is beneficial/admirable/beautiful /noble/honourable and what is wearisome/cowardly/dishonourable; (ii) the Hebrew of Genesis 3.5 - generally rendered as "knowing tov and rah" - with tov suggesting pleasing, pleasant, beautiful, and *rah* adversity, unpleasant, harmful, injurious; and (iii) Genesis 8.21 followed by Luke 6.43-5 in Greek with his own translation; and (iv) Aeschylus, Sophocles, and verses from Romans 12 and 13, again in Greek with his own translations.

He concludes the section by writing that

"what these examples reveal - and many other examples from Christian scripture could be adduced - is not abstract, impersonal, theological concepts of 'good' and 'evil' but rather something personal that individuals can relate to and understand, and it is tempting therefore to suggest that it was later, and theological, interpretations and interpolations which led to a harsh dichotomy, an apocalyptic eschatology, a 'war' between an abstract 'good' and 'evil', and that with such interpretations and interpolations - much in evidence in the persecution of alleged heretics - the simple gospel message of the health of love was somehow lost for a while, to be, later on, re-expressed by people such as William Penn, who wrote, in his *Some Fruits of Solitude*, "Let us then try what love can do."

Moving on to the Muslim view, he provides quotations from the Koran in Arabic followed by his own "fallible interpretations of meaning" in English, knowing from his Muslim years not to describe them as 'translations'.

He quotes Surah 5, Ayah 100, Surah 2, Ayah 267, and Surah 2, Ayah 267, the latter of which interprets:

"From what We give you from the earth and from the good things you have earned - disburse; but do not look toward disbursing those defective things, which you would never take [for yourself] unless your eyes were closed."

His view is that

"as with the New Testament, what these examples reveal - and many other examples could be adduced - is not abstract concepts of 'good' and 'evil' but rather something that is understandable by individuals and related to themselves and the world around them."

In his *The Way Of Jesus of Nazareth: A Question Of Hermeneutics?* {9} he expands upon his statement

that "the simple gospel message of the health of love was somehow lost for a while" by referencing his translation of the Gospel of John and concluding that:

What emerges from my own translation – that is, from my particular 'interpretation of meaning' of the Gospel According To John – is rather reminiscent of what individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox, and William Penn wrote and said about Jesus and the spiritual way that the Gospels in particular revealed. This is the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from supra-personal moralistic interpretations based on inflexible notions of 'sin' and thus on what is considered 'good' and what is considered 'evil'.

Hence why he writes that the Gospel of John "contains certain truths not only about our physis as human beings but also about our relation to Being, to the divine, to the numinous."

Thus for Myatt the Gospel of John forms part of what he terms 'the culture of pathei-mathos' {10} with their being

"in this culture of pathei-mathos a particular ethos: the tone of harmony, ἁρμονίη; of a natural balance, or rather of how certain human actions are hubris - ὕβρις - and not only disrupt this needful harmony but also cause or contribute to suffering. Of the importance, and perhaps the primacy, of human love; of how Eris is the child of Polemos and Hubris, and of how a lovelorn Polemos follows Hubris around, never requited. Of how the truths of religions and spiritual ways are, in their genesis, basically simple, always numinous, and most probably the same: guides to living in such a way that we can rediscover the natural balance, appreciate the numinous, and avoid hubris.

In Part Three of *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God* - subtitled *Religion, Law, and The Reformation of Individuals* - Myatt describes how all this, and his analysis Part Two of Islamic and Western jurisprudence, and of the modern State, relates to his philosophy of pathei-mathos. For the culture of pathei-mathos:

"not only provides, as does the modern State, a perspective (and a teleology) unrelated to the judgement of a supreme deity and the promise of an after-life, but also points us toward answers rather different from those provided by proponents of the State, of liberal democracy, and of a jurisprudence concerned with international law and codifying and criminalizing what politicians, and/or some political theory, ideology, dogma, or agenda, deem to be bad.

For what that culture provides is an understanding of how all forms - be they considered political, or codified ideologically or in the form of a dogmatic hierarchical religion - have caused suffering, or do cause suffering sooner or later, because they are judgemental, supra-personal; and that such suffering is unjustified because it is individual human beings and indeed the other life with which we share this planet who and which are important; and that to alleviate and to prevent and remove the causes of suffering is necessary because a manifestation of what is good; that is, a manifestation of reasoned, balanced, compassionate, personal judgement, and of that learning, that knowledge, the insights, that personal experience of conflict, war, disaster, tragedy, havoc, violence, hatred, and pain, have taught and revealed to individuals for some three thousand years."

Which, in his words, leads to

"an understanding of (i) how good and bad are not 'out there' and cannot be manifest or assumed to be manifest in some form, by some ideation, or in 'them' (the others), without causing or contributing to or being the genesis of suffering, but instead are within us as individuals, a part of our nature, our character, our φύσις, and often divergently expressed; and (ii) of how, in my view at least, personal honour and not a codified law, not a jurisprudence, is the best, the most excellent, way to define and manifest this 'good', with honour understood, as in my philosophy of pathei-mathos, as an instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous."

This relates to his understanding of honour as described in the *The Numinous Balance of Honour* section of chapter VI of his *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*. {11}

Which understanding, as with most of his philosophy of pathei-mathos, {12} he frames in terms of classical rather than modern philosophy and thus uses ancient Greek terms:

"In many ways, the personal virtue of honour, and the cultivation of wu-wei, are - together - a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἁρμονίη. For personal honour is essentially a presencing, a grounding, of ψυχή - of Life, of our φύσις - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη."

Myatt's understanding of honour as a personal presencing of the numinous and a consequence of empathy - that is, his understanding of good and evil - may be said to be one ultimately based on experience. For his philosophy:

"is not a conventional, an academic, one where a person intellectually posits or constructs a coherent theory - involving ontology, epistemology, ethics, and so on - often as a result of an extensive dispassionate study, review, or a criticism of the philosophies or views, past and present, advanced by other individuals involved in the pursuit of philosophy as an academic discipline or otherwise. Instead, the philosophy of pathei-mathos is the result of my own pathei-mathos, my own learning from diverse - sometimes outré, sometimes radical and often practical - ways of life and experiences over some four decades; of my subsequent reasoned analysis, over a period of several years, of those ways and those experiences; of certain personal intuitions, spread over several decades, regarding the numinous; of an interior process of personal and moral reflexion, lasting several years and deriving from a personal tragedy; and of my life-long study and appreciation of Hellenic culture."

Which brings us to the core of that experience, the concept of honour, and how experience and his learning from experience caused him to refine it over the decades. From being a codified part of his extremist ideology to being a manifestation, a personal understanding, of the essence of 'the human culture of pathei-mathos'.

This was the 'inner struggle' described in his autobiography *Myngath*, {13} during which Myatt's perception of honour and duty would be changed.

Part Two

Extremism, War, And Honour

In his old writings as a neo-nazi ideologist (1984-1998) and, later (2001-2008) as a Muslim apologist for al-Qaeda and the Taliban, Myatt eulogized Kampf and Jihad, and the role of "the warrior". {14}

This began to change when a personal tragedy led him to his question his extremist past and extremism in general; a questioning he wrote about in his semi-autobiographical 2013 book *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism: A Very Strange Peregrination*. {8}

A passage from that book provides the necessary personal and philosophical context, and a passage I quote in full since it also explains the genesis of his understanding of suffering, of the inhumanity of war, and of extremism in general:

"I have - fully knowing my past hubris, the suffering I have caused, and aware of my manifold errors and mistakes over four decades - a great respect for other religions and spiritual ways, and aware as I am how they each in their own manner, express, have expressed, or are intimations of, the numinous. For instance, I have come to appreciate, more and more over the past few years, the numinosity of the sacred music of the Christian Church (especially Catholicism), from before Gregorian chant to composers such as Byrd, Dowland, Lassus, to Palestrina, to Phillipe de Monte, and beyond. So much so that such sacred music is now the only music I can listen to, out of choice, redolent as it is, has become, for me, of the beautiful, of humility, of tragedy, of a sacred suprapersonal joy, of what is or can be divined through contemplative prayer. A remarkable treasure of culture, of pathei-mathos...

Without such religious, such spiritual, such organized, reminders, daily or weekly - that is, without prayer and without what is perhaps the best that religions and spirituality manifest - how do we balance another need of ours? That need to cause suffering and cry havoc, and a need whose genesis, perhaps, resides in our desire to be, to express, to re-affirm the separation-of-

otherness, manifest as this is and has been in our own self-importance, our egoism, our greed; and in our belief that 'we', our assumed or our assigned category, are better than, superior to, 'them', the others: that 'we' are 'right' or have right on our side while 'they' do not and are wrong, leading as such belief so often does and so often has done to conflict and war and to us treating 'the others' in a dishonourable, uncompassionate, way because we, or those we follow and obey, have dehumanized 'them'. For I now incline toward the view that without such categorization, such assumptions - such a prejudice, such a belief - about 'us' and 'them', without such greed, such self-interest, and such a need to express, to manifest, importance, then war and suffering-causing armed conflict are not possible.

Is humility, therefore and as most religions and spiritual ways inform us, a necessity for us, as human beings? And if so, then how to manifest such humility, to be reminded of such a need, if we, as I now, personally have no expectation of or belief in God, or in Allah - in Heaven or Jannah - or in gods, or even in mechanisms such as rebirth and karma? Such questions have greatly occupied me for the past three years.

Given what I have intuited about our human nature - what many others have intuited or discovered over millennia - and what I believe I may have learned from my own pathei-mathos, I feel humility is indeed a necessity for us, as a means of guiding us toward avoiding causing suffering; as a means of placing our own life in the cosmic perspective of Life. That is, as a means of appreciating our nature as fallible, error-prone, beings who have the ability, the character, to not only refrain from committing the error of hubris but to also rationally understand why hubris is an error and what the numinous may be, beyond ideations and beyond the myths, the allegories, the spiritualities, the words, that we have used and do use in order to try and express it.

As to how to manifest humility - sans religions, sans prayer to a deity or deities, (etcetera) - I admit I do not know, although my [philosophy of pathei-mathos] is my attempt to find, and to try and express, some answers. Fallible answers such as the importance, the numinosity, of personal love; fallible answers such as empathy, and the knowing, the understanding, of others (and of ourselves) that empathy provides and of how such empathy and such empathic knowing is and can only be personal."

Here we have, in what he termed the separation-of-otherness, the basis for his philosophy of pathei-mathos: (i) pathei-mathos, (ii) the knowledge provided by empathy, and (iii) that this knowing is personal and thus cannot form the basis for anything supra-personal such as a political ideology or a religion.

As he explains in that Part One of *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*:

[A]ll extremists accept - and all extremisms are founded on - the instinctive belief or the axiom that their cherished ideation(s) or abstraction(s) is or are more important, more valuable, than the individual and the feelings, desires, hopes, and happiness, of the individual. The extremist thus views and understands the world in terms of abstractions [...]

The abstractions of extremism are manifest in the ideology, which posits or which attempts to explain (however irrationally and intolerantly) some ideated form, some assumed or believed in perfect (ideal) form or category of some-thing, and which ideated form is or can be or should be (according to the ideology) contrasted with what is considered or assumed to be its 'opposite' [...]

The individual, extremist or otherwise, is therefore required to accept - be subservient to - the judgement that the ideology asserts, or which some ideologue proclaims, is correct; for all ideologies denigrate or require (overtly or otherwise) the suspension of individual judgement either in favour of the collective, 'correct', ideological one, or in favour of the judgement of some leader, ideologue, or some 'higher authority'.

What his own pathei-mathos and that of others revealed was:

"a quite simple truth; that what is wrong is causing or contributing to suffering, and that, with (at least in my admittedly fallible opinion) one exception and one exception only we cannot now (again, at least in my admittedly fallible opinion) morally justify intentionally causing or contributing to the suffering of any living being.

How many more centuries - or millennia - will we need? To learn, to change, to cease to cause such suffering as we have for so many millennia caused.

My own life - of four decades of suffering-causing extremism and personal selfishness - is, most certainly, just one more example of our manful capacity to be stupid and hubriatic. To fail to learn from the pathei-mathos of human culture, even though I personally had the advantages of a living in diverse cultures and of a 'classical education', and thus was taught or became familiar with the insights of Lao Tzu, of Siddhartha Gautama, of Jesus of Nazareth, of Sappho, Sophocles, Aeschylus, Cicero, Livy, Marcus Aurelius, Dante Alighieri, Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, TS Eliot, EM Forster, and so many others; and even though I had the opportunity to discover, to participate in, and thus felt, the numinosity, the learning, inherent in so many other things, from plainchant to Byrd, Dowland, Palestrina, Tallis, to JS Bach and beyond. And yet, despite all these advantages, all these chances to learn, to evolve, I remained hubriatic; selfish, arrogant, in thrall to ideations, and like so many men somewhat addicted to the joy, to the pleasures, of Kampf, placing pursuit of that pleasure, or some cause, or some ideation, or my own needs, before loved ones, family, friends. Only learning, only finally and personally learning, after a death too far."

Honour And Empathy

During Myatt's National Socialist years his perception of honour was of it as "the natural instinct for nobility made conscious and this is done through a Code of Honour" {15} which laid down rules of behaviour such as being reserved in public and not given to displays of emotion."

During his "inner struggle" between 2006 and 2009 such an impersonal written codification with its rules or commandments was at odds with the individual learning inherent in the culture of pathei-mathos:

"One uncomfortable truth from which even I with all my sophistry could not contrive to hide from myself, even though I tried, for a while. The truth that I am indebted. That I have a debt of personal honour to both Fran and to Sue, who died - thirteen years apart - leaving me bereft of love, replete with sorrow, and somewhat perplexed. A debt to all those other women who, over four decades, I have hurt in a personal way; a debt to the Cosmos itself for the suffering I have caused and inflicted through the unethical pursuit of abstractions.

A debt somehow and in some way - beyond a simple remembrance of them - to especially make the life and death of Sue and Fran worthwhile and full of meaning, as if their tragic early dying meant something to both me, and through my words, my deeds, to others. A debt of change, of learning - in me, so that from my pathei- mathos I might be, should be, a better person; presencing through words, living, thought, and deeds, that simple purity of life felt, touched, known, in those stark moments of the immediacy of their loss.

But this honour, I have so painfully discovered, is not the abstract honour of years, of decades, past that I in my arrogance and stupid adherence to and love of abstractions so foolishly believed in and upheld, being thus, becoming thus, as I was a cause of suffering. No; this instead is the essence of honour, founded in empathy; in an empathy with and thus a compassion for all life, sentient and otherwise. This is instead a being human; being in symbiosis with that-which is the essence of our humanity and which can, could and should, gently evolve us." {16}

In 2014 he expressed his understanding more philosophically, writing that personal honour

"presences the virtues of fairness, tolerance, compassion, humility, and εὐταξία - as (i) a natural intuitive (wordless) expression of the numinous ('the good', δίκη, συμπάθεια) and (ii) of both what the culture of pathei-mathos and the acausal-knowing of empathy reveal we should do (or incline us toward doing) in the immediacy of the personal moment when personally confronted by what is unfair, unjust, and extreme.

Of how such honour - by its and our φύσις - is and can only ever be personal, and thus cannot be extracted out from the 'living moment' and our participation in the moment; for it is only through such things as a personal study of the culture of pathei-mathos and the development of the faculty of empathy that a person who does not naturally possess the instinct for δίκη can develop what is essentially 'the human faculty of honour', and which faculty is often appreciated and/or discovered via our own personal pathei-mathos." {17}

This "cannot be extracted out from the living moment" also applies to empathy since

"empathy is a human faculty mean that the apprehension is wordless and personal and cannot be extrapolated beyond, or abstracted out from, the individual without losing some or all of its numinosity since the process of denotatum - of abstraction - devolves around the meanings

assigned to words, terms, and names, and which meanings can and do vary over causal time and may be (mis)interpreted by others often on the basis of some idea, or theory, or on some comparative exegesis." {18}

Furthermore, when asked in a 2022 interview:

"You appear to have forged an existential crucible from which many now draw inspiration. How would you like to see that inspiration embodied in the lives of those who look up to you?" {19}

Myatt's answer was:

"Just as my fallible understanding is that honour cannot be abstracted from a personal moment to become some sort of principle or guide, so my similar fallible understanding is that a person who learns by means of pathei-mathos cannot be or rather should not become such a guide or even an example and certainly should not assume any sort of guiding role."

In the same interview when asked where does he philosophically situate his own paganus weltanschauung, he replied:

"I do not situate my weltanschauung anywhere in terms defined or believed or discussed by others, ancient or modern, because it is just my weltanschauung, born from various experiences and the loss of loved ones, and nurtured by working and living on a farm in England, by solitary walks along a sea-shore and in the hills and deciduous woods of English Shires."

Which answers express the *raison d'être* of his philosophy: the personal pathei-mathos of one person and, as he also says in that 2022 interview, his "attempt at expiation".

Conclusion

Those answers in that 2022 interview return us to where we began: with his defence, based on personal experience, of Catholicism, and with his 2013 text *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*, the first chapter of which, titled *Numinous Expiation*, invokes the dilemma he faced when confronting his extremist past:

"One of the many problems regarding my own past which troubles me - and has troubled me for a while - is how can a person make reparation for suffering caused, inflicted, and/or dishonourable deeds done. For, in the person of empathy, of compassion, of honour, a knowledge and understanding of dishonour done, of the suffering one has caused - perhaps before one became such a person of compassion, honour, and empathy - is almost invariably the genesis of strong personal feelings such as remorse, grief, and sorrow. The type of strong feelings that Christopher Marlowe has Iarbus, King of Gaetulia, voice at the end of the play *The Tragedie of Dido Queene of Carthage*, written c.1587:

Cursed Iarbas, die to expiate
The grief that tires upon thine inward soul.

One of the many benefits of an organized theistic religion, such as Christianity or Islam or Judaism, is that mechanisms of personal expiation exist whereby such feelings can be placed in context and expiated by appeals to the supreme deity. In Judaism, there is Teshuvah culminating in Yom Kippur, the day of expiation/reconciliation. In Catholicism, there is the sacrament of confession and penance. In Islam, there is personal *dua* to, and reliance on, Allah Ar-Rahman, Ar-Raheem, As-Salaam.

Even pagan religions and ways had mechanisms of personal expiation for wrong deeds done, often in the form of propitiation; the offering of a sacrifice, perhaps, or compensation by the giving or the leaving of a valuable gift or votive offering at some numinous - some sacred and venerated - place or site."

The only answers Myatt could find were his pagan philosophy of pathei-mathos {3} and his writings about rejecting extremism. That certain academics and persons of a particular political persuasion have prejudicially rejected his answers surely reveals something significant about them.

Rachael Stirling
January 2023

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{3} The pagan nature of Myatt's philosophy is comprehensibly described in *The Pagan Philosophy Of David Myatt*, which includes the monograph *Western Paganism And Hermeticism: Myatt And The Renaissance of Western Culture*. <https://concerningmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/09/myatt-paganism.pdf>

{4} The use of the English term numinous dates from the 17th century, and Myatt explains his understanding of the numinous in his essay *From Mythoi To Empathy*:

"that it is primarily a perceivation, not a personal emotion or feeling, not a mysterium, and not an idea in the sense of Plato's εἶδος and thus is not similar to Kant's concept of *a priori*. As a perceivation, while it includes an apprehension of what is often referred to as 'the divine', 'the holy' - and sometimes thus is an apprehension of theos or theoi - it is not limited to such apprehensions, since as in the past it is often an intimation of, an intuition concerning, the natural balance of ψυχή; a balance which ὕβρις [hubris] upsets. This natural balance - our being as human beings - is or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful." *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, seventh edition, 2022, pp.38-41, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

{5} <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/religion-and-empathy.pdf>

{6} <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2018/09/09/persecution-and-war/>

{7} <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/in-defence-rc-1.pdf>

{8} *Understanding And Rejecting Extremism*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/david-myatt-rejecting-extremism.pdf>

{9} <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/09/30/the-way-of-jesus-of-nazareth/>

{10} Myatt describes this culture in the following terms:

"The pathei-mathos of individuals over thousands of years, often described in literature, poetry, memoirs, aural stories, and often expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, has resulted in an accumulation of insights; what we might with some justification describe as a culture, which, while often redolent of the spiritual, is not religious. That is, not doctrinal, not codified, not organized, and not presenting or manifesting a theology. A culture that is supra-national, containing as it does, among many other treasures, the observations of Lao Tzu, Siddhartha Gautama, Ovid, and Mohandas K. Gandhi; the thoughts of Aeschylus, Sappho, and Sophocles; the writings of Marcus Aurelius and Jane Austen; the allegory, the mysterium, of Jesus of Nazareth; and, importantly, the experiences - written, recorded, and aural - of those who over the centuries have endured suffering, conflict, disaster, tragedy, and war, and who were forever changed by the experience."

{11} *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, seventh edition, 2022, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

{12} This use of Greek terms, sometimes transliterated, sometimes not, makes his philosophy not only rather distinct among modern philosophies but also often obscure. In his defence, Myatt writes that

"the philosophy of πάθει μάθος has certain connexions to Hellenic culture and I tend therefore to use certain Greek words in order to try and elucidate my meaning and/or to express certain philosophical principles regarded as important in - and for an understanding of - this philosophy; a usage of words which I have

endeavoured to explain as and where necessary, sometimes by quoting passages from Hellenic literature or other works and by providing translations of such passages. For it would be correct to assume that the ethos of this philosophy is somewhat indebted to and yet - and importantly - is also a development of the ethos of Hellenic culture; an indebtedness obvious in notions such as δίκη, πάθει μάθος, avoidance of ὕβρις, and references to Heraclitus, Aeschylus, and others, and a development manifest in notions such as empathy and the importance attached to the virtue of compassion." Introduction to Part Two of *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, seventh edition, 2022, op.cit.

As with the philosophy of Heidegger, who also uses Greek terms and certain words, such as Dasein, in a particular philosophical way, Myatt's philosophy requires serious study.

{13} David Myatt, *Myngath*, 2013, pp.65-67, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/david-myatt-myngath.pdf>

{14} Rachael Stirling's *The Peregrinations Of David Myatt: National Socialist Ideologist* chronicles Myatt's extremist decades with quotations from his neo-nazi and Islamist writings.
<https://concerningmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/09/dm-ns-ideologue-second-edition.pdf>

{15} *The Meaning of National-Socialism*, included in *Selected National Socialist Writings Of David Myatt*, <https://archive.org/download/myatt-selected-ns-writings1/myatt-selected-ns-writings1.pdf>

{16} *Myngath*, pp.80-81, op.cit.

{17} *The Way Of Pathei-Mathos - A Précis*, included in his book *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*, 2014. A gratis pdf version is available at <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/one-vagabond-pathei-mathos.pdf>

{18} *From Mythoi To Empathy*, 2018. Included in *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, seventh edition, 2022, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

{19} *What is the Meaning of Myatt?* Included in *Three 2022 Interviews*, <https://concerningmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/11/dm-three-interviews.pdf>

The Question Of David Myatt And Expiation



One of the central themes of David Myatt's extensive post-2012 writings is expiation; of finding some means by which the mistakes of his past, of his forty or so years of political and religious extremism, may be offset or recompensed. Myatt, in his 2013 text *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos: Spirituality, Humility, and A Learning From Grief*, {1} devotes a whole chapter to expiation and his concerns, writing that:

One of the many problems regarding my own past which troubles me - and has troubled me for a while - is how can a person make reparation for suffering caused, inflicted, and/or dishonourable deeds done. For, in the person of empathy, of compassion, of honour, a knowledge and understanding of dishonour done, of the suffering one has caused - perhaps before one became such a person of compassion, honour, and empathy - is almost invariably the genesis of strong personal feelings such as remorse, grief, and sorrow [...]

One of the many benefits of an organized theistic religion, such as Christianity or Islam or Judaism, is that mechanisms of personal expiation exist whereby such feelings can be placed in context and expiated by appeals to the supreme deity. In Judaism, there is Teshuvah culminating in Yom Kippur, the day of expiation/reconciliation. In Catholicism, there is the sacrament of confession and penance. In Islam, there is personal dua to, and reliance on, Allah Ar-Rahman, Ar-Raheem, As-Salaam.

Even pagan religions and ways had mechanisms of personal expiation for wrong deeds done, often in the form of propitiation; the offering of a sacrifice, perhaps, or compensation by the giving or the leaving of a valuable gift or votive offering at some numinous - some sacred and venerated - place or site [...]

All such religious mechanisms of expiation, whatever the theology and regardless of the motivation of the individual in seeking such expiation, are or can be cathartic; restorative, healing. But if there is no personal belief in either a supreme deity or in deities, how then to numinously make reparation, propitiation, and thus to not only expiate such feelings as remorse, grief, and sorrow but also and importantly offset the damage one's wrong actions have caused, since by their very nature such suffering-causing actions are ὄβρις and not only result in harm, in people suffering, but also upset the natural balance. In truth, I do not know the answer to the question how to so numinously make reparation, propitiation. I can only conject, surmise [...]

In relation to his own beliefs, or lack of them, the important section is:

"if there is no personal belief in either a supreme deity or in deities, how then to numinously make reparation, propitiation, and thus to not only expiate such feelings as remorse, grief, and sorrow but also and importantly offset the damage one's wrong actions have caused." {1}

The answer he apparently settles on is to write about his past, about his regrets, about his decades of extremism; and how he came to reject such extremism, political and religious; with his philosophy of pathei-mathos being, for him, expiative:

"In a very personal sense, my philosophy of pathei-mathos is expiative, as are my writings concerning

extremism, such as my *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism: A Very Strange Peregrination*." {2}

"After 2006, I increasingly felt compelled to develop [that philosophy] in expiation, in search of answers, and in an effort to understand myself, my extremist pasts, and the suffering I finally came to realize I had caused. {3}

Never Forgive?

Are such expiatory writings by Myatt sufficient? His many political enemies do not believe so, for one or more of the following reasons. Firstly, because of their ideological axiom "never forgive, never forget" which in practice, on the human level, means that they are unable or unwilling to forgive him, and can be vindictive, vengeful, with hatred and prejudice motivating their actions and their deeds.

Secondly, because their prejudice and hatred motivates many of them to believe his post-2012 writings are lies, a deception. Thirdly, because of their zealous certitude that he, despite his denials, is Anton Long and the founder of the occultic Order of Nine Angles (O9A, ONA) and has never publicly condemned it or its policies such as support for the 'culling' of certain humans.

In respect of such people Myatt wrote, in 2012,

"are those who in the past have prejudged me - who have written about me as a violent extremist - accepting of individual change, of the virtues of reformation and pardonance? [...] Are they open to the possibility of my change and reformation? Or will they continue with 'the party line' and thus continue to insist that I am some sinister person whose recent mystical writings are just some sort of diabolical ploy?

More interestingly (perhaps) could my career as an extremist have been brought to an earlier end had one or some of my opponents taken the trouble to get to know me personally and rationally revealed to me the error of my suffering-causing, unethical, extremist ways? Perhaps; perhaps not - I admit I do not know. I do know, however, how my personal interaction with, and the ethical behaviour of, the Police I interacted with from the time of my arrest by officers from SO12 in 1998, permanently changed (for the better) my attitude toward the Police." {4}

Two years later he would write:

"I harbour no resentment against individuals, or organizations, or groups, who over the past forty or so years have publicly and/or privately made negative or derogatory comments about me or published items making claims about me. Indeed, I now find myself in the rather curious situation of not only agreeing with some of my former political opponents on many matters, but also (perhaps) of understanding (and empathizing with) their motivation; a situation which led and which leads me to appreciate even more just how lamentable my extremism was and just how arrogant, selfish, wrong, and reprehensible, I as a person was, and how in many ways many of those former opponents were and are (ex concessio) better people than I ever was or am.

Which is one reason why I have written what I have recently written about extremism and my extremist past: so that perchance someone or some many may understand extremism, and its causes, better and thus be able to avoid the mistakes I made, avoid causing the suffering I caused; or be able to in some way more effectively counter or prevent such extremism in the future." {5}

In respect of founding a covert Occult group in the 1970s, Myatt's explanation has always been that his purpose was for it to be used to aid National Socialism, and which explanation is both explicit and expressive of his extremist, immoral and fanatical belief at the time that any means were justified in the political and revolutionary struggle he believed in and was then fighting:

"In respect of covert action, I came to the conclusion, following some discussions with some C88 members, that two different types of covert groups, with different strategy and tactics, might be very useful in our struggle and thus aid us directly or aid whatever right-wing political party might serve as a cover for introducing NS policies or which could be used to advance our cause. These covert groups would not be paramilitary and thus would not resort to using armed force since that option was already covered, so far as I was then concerned, by C88.

The first type of covert group would essentially be a honeytrap, to attract non-political people who might be or who had the potential to be useful to the cause even if, or especially if, they had to be 'blackmailed' or persuaded into doing so at some future time. The second type of covert group would be devoted to establishing a small cadre of NS fanatics, of 'sleepers', to - when the time was right - be disruptive or generally subversive.

Nothing came of this second idea, and the few people I recruited during 1974 for the second group, migrated to help the first group, established the previous year. However, from the outset this first group was beset with problems for - in retrospect - two quite simple reasons, both down to me. First, my lack of leadership skills, and, second, the outer nature chosen for the group which was of a secret Occult group with the 'offer', the temptation, of sexual favours from female members in a ritualized Occult setting, with some of these female members being 'on the game' and associated with someone who was associated with my small gang of thieves." {6}

In effect, Myatt is concatenating his founding of an Occult movement, which he does not name, with his political and religious extremism and with his rejection of all extremism with the result, although unstated, that he apparently considers such a manifestation of Occultism as just another extremism. Perhaps unsurprisingly this concatenation does not satisfy his political opponents, and Myatt was asked about this in regard to his past as a neo-nazi in a 2022 interview:

RS: Yet your many vociferous politically motivated opponents have not accepted that you have rejected extremism with many still considering you a neo-nazi. Does that bother you?

DM: No. For judging by their deeds and words they live in a different world from the one I now inhabit or rather that I now perceive. My perceivation is a very local and personal one; of my locality, of Nature and its local emanations; of my relatives and friends and my interactions with and concern for them. That other world beyond - or should that be those other worlds beyond - this local personal world no longer concern me given my plenitude of past mistakes, my past hubriatic suffering-causing interference, and my recently discovered Uncertainty Of Knowing.

They, those opponents, in comparison seem to have that Certitude Of Knowing that I for many decades had, breeding as it did and does prejudice, intolerance, hatred, and discouraging as it did and does empathy, forgiveness, and a personal Uncertainty Of Knowing. {7}

In another interview he was asked a similar question:

[T]hey claim you are still a neo-nazi; that what you write and have written since 2010 such as your autobiography should be treated with suspicion and not taken seriously; that unless you come out in public to attend some sort of 'media circus' and directly answer their questions, they will never believe you.

Myatt replied:

φημί ἐγώ, Μαθεῖν θέλω τὰ ὄντα καὶ νοῆσαι τὴν τούτων φύσιν καὶ γινῶναι τὸν θεόν·

Such a seeking to apprehend such things is what now and for the past twenty or so years has occupied me [...] As for what they or others claim or believe about me now and the past, it is their burden howsoever brought-into-being, howsoever nurtured and howsoever it might be described by them or by others. {7}

It is possible, therefore, to conclude, especially given their silence about Myatt's post-2012 writings about Christianity, that such opponents are acting in an intolerant way inconsistent with the message of the Christian gospels and what many, including Myatt, believe is the gospel message of forgiveness.

Christianity And The Gospels

To many it seems strange that the later Myatt, manifest in his post-2012 writings, would write positively about Christianity and especially about Catholicism, given the widespread and decades-long and often politically motivated accusations of him being a 'satanist'. These writings include his three-part *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*, {8} *Miserere Mei, Deus*, {9} and his translation of and commentary of chapter one to five of the Gospel of John. {10}

In this respect, a section in his *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism: A Very Strange Peregrination* is relevant:

"I have - fully knowing my past hubris, the suffering I have caused, and aware of my manifold errors and mistakes over four decades - a great respect for other religions and spiritual ways, and aware as I am how they each in their own manner, express, have expressed, or are intimations of, the numinous. For instance, I have come to appreciate, more and more over the past few years, the numinosity of the sacred music of the Christian Church (especially Catholicism), from before Gregorian chant to composers such as Byrd, Dowland, Lassus, to Palestrina, to Phillippe de Monte, and beyond." {11}

In his *The Way Of Jesus of Nazareth* he provides his interpretation of the Gospel of John:

"What emerges from my own translation - that is, from my particular 'interpretation of meaning' of the Gospel According To John - is rather reminiscent of what individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox, and William Penn wrote and said about Jesus and the spiritual way that the Gospels in particular revealed. This is the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from supra-personal moralistic interpretations based on inflexible notions of 'sin' and thus on what is considered good and what is considered evil." {12}

One of most recent writings expresses his feelings in regard to Christianity:

"The liturgical season of The Passion is upon us again and I find myself appreciating once more how the numinous allegory of The Passion was presented in liturgical music from the Graduale *Christus Factus Est* to Vittoria's *Popule meus, quid feci tibi* - Ἅγιος ὁ Θεός, Ἅγιος ἰσχυρός, Ἅγιος ἀθάνατος, ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς - to Scarlatti's Stabat Mater to JS Bach's St John and Matthew Passions. And I reminded so movingly of - when a monk - singing Tenebrae amid the flickering then extinguished light of candles...

So much human suffering for so many millennia which the allegory of The Passion of Jesus of Nazareth reminded so many of, century after century; as it reminded me several times in the depths of my decades of extremism. In comparison with such numinous music, liturgical and otherwise, what is my own wordy

weltanschauung of pathei-mathos worth? Very little it now seems to me, if anything at all." {13}

However, so far his political opponents have not commented on, or possibly not read, such writings perhaps because, as I assume, they consider them just another part of the 'diabolical ploy', the deception, they believe and claim are his post-2012 writings. Which silence is perhaps one more expression of their prejudice, hatred, and un-Christian attitude, although to many unbiased readers such writings are indicative of a person who is not only remorseful but able to understand and place his own life into a wider human perspective.

A Lingering Influence

That Myatt despite his post-writings and rejection of all extremism, political, religious, and Occult, has a lingering influence on extremists both neo-nazi and Occult, with for example "most of his neo-nazi writings are still essential reading in many militant far-right groups and circles" {14} may partly explain the ideological, 'hard-line', attitude of many of his opponents.

Is such influence Myatt's fault or the fault of his opponents with their 'never forgive' attitude and their prejudicial assumption that those post-2012 writings are a deception? Given that Myatt's post-2012 writings are voluminous and consistent in content over a period of ten years with his philosophy of pathei-mathos also consistent with his rejection of extremism, the logical answer would seem to be that it is such prejudicial ones, with their continual propagation of their unfounded allegations, who are at fault.

Perhaps it will take several scholarly, unbiased, studies of those writings and that philosophy to redress the balance although given the current state of academia where certain matters are verboten such studies may be many decades in the future.

Rachael Stirling
June 2023

{1} <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/religion-and-empathy.pdf>

{2} *Some Questions For DWM, March 2014*. <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/dwm-2014-questions.pdf>

Myatt's philosophy is outlined in the seventh edition of his *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

{3} The quotation is from page 72 of Myatt's 2013 autobiography *Myngath*. <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/david-myatt-myngath.pdf>

{4} *A Matter Of Honour*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/08/a-matter-of-honour.pdf>

{5} *Pathei-Mathos - Genesis of My Unknowing*, 2012, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2012/06/23/pathei-mathos-genesis-of-my-unknowing/>

{6} *Ethos of Extremism*, 2012, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2017/10/ethos-extremism-extracts.pdf>

{7} *An Uncertitude Of Knowing, Four Interviews With David Myatt*, 2023. International Standard Book Number 979-8394746574

{8} <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/in-defence-rc-1.pdf>

{9} <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2013/03/10/miserere-mei-deus/>

{10} His translation and commentary of chapters one to five of the Gospel of John is available at <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2017/10/gospel-of-john-1-5.pdf>

{11} *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/david-myatt-rejecting-extremism.pdf>

{12} <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/09/30/the-way-of-jesus-of-nazareth/>

{13} *Tenebrae*, April 2023. <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2023/04/06/tenebrae/>

{14} Daniel Koehler. *From Traitor to Zealot: Exploring the Phenomenon of Side-Switching in Extremism and Terrorism*. Cambridge University Press, 2021. p.162

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Image credit: David Myatt, 1995, visiting a Catholic Church

Scholarship, Primary Sources, And Mr Myatt

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Aristotelis Hermeneutica Analytica Elenctica

Εστι δη των εν τω διαλέγεσθαι λόγων τέτταρα γένη, διδασκαλικοί και διαλεκτικοί και πειραστικοί και εριστικοί [...]

διδασκαλικοί μεν οι εκ των οικείων αρχών εκάστου μαθήματος και ουκ εκ των τού αποκρινόμενου δοξών συλλογιζόμενοι (δεῖ γαρ πιστεύειν τον μανθάνοντα), διαλεκτικοί δ' οι εκ των ενδόξων συλλογιστικοί αντιφάσεως, πειραστικοί δ' οι εκ των δοκούντων των αποκρινόμενῳ και αναγκάων ειδέναι το προσποιουμένῳ ἔχειν την επιστήμη (δυν τρόπον δε, διώριται εν ετέροις), εριστικοί δ' οι εκ των φαινομένων ενδόξων μη όντων δε συλλογιστικοί ή φαινόμενοι συλλογιστικοί. περί μεν ούν των αποδεικτικών εν τοῖς Αναλυτικοῖς εἴρηται, περί δε των διαλεκτικών και πειραστικών εν τοῖς ἄλλοις· περί δε των αγωνιστικών και εριστικών νύν λέγωμεν.

οοοοοοο

Scholarship And Primary Sources

A study of primary sources is the scholarly, the civilized, way for an individual to understand, to acquire a learned knowledge of a subject, such as a philosophy or a weltanschauung be such a weltanschauung a spiritual or a religious one. Thus to understand in such an individual, civilized, way the religion of Christianity a detailed study of the four gospels in their original language is required since they are primary sources in respect of that religion given that Christian tradition considers them the oldest and most reliable sources. Similarly, to understand in such a way a philosophy such as that of Immanuel Kant a study of his writings, and his writings alone and in their original language is necessary, since to rely on the translations of others is to rely on the interpretation of those others, as is considering and giving weight to the opinions or the conclusions of others regarding Kant's philosophy.

To be learned, to be a scholar in the traditional sense, is to have a profound knowledge gained by study.

Scholarly (skɒˈlɹli), *a.* [f. SCHOLAR + -LY¹.]
Not in Johnson or Todd.
Pertaining to, or characterizing, a scholar; befit-
ting, or natural to, a scholar; learned, erudite.

Learned:

2. Of a person: In early use, that has been taught; instructed, educated. In later use with nar-
rowed sense: Having profound knowledge gained
by study, esp. in language or some department of
literary or historical science; deeply-read, erudite.
Const. *in*, † *of*. (Superseding the earlier LERED.)
Learned society: a society formed for the prosecution of
some branch of learning or science.

However, in this era where the interpretations, the opinions, the often fallaciously made conclusions, of others are readily available by means of printed articles and books, by the Media, and by mediums such as the Internet, this scholarly, civilized, rational, slow way to acquire a balanced knowledge and understanding of a subject is a dying, unpopular, Cræft {1} even in academia. For the designation 'academic' in this era does not necessarily imply that a person who is employed in academia is learned, erudite, in a particular subject as for example the scholar Richard Jebb was erudite in Ancient Greek. Instead, it is often the case that a published work by a modern academic is not based on their own detailed scholarly research {2} using primary sources {3} but on the opinions, or the conclusions, of others, and thus often on fallacies such as Appeal to Authority. {4}

The particular Cræft under consideration was, in the early decades of the twentieth century, practised by many if not most of what are now described as 'intelligence' or security service agencies but has become deprecated because as experience has revealed the political paymasters of such agencies do not want to be informed of what may contradict their political agenda and personal opinions but only of what may be politically or personally advantageous to them and their government, and if some analyst provides an inconvenient report then politicians, as they have done multiple times recently in regard to Western actions in Iraq and Afghanistan, have no hesitation in censoring or concealing or denying the truth in the belief that through manipulation of the Media that truth will 'go away' or that certain documents will 'go missing' or that it will be officially suppressed for fifty years or more under what is known, in Britain, as the fifty year rule.

This deprecation of the scholarly Cræft is particularly evident in the case of Wikipedia.

Wikipedia

In the last decade or so the Internet articles which are collected together under the term Wikipedia - the so-called "free encyclopedia that anyone can edit" - have become the first and often the only source most people turn to find out about a subject or an event or a group or an individual partly because, given massive financial and other support to the Wikipedia Foundation from the corporate worldwide business Google (with an annual revenue, as of 2023, around US\$200 billion) Wikipedia items always appear at the top of internet searches using Google Search as they invariably do when other 'search engines' are used given the volume of traffic to Wikipedia generated by Google Search.

But this support by Google comes at a cost, as evident in the criteria Wikipedia uses for what they regard as a 'reliable

source'. Their criteria is to reject primary sources in favour of interpretive secondary and tertiary source material produced by established publishers or by news media (including digital, on-line ones) whose authors are regarded by the often anonymous editors of Wikipedia as authoritative about a subject simply because their items are published by such publishers and news media or have appeared elsewhere in the mass media. Thus opinion pieces by academics, by journalists and others which meet the Wikipedia criteria of being such secondary or tertiary sources provide the basis for Wikipedia articles even if the authors of cited books or articles commit fallacies such as the Appeal To Authority and the Fallacy of Incomplete Evidence and have not used primary sources as the basis for their conclusions.

The consequence is that most of those using Wikipedia unknowing commit the fallacy of Appeal To Authority, relying as they do on the opinions and conclusions of others and thus on secondary and tertiary sources.

This reliance on such a mass media source as Wikipedia is indicative of our era for two reasons. Firstly, because it is a radical departure from the civilized, rational, way of personally acquiring a balanced knowledge and understanding of a subject or a person by using primary sources or by searching for books and items written by those who are scholars and thus who have used primary sources and drawn conclusions based on logical reasoning. Secondly, because such reliance is invariably a reliance on what has become or appears to be the accepted public or Establishment opinion {5} about a subject or a person often based as such an opinion is on propaganda, and thus is an example of the fallacy of ad populum which is when a person 'follows the crowd' and believes or claims that because so many others have claimed or believe something it is probably true, as in the old proverb 'no smoke without fire'.

Thus, far from being used by many to access knowledge of a scholarly nature, the Internet and digital resources such as Wikipedia are used by the majority to access what has become the accepted public or Establishment opinion about a subject or a person.

A Modern Example

In the matter of Wikipedia an example of their use of secondary and tertiary sources, and thus of opinion pieces by journalists, politicians, academics and others, is the article about the controversial modern figure David Myatt, former neo-nazi activist and ideologue, former Catholic monk, former supporter of bin Laden and the Taliban, and apparently now a reformed extremist who has developed a mystical philosophy centred around virtues such as compassion and empathy.

The Wikipedia article relies almost entirely on secondary and tertiary sources; provides no link to Myatt's current weblog, and no quotations from his recent writings. Instead, it is dominated by the allegation of him being "the political and religious leader of the White nationalist theistic Satanist organization [the] Order of Nine Angles".

As 'evidence' for this allegation the secondary and tertiary sources include mainstream published opinion pieces by antifascists and journalists; citations to reports and articles by government sponsored policy groups such as the Combating Terrorism Center at the Establishment-run West Point Military Academy; and academics such as Goodrick-Clarke and Senholt.

Yet when examined, none of these secondary and tertiary sources provide any probative evidence for the accusations they make. Pertinent examples are:

° The referenced report by the Combating Terrorism Center simply states that "the O9A is a occultist current founded by David Myatt in the late 1960s in the United Kingdom," with their only citation being a book by Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke. However, on examination, that cited book provides no evidence from primary sources.

For Goodrick-Clarke's identification of Myatt as 'Anton Long' - in his book *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism, and the Politics of Identity*, NYU Press, 2003 - is solely based on his claim that Myatt was the author of a typescript titled *Diablerie*, a copy of which is in the British Library, General Reference Collection Cup.711/742, BNB GB9219567. However, he provided no evidence, no sources, for this claim of his, or for his other claims such as that "the ONA was founded by David Myatt" and that Myatt was "a long time devotee of satanism."

Goodrick-Clarke also failed to research and provide any documentary evidence from primary sources regarding Myatt's life so that it could be compared to the life described in the *Diablerie* manuscript; he failed to ask Myatt himself about the manuscript which Myatt his 2012 text *A Matter of Honour* denounced as a work of fiction. {6}

The fact that Goodrick-Clarke's book is and has often been cited as 'proof' that DM=AL thus provides another classic example of the fallacy of appeal to authority.

° That Jacob Senholt is cited and quoted as writing that "ONA-inspired activities, led by protagonist David Myatt, managed to enter the scene of grand politics and the global War On Terror" and yet Senholt, as described in Appendix One of our article, not only failed to provide evidence from primary sources but committed the fallacy of Incomplete Evidence.

° In regard to Myatt's rejection of extremism, the citation is not to primary sources written by Myatt since 2012 but to a secondary source: an article by Daveed Gartenstein-Ross & Madeleine Blackman, with Daveed Gartenstein-Ross in a later, 2023, article - *The Order of Nine Angles: Cosmology, Practice & Movement*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2023.2186737> - claiming that "[Anton] Long's writings display thematic and linguistic similarities to those of Myatt" while not providing details of what these similarities are, nor any evidential facts regarding them nor providing any citations to where such similarities have been analysed and evidential facts presented. We can only presume that the now discredited assumptions of Senholt - qv. Appendix One below - were the source.

° In regard to opinion pieces by lay-persons, a 2003 book by a journalist - *Into a World of Hate* by Nick Ryan - is

mentioned although the claims made by the author, such as that Myatt wrote "the publicly available teachings of the ONA under the pseudonym Anton Long", are simply the author's personal opinion with no scholarly citations given to support them. Which mention of such a book by a lay-person is yet another example of how the editors of the Wikipedia article about Myatt commit the fallacy of Appeal to Authority.

The logical conclusion is that the Wikipedia article about Myatt, based as it is on secondary and tertiary sources, is unbalanced, remiss, failing as it does to cite or provide quotations from primary sources such as Myatt's extensive post-2012 writings {7} referencing as it does only the accepted Establishment opinion about him evident in such government and corporate sponsored policy groups such as the Combating Terrorism Center. Hence why the minimal reference in the Wikipedia article about Myatt having rejected extremism and developed his own philosophy is not to Myatt's writings on the matter but to interpretive secondary sources such as a 2012 book by Roger Griffin titled *Terrorist's Creed: Fanatical Violence and the Human Need for Meaning*.

Conclusion

Is this examination such as we have conducted just a pedantic aside which can easily be ignored in the maelström of the modern world with its rapid easily accessible transmission, and acceptance of, personal opinion and propaganda?

We believe it is not a pedantic aside, for the reliance on secondary and tertiary sources, the committal by politicians, journalists and even by academics of fallacies of reasoning, expose how our Western civilization has apparently declined because we have forsaken its core essentials: scholarship, logical reasoning, and the Aristotelian essentials which are:

- (i) Reality (existence) exists independently of us and our consciousness, and thus independent of our senses;
- (ii) our limited understanding of this independent 'external world' depends for the most part upon our senses – that is, on what we can see, hear or touch; that is, on what we can observe or come to know via our senses;
- (iii) logical argument, or reason, is perhaps the most important means to knowledge and understanding of and about this 'external world';
- (iv) the cosmos (existence) is, of itself, a reasoned order subject to rational laws.

Essentials also expressed in relation to science by Isaac Newton in his *Principia*,

"We are to admit no more causes of natural things than such as are both true and sufficient to explain their appearance [...] for Nature is pleased with simplicity, and affects not the pomp of superfluous causes."

To conclude, we would controversially claim that David Myatt, object of much Establishment propaganda as exemplified in the Wikipedia article about him, is in his later life one modern example of the *raison d'être* of our Western civilization, as evident in such post-2012 writings of his as (i) *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, (ii) *The Gospel According To John: A Translation And Commentary*, Chapters 1-5; (iii) *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*; and (iv) *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*.

All of which writings, available both in print and on his weblog, are not even mentioned in that Wikipedia article or even by academics.

Haereticus Reputandus

September 2023

v.1.5

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{1} Cræft: this older spelling implies more than the modern usage associated with the word 'craft'.

III. † 5. The learning of the schools, scholarship. b. (with *a* and *pl.*) A branch of learning or knowledge, a science. *The seven crafts*: the 'seven arts' of the mediæval Universities: see ART 7. *Obs.*
c 1205 LAY. 10923 On bocken heo cuðe godne cræft. *Ibid.* 30493 An clarc þe com from Spaine . . feole craftes he cuðe. *a* 1225 *Leg. Kath.* 522 Fifti scolmeistres, of alle þe creftes þet clerc ah to cunnen. *a* 1300 *Cursor M.* 4647 (Cott.) þe seuen craftes all he can. *a* 1400–50 *Alexander* 33 þe pasage of þe planetis, þe poyntes & þe sygnes. þai ware þe kiddes of þat craft knawyn in þaire tyme. 1483 *Cath. Angl.* 79 A Crafte, *ars liberalis, sciencia* [etc.]. 1530 PALSGR. 210/1 Crafte of multiplyeing, *alquenemie*.
IV. A branch of skilled work.
6. An art, trade, or profession requiring special skill and knowledge; *esp.* a manual art, a HANDICRAFT; sometimes applied to any business, calling, or profession by which a livelihood is earned.
c 897 K. ÆLFRED *Gregory's Past.* i. 24 Se cræft þæs lareowdomes bið cræft ealra cræfta. *c* 900 *Beda's Hist.* iv. xiii, Seo þeod ðone cræft ne cuðe ðæs fiscnoper. *c* 1040 *Rule St. Benet* 94 For ingehide his cræftes. 1340 *Ayenb.*

{2} The criteria of scholarship are: (i) a detailed, meticulous, unbiased original research on and concerning a specific topic or topics or subject undertaken over a year or more in duration and involving primary source material; (ii) an ability to be able to read primary sources in their original language; and (iii) a rational assessment of the knowledge acquired by such research, with such conclusions about the topic, topics, or subject being the logical result of the cumulative scholarly learning so acquired. If the researcher cannot read primary sources in their original language and has to rely on the translations of others then their conclusions are not original and not scholarly just as if they commit logical fallacies - such as the fallacy of Incomplete Evidence - then their conclusions are also not scholarly.

{3} Primary sources include contemporaneous manuscripts, letters, diaries, memoirs, personal journals, interviews, speeches, and other materials individuals used to describe (i) events in which they were participants or observers, and (ii) ideas or creations - such as a philosophy, music, literature, or art-work - which they were responsible for. Hence in the matter of a philosophy such as that of Heidegger the primary sources are his published writings, authenticated recordings or transcriptions of his speeches/lectures, and authenticated unpublished manuscripts if any. The writings, opinions, and conclusions of others about that philosophy are secondary or tertiary sources.

{4} See Appendix Two for fallacies such as Appeal to Authority.

{5} By the Establishment is meant those who in modern Western societies have the power, the means, to influence and to shape 'public opinion' on matters political and social. The Establishment thus includes politicians and the incumbent government and often the 'political opposition', large often multinational corporate businesses, the mainstream Media (including national newspapers, television and internet news media and outlets), well-funded special-interest advocacy groups both political and business-orientated; established academics whose work has featured in mainstream publications, and so-called 'independent' or 'freelance' journalists whose work appears in or is cited by the mainstream Media or established publishers.

An Establishment represents the orthodoxy, the zeitgeist, of a particular era, with adherence to or a belief in that orthodoxy a good indication of who or what is part of the Establishment, with the orthodoxy of the current Western current era including support for the idea of modern democracy even if the result of elections has been influenced by particular business and political concerns and 'special interest' groups who have the financial resources to employ professional lobbyists, Media consultants, and propagandists and who often have politicians to further their interests or agenda.

{6} <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/08/a-matter-of-honour.pdf>

{7} <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/>

Appendix One

Senholt And the Fallacy Of Incomplete Evidence

Jacob Senholt, in a revised version of his 2009 MA thesis titled *Political Esotericism & the convergence of Radical Islam, Satanism and National Socialism in the Order of the Nine Angles* published as a chapter in the 2012 book *The Devil's Party - Satanism in Modernity* {1} alleged that Myatt wrote the terrorist manual *A Practical Guide to Aryan Revolution* which it has been claimed influenced David Copeland, and Senholt like others before and since - including the authors of the 2023 article *The Order of Nine Angles: Cosmology, Practice & Movement*, DOI:10.1080/1057610X.2023.2186737 - Senholt provided no evidential facts in support of that particular allegation, and did not mention that following Myatt's arrest in early 1998 by police officers from Special Branch based at Scotland Yard, the British police in conjunction with the Canadian police and the FBI spent three years trying to prove that Myatt wrote that document, having seized his computers and files, searched his home for over seven hours, and travelled to places such as Canada to interview witnesses. They failed to find any evidence and Myatt was released from his bail in the Summer of 2001.

Senholt also presented his circumstantial evidence that Myatt=Long and in the process and probably inadvertently commits the fallacy of incomplete evidence which is when only certain evidence is presented with other evidence not found, or ignored or deliberately suppressed.

Circumstantial Evidence

i) He mentions a 1978 text, *Copula cum Daemone*, which he claims was written by a DW Myatt and was "in a collection of ONA manuscripts" manuscripts but does give the title of this collection nor any details of publication or images of the text nor any evidence that it was written by Myatt. He then claims that in later digital editions of this text - which again he provides no references to or images of - it was attributed to various other authors and concludes that this is "a clear example of a text originally issued by Myatt, and later disguised with a pseudonym."

In other words, he does not provide any evidential facts but presents only his personal opinion.

ii) He goes on to claim that the *Diablerie* manuscript - a copy of which is in the British Library {2} - "reveals details of Long's life that appear remarkably similar to Myatt's own life" and cites Goodrick-Clarke and yet as with Goodrick-Clarke {3} does not provide comparisons using research based on documentary evidence from primary sources regarding Myatt's life.

Thus and yet again Senholt does not provide any evidential facts but presents only his personal opinion.

iii) His next claim is that since writings by Myatt and the ONA have been published by the same publisher there "is a direct connection" which is a spurious conclusion since publishers often print items from various authors which does not mean the various authors are connected in any way.

iv) His next piece of circumstantial evidence "concerns the use of alternate dating-systems", about which he states that since both Myatt in his National Socialist writings and the ONA use "yf, designating the Year of the Führer" there is a connection, neglecting to mention - or failing to discover through research - that other groups such as the Ku Klux Klan and William Pierce of National Alliance fame and other neo-nazis have used the same dating system, both in its English form and its German form of 'Jahr des Fuhrers' {4}.

(v) His final piece of circumstantial evidence is linguistic, claiming that "when one has a closer look at many of the basic ideas and the terminology used in the ONA, it appears as if there are many glaring similarities to Myatt's own ideas." He cites terms such as Homo Galactica, causal and acausal, and Aeons while failing to mention that such borrowing of terms, ideas and concepts, is and has been common for centuries and is not evidence of a direct and personal link between those using such terms, ideas and concepts.

However, he not only does not provide any evidence from forensic linguistics but fails to mention numerous texts by Anton Long and by self-declared O9A adherents in which he explains the purpose of Anton Long's Labyrinthos Mythologicus which implies:

"myth-making; creating or concerned with mythology or myths; a mythical narrative, and is both (a) a modern and an amoral version of a technique often historically employed, world-wide among diverse cultures and traditions both esoteric and otherwise, to test and select candidates, and (b) a mischievous, japing, sly, and sometimes (for mundanes) an annoying, part of the O9A sinister dialectic." {5}

In other words, it was used not only to test and select candidates but also had an antinomian, dialectical, and japing purpose with Anton Long in a 28th August 103yf [1992] letter to Temple of Set member David Austen writing that the intent was "to make people like you draw the conclusion you were intended to make." {6} There is also the problem of the O9A 'manual of style' in relation to the claim that

"since one or more ONA blogs or websites, or some articles, use the same or similar styling and/or layout as some blog or website or article by or assumed to be by Myatt, it means that Myatt is behind them all - clearly ignoring the obvious fact that such similarities, if not just coincidental, could well be a deliberate imitation designed to get mundanes to jump to such a silly, fallacious, conclusion." {7} {8}

In regard to forensic linguistics,

"author profiling is subjective not empirical and thus not definitive. Second, and most important in this case, the task would be formidable with the result easily open to question given the volume of material written by both Myatt and the pseudonymous Anton Long over several decades and given that the forensic profiler would have to subjectively select what texts from what years to compare.

What would their subjective criteria for such a selection be? To compare a few texts from around the same time? To compare a few texts from the same decade? To compare just a few or dozens of texts from three or four decades?

Since 1984 with the publication of his 45 page tract *Vindex - Destiny of the West* to 2022 with the publication of his *Numinosity, Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition*, Myatt has written thousands of pages of texts. The texts also vary in subject matter, from polemical propagandistic texts in support of National Socialism (1984-1998) to ideological tracts in support of his 'ethical National Socialism' (1996-1998) to items supporting a particular and radical interpretation Islam (2001-2008) to his post-2012 writings about his philosophy of pathei-mathos to his autobiographical effusions such as his 2014 collection of essays titled *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods* and the letters included in parts two and three of his 2013 book *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*. There is also the matter of Myatt's translations of and commentaries on tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum (2017) and his 2017 scholarly monographs *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* and *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*.

In the case of Anton Long there are also thousands of pages of texts, from most of the typescripts included in the compilation *Naos* (1989) to *The Satanic Letters* (1992) to *Enantiodromia - The Sinister Abyssal Nexion* (2012). The issue is further complicated by writings published between 1992 and 2011 which do not bear the name 'Anton Long' and thus are anonymous but which anonymous texts many critics have assumed were written by Anton Long but for which assumption they have not and never have provided any evidence." {7}

Insight Roles

Following his circumstantial evidence, Senholt also claims that Myatt's diverse and exeatic life is an example of O9A Insight Roles which mean "gaining real-life experience by working undercover for a period of 6-18 months".

Of five Insight Roles, Senholt cites three - (a) "Join or form a covert insurrectionary organization, dedicated to National Socialism", (b) "Convert to Islam and aid, through words, or deeds, or both, those undertaking Jihad against Zionism and the NWO", and (c) "Join or form a National Socialist group or organization, and aid that organization and especially aid and propagate historical revisionism" - which he claims Myatt has undertaken.

What Senholt neglects to mention is that Myatt promoted National Socialism for thirty years (1968-1998) not for the "6-18 months" of an Insight Role, and was a Muslim who supported Jihad for over ten years (1998-2009) not for the "6-18 months" of an Insight Role.

Which places Senholt's claim into perspective. In addition, he does not mention the obvious facts that the O9A might have been inspired by the nature of Myatt's exeatic life to concoct such Insight Roles, and that Myatt's life does not include other suggested roles such as being an assassin and joining the police or the armed forces.

Conclusion

In summary, Senholt does not provide any evidential facts in regard to the urban tale that Myatt was/is Anton Long and founded the O9A. Instead, he commits the fallacy of incomplete evidence. That his work is often cited as 'proof' of that urban tale about Myatt being Anton Long provides another example of people committing the fallacy of appeal to authority.

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{1} Per Faxneld and Jesper Aa. Petersen (editors), *The Devil's Party: Satanism in Modernity*, Cambridge University Press, 2012.

{2} A copy of the 19 page *Diablerie - Revelations of a Satanist* typescript is in the British Library: General Reference Collection Cup.711/742, BNB GB9219567.

{3} Goodrick-Clarke's identification of Myatt as 'Anton Long' - in his book *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism, and the Politics of Identity*, NYU Press, 2003 - is solely based on his claim that Myatt was the author of a typescript titled *Diablerie*, a copy of which is in the British Library, General Reference Collection Cup.711/742, BNB GB9219567.

He provides no evidence, no sources, for this claim of his, or for his other claims such as that "the ONA was founded by David Myatt" and that Myatt was "a long time devotee of satanism."

Goodrick-Clarke also failed to research and provide any documentary evidence from primary sources regarding Myatt's life so that it could be compared to the life described in the Diablerie manuscript; he failed to ask Myatt himself about the manuscript which Myatt his 2012 text *A Matter of Honour* denounced as a work of fiction:
<https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/08/a-matter-of-honour.pdf>

That Goodrick-Clarke's book is and has been often cited as 'proof' that DM=AL thus provides another classic example of the fallacy of appeal to authority.

{4} <https://web.archive.org/web/20230511054221/https://www.nytimes.com/1991/11/03/world/klan-seizes-on-germany-s-wave-of-racist-violence.html>

{5} *A Glossary of Order of Nine Angles Terms*, v. 7.05, included in *Order Of Nine Angles Subculture: A Complete Guide*, e-text, 1520 pages, 2021.

{6} The letter is included in facsimile in volume one of *The Satanic Letters of Stephen Brown*, Thormynd Press, 1992.

{7} Kerri Scott, *Author Profiling In The Case Of David Myatt And Anton Long*, e-text, 2022.

{8} The O9A 'manual of style' was publicly mentioned in several 2015 and 2016 Internet posts such as this one from 2016:

That you equate me/us with someone else who has posted about the O9A on some forum (which has since banned all discussion of the ONA) is both flattering and mildly amusing. Perhaps it's the still secret "ONA Manual Of Style" that keeps outsiders making such assumptions...

<https://web.archive.org/web/20220511055625/https://annaczereda.wordpress.com/2016/09/13/mad-as-a-hatter/>

It was also described in a 2016 article titled *The O9A Manual Of Style*,

"As mentioned to some correspondents over the years, those who are associated with the Falciferian O9A have had an 'ONA Manual of Style' just as many older, established, newspapers (such as the Guardian and the New York Times) have their in-house manuals of style and usage. Such manuals are often updated every few decades, and are useful guides that enable printed items to have an 'in-house' style. Given the non-hierarchical structure and ethos of the O9A, the manual offers guidance, recommending best practice rather than giving rules which are expected be followed.

The ONA manual deals not only with the specific - O9A assigned - meaning of certain words (such as nexion, presencing, mundanes, culling) but also with many other topics, such as (i) whether certain words - for example 'satanism' and 'satan' - should be with an upper or a lower case S, (ii) how titles and subtitles should appear (usually, and against current convention) with all words beginning with upper case), (iii) how footnotes should be numbered and displayed (usually numbered within curly brackets), (iv) how each page should be set out, (v) how texts should display the name of the author, and (vi) how the introduction to following paragraphs should be phrased, with suggestions ranging from 'However' to 'In addition' to 'Thus'

[...]

Initially compiled by 'Anton Long' in the early 1990s, the manual has gone through several editions, with one of its main functions being inspired by what was once termed the Aquino fallacy."

The article *The O9A Manual Of Style* was included in the compilation *The Dialectical Order Of Nine Angles*, e-text, 2016.

Appendix Two

The Fallacy Of Appeal To Authority

The fallacy of appeal to authority, also known as the fallacy of Argumentum ad Verecundiam, is somewhat misunderstood in this age of the Internet. It is not only citing or quoting a person or persons who is/are regarded, by the person citing or quoting or by others, as an authority or 'expert' on a subject but also citing or quoting the opinion given by some institution, or 'policy/advisory group' or similar, on a subject, regardless of whether or not the 'expert' or institution or whatever has their opinion published by some means or some medium regarded as 'mainstream', academic, or 'respectable' or authoritative.

The crux of the fallacy is a reliance by someone or by some others on who or what is regarded in a particular society as an authority on or as having a detailed or 'expert' knowledge of a subject or subjects.

Thus a statement such as the fallacy of appeal to authority "is when the opinion of a non-expert on a topic is used as evidence" is itself fallacious because although it appears to be a decisive statement regarding 'authority' it is logically not so having not only restricted the fallacy to those are not 'experts' but does not define what an 'expert' or a 'false expert' is or are or who or what person or institution, or 'policy/advisory group' or similar has the 'authority' to declare someone an 'expert' or a 'false expert' in a certain subject or subjects, and from whence a person or an institution, or 'policy/advisory group' or similar derives their own authority to make such declarations.

The corollary of the appeal to authority, as defined in the first paragraph, is personal research by scholarly means of a subject using primary sources. Which leads to the definition of what constitutes primary sources and scholarly means, as defined below.

Fallacy Of Ad Populum

This is when a person 'follows the crowd' and believes or claims that because so many others have claimed or believe something it is probably true.

Fallacy Of Argumentum ad Hominem

This belongs to the category ignoratio elenchi. Argumentum ad hominem is when the character and/or the motives and/or the identity of the person presenting an argument is/are maligned or called into question often in an attempt to deflect attention away from the topic being discussed or from their failure to answer questions asked of them.

Fallacy of Composition

Also known as the Fallacy of Illicit Transference. This is an example of equivocation, and is when a generalization is made from a few specific instances or examples with the generalization then applied to pejoratively describe or malign a group or organization or person.

Fallacy Of The False Cause

Generally referred to by the Latin phrase *non causa pro causâ*. This fallacy is the assumption that one thing is the cause of another without any logical reasoning.

Fallacy Of Incomplete Evidence

Also known as the fallacy of suppressed evidence. This is when evidence which disproves or may disprove a claim or conclusion is not considered either deliberately (suppressed evidence) or because of a lack of detailed and scholarly research.

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The criteria of scholarship are: (i) a detailed, meticulous, unbiased original research on and concerning a specific topic or topics or subject undertaken over a year or more in duration and involving primary source material; (ii) an ability to be able to read primary sources in their original language; and (iii) a rational assessment of the knowledge acquired by such research, with such conclusions about the topic, topics, or subject being the logical result of the cumulative scholarly learning so acquired. If the researcher cannot read primary sources in their original language and has to rely on the translations of others then their conclusions are not original and not scholarly just as if they commit logical fallacies - such as the fallacy of Incomplete Evidence - then their conclusions are also not scholarly.

Primary sources include contemporaneous manuscripts, letters, diaries, memoirs, personal journals, interviews,

speeches, and other materials individuals used to describe (i) events in which they were participants or observers, and (ii) ideas or creations - such as a philosophy, music, literature, or art-work - which they were responsible for. Hence in the matter of a philosophy such as that of Heidegger the primary sources are his published writings, authenticated recordings or transcriptions of his speeches/lectures, and authenticated unpublished manuscripts if any. The writings, opinions, and conclusions of others about that philosophy are secondary or tertiary sources.

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Another Iconoclastic Translation

Although David Myatt's translation of the gospel of John from the Christian New Testament is, as of the date of writing, a work-in-progress, sufficient has been released for a preliminary review. Thus far he has published the completed translation of and extensive commentary on the whole of chapters 1 to 5, which partial translation is available from his blog. {1}

To describe the translation as iconoclastic is something of an understatement. Perhaps more aptly it is heretical in the sense that Wycliffe's 14th century and Luther's 16th century translations were at the time considered by some to be heretical. To understand why it might be considered heretical, by mainstream Christians at least, we need to examine Myatt's methodology.

Methodology

Myatt's methodology is the same as that used in his translations of chapters from the Corpus Hermeticum which was written in the same Hellenistic Greek as the New Testament. His methodology is to use some transliterations – theos instead of god/God; phaos instead of light; and so on – and to find unusual English words for Greek terms which he considers are important to preserve the meaning current at the time the writings were composed. His reasoning is that particular English words – and angel, Word, spirit, prison, heaven, hour, and Jews, come to mind vis-a-vis the gospels – have acquired or now convey meanings which are not appropriate to the time of the gospels and which thus distort the text.

One very striking example is his translation of verse 24 of chapter 3. The King James Bible has "For John was not yet cast into prison." All other English translations are similar. Myatt, however, has "And John had yet to be hurled into a guarded cage."

In his commentary on this verse he writes,

βεβλημένος εἰς τὴν φυλακὴν. A phrase deserving some consideration, for φυλακή is not 'prison' as prisons are understood today and in the past few centuries but rather 'a guarded cage', with βεβλημένος εἰς implying a forceful 'throwing' or a hurling into such a cage.

A quick check of a dictionary of ancient Greek reveals that φυλάσσω – the origin of the term φυλακή – does mean "to keep guard" and figuratively, in the likes of Herodotus, implies a 'cage'.

But possibly most controversial of all is his rejection of English terms such as *Jews*, *angel* and *heaven*. In place of Jews he has Judaeans, writing in a comment on chapter 1 verse 19,

After much consideration I have translated Ἰουδαία not by the conventional term 'Jews' but rather by Judaeans, given (i) that the English terms Jews and Jewish (deriving from the 13th/14th century words gyv/gyw and lewe) have acquired connotations (modern and medieval) which are not relevant to the period under consideration; and (ii) that the Greek term derives from a place name, Judaea (as does the Latin iudaeus); and (iii) that the Anglo-Saxon version (ASV) retains the sense of the Greek: here (iudeas) as elsewhere, as for example at 2.6, æfter iudea gecleansunge, "according to Judaeian cleansing."

In a long and bound to be controversial comment on the term 'heaven' he writes,

Conventionally, οὐρανός here is always translated as 'heaven' although the term 'heaven' – used in the context of the Gospels – now has rather different connotations than the Greek οὐρανός, with the word 'heaven' now often implying something explained by almost two thousand years of exegesis and as depicted, for example, in medieval and Renaissance Christian art. However, those hearing or reading this particular Greek gospel for the first time in the formative years of Christianity would most probably have assumed the usual Greek usage of "the heavens" in the sense of the "the star-filled firmament above" or in the sense of "the sky" or as the abode of theos and/or of the gods (ἐν οὐρανῷ θεοί), an assumption consistent with the fact that the Evangelist explains and interprets certain non-Greek words (qv. the comment on 1.42) and considering also his use of a colloquial Greek expression (qv. the comment on 1.51).

It therefore seems apposite to suggest a more neutral word than 'heaven' as a translation of οὐρανός and one which might not only be understood in various 'classical' ways by an audience of Greek speakers (such as the ways described above) but also be open to a new, and Christian, interpretation consistent with the milieu that existed when the Gospel of John was written and first heard. That is, before the exegesis of later centuries and long before post-Roman Christian iconography. Hence my suggestion of the post-classical Latin term Empyrean, which can bear the interpretation of the abode of theos and/or of the gods, of "the sky", of the "the star-filled firmament above; and a Christian one suggested by Genesis 2.8 – παράδεισον ἐν Εδεμ (the Paradise of Eden) – and also by shamayim.

Which is why the standard translation of a verse such as chapter 1,19 – "And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who are you?" – is interpreted by Myatt as

For such was the evidence John gave when the Judaeans dispatched priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him: "Who are you?"

Heresy

His heretical interpretation is evident in so many passages it is difficult to pick out just one or two. But the following is a typical example, from chapter 3, verses 19-21, with Myatt pointing out in his commentary that in the gospel of John *the phaos* is identified as Jesus himself and thus is in the gospel of John a synonym for Jesus.

And this is the condemnation: That the Phaos arrived in the world but mortals loved the darkness more than the Phaos, for their deeds were harmful. For anyone who does what is mean dislikes the Phaos and does not come near the Phaos lest their deeds be exposed. But whomsoever practices disclosure goes to the Phaos so that their deeds might be manifest as having been done through Theos.

This is conventionally translated as "And this is the verdict, that the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light, because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come toward the light, so that his works might not be exposed. But whoever lives the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God."

The effect of Myatt's interpretation of the gospel is that it not only humanizes Jesus but also Christianity, with Myatt writing in the Preface that,

"it imparts something important regarding the teachings, and the life, of Jesus of Nazareth: something quite human, something rather different from a stern preacher preaching about 'sin'; something which seems to express what the Beatitudes express, and something which individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox and William Penn many centuries later tried to say and write about Christianity and about the teachings and the life of Jesus of Nazareth."

He also mentions Julian of Norwich, George Fox and William Penn in his 2017 essay *The Way Of Jesus of Nazareth: A Question Of Hermeneutics?* where, giving several examples from his translation and commentary, he writes that the gospel expresses

"the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from supra-personal moralistic interpretations based on inflexible notions of 'sin' and thus on what is considered 'good' and what is considered 'evil'. {2}

His iconoclasm - heresy? - is also evident in his translation and commentary on The Beatitudes, {3} from The Gospel According To Matthew 5:1–10, and which translation is:

- 1 Observing the multitudes, he ascended the hill and, having sat down, his disciples approached him.
- 2 Then, a revelation, for he instructed those there by saying this:
- 3 Fortunate, those humble with spiritus, for theirs is the Kingdom of Empyrean.
- 4 Fortunate, those who grieve, for they shall have solace.
- 5 Fortunate, the gentle, for they shall acquire the Earth.
- 6 Fortunate, those who hunger and thirst for fairness, for they shall be replete.
- 7 Fortunate, the compassionate, for they shall receive compassion.
- 8 Fortunate, the refined of heart, for they shall perceive Theos.
- 9 Fortunate, the peaceable, for they shall be called children of Theos.
- 10 Fortunate, those harassed due to their fairness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Empyrean.

The translation, as he explains in his commentary, uses his interpretation of particular Greek words in the Gospel of John, rather than the conventional ones, examples in The Beatitudes being 'theos' instead of God, 'fortunate' instead of blessed, 'spiritus' instead of spirit, and Empyrean instead of Heaven; all of which he explains in detail in his commentary on John and quotes from in his commentary on the Beatitudes.

Conclusion

As to whether Myatt's translation of John, when completed, will find a niche is an interesting question given not just his iconoclastic methodology but also the esteem in which the gospels are held by Christians the vast majority of whom, were they to read his interpretation, would probably be offended even though his explanations in his commentary are extensive and scholarly.

KS
2018
v.1.05

{1} <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2023/08/myatt-gospel-john-1-5.pdf>
{2} <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2023/08/dm-way-of-jesus.pdf>
{3} <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2023/08/the-beatitudes-v1.pdf>

Editorial Note:

An earlier version of this article was originally published in 2017 on the now defunct regardingdavidmyatt blog.
We have updated the URL's

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Notes On Expiation, Forgiveness, And Implacability

In the matter of the post-2012 writings of David Myatt, ⁽¹⁾ in which he described his rejection of National Socialism, of all types of extremism, and expounded his weltanschauung of pathei-mathos ⁽²⁾ with its virtues of compassion, empathy, and honour, there are only two logical approaches. Either (i) they are, as his former political opponents believe, Myatt "lying through his teeth", ⁽³⁾ a deception, and that he is still an extremist, a neo-nazi; or (ii) they are as Myatt writes expiative ⁽⁴⁾ and express what he has slowly learned from his own pathei-mathos: from his three decades as a neo-nazi activist and ideologue, from his decade as a Muslim, from the deaths of two loved ones, and from a scholarly study in their original language of Ancient Greek, Hellenistic, and Christian literature including Aeschylus, Sophocles, Aristotle, Cicero, the Corpus Hermeticum, the Christian Gospels and The Fathers Of The Church such as Tertullian, Augustine and Maximus of Constantinople whose writings are included in the collections, edited by Migne, titled *Patrologia Graeca* and *Patrologia Latina*, also known under the title *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*. ⁽⁵⁾

In regard to the belief of his former political opponents the question they have to answer is where is their evidence, their proof? For the civilized rule is that the burden of proof is on those who accuse.

Reasonable doubt: is there any other reasonable explanation for those writings other than the accusation they are lies, a deception? Yes, that they are expiative and born of pathei-mathos, in support of which they are consistent over a period of some ten years and detailed both in autobiographical terms, in terms of the scholarly, poetic and other references and quotations, and particularly in terms of the philosophy expressed by means of their ontology, ethics, and epistemology.

Evidential facts: are there any evidential facts that make their accusation substantially more probable to be true rather than false? No. One such evidential fact would be a forensically verified recorded or written confession by Myatt under Police caution in which he admitted they were a deception and that he was still a neo-nazi. No such confession exists.

His accusers have provided no evidence, no proof, and It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the accusation, by whomsoever made and whatever their status, is false. Which logically leads to the questions (i) of why was the accusation not only made but propagated by the accuser(s) for nearly a decade via modern mass media, and (ii) of why no academic or journalist questioned the accusation and asked for or sought evidence for and against it?

Implacability And Peer Pressure

The most obvious and logical answer as to why the accusation was made is the implacability of Myatt's political opponents born as this is from a belief in, an adherence to, an ideology with its uncompassionate axiom of "never forget, never forgive."

A secondary answer is that it is their nature, their character, to be unforgiving and to believe they do not require evidence because they already knew, or felt, that a person was guilty as many of those who, for example, did regarding the accused in the witch-trials such as in Salem and in Scotland, with such verbal evidence as was given in such trials imaginary, emotionally or religiously biased, vindictive, hateful, or prejudiced as in being in those cases misogynistic.

The logical answer as to why the accusation has been assiduously propagated by the accuser(s) is in the second answer: because it is in their nature, their character to do so.

The logical answer to why the accusation has never been rationally investigated or challenged by others is two fold. First, the fallacies of appeal to authority and of ad populum. The appeal to authority is when a person, journalists and academics included, accepts what someone else says or writes because they accept or believe that those making or repeating the accusation are some sort of 'authority' on the matter; the fallacy of ad populum is when they, including many journalists and academics, believe that because so many others believe or accept the accusation as true it must be true.

Second, it has not been investigated because of 'peer pressure'. In this case, the 'peer pressure' is the current Establishments of the West and their shared zeitgeist which Establishments, as evident in the repetition of the accusation against Myatt by politicians, by the mass media and in 'reports' by government and corporate sponsored policy groups, accept the accusation as true. For the careers, the livelihood of most journalists and academics depends on not crossing certain boundaries. In the case of the witch-trials the boundaries were set by the Church and its believers; now the often unacknowledged boundaries are set by current Establishments, by the mass media and by government and corporate sponsored policy groups.

Forgiveness

Forgiveness is one of the virtues of the religion of Christianity. Of religions in general Myatt wrote:

"In fifty years of diverse peregrinations - which included forty years of practical involvement with various religions and spiritual ways, practical involvement with extremisms both political and religious, and some seven years of intense interior reflexion occasioned by a personal tragedy - I have come to appreciate and to admire what the various religions and the diverse spiritual ways have given to us over some three thousand years.

Thus have I sensed that our world is, and has been, a better place because of them and that we, as a sentient species, are en masse better because of them. Thus it is that I personally - even though I have developed my own non-religious weltanschauung - have a great respect for religions such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism; for spiritual ways such as Buddhism, Taoism [...]

One of the greatest gifts such religions and spiritual ways offer seems to me to be the gift of humility: the insight that we human beings are fallible and transient, and that there is some-thing 'out there' which is numinous, sacred, more vast and more powerful than us whether we call this some-thing God, or Allah, or θεός or Nature, or δίκη or Wyrð, or Karma or ψυχή or simply the acausal. The insight that to disregard this some-thing, to disrespect what-is numinous, is unwise - ὕβρις - and perpetuates suffering or is the genesis of new suffering and which new suffering may well continue long after we, who brought it into being and who gave it life, are dead." ⁽⁶⁾

Of Catholicism:

"Why does someone who has developed a somewhat paganus weltanschauung - the mystical individualistic numinous way of pathei-mathos - now defend a supra-personal organization such as the Roman Catholic Church? Because I from personal experience appreciate that for all its many faults - recent and otherwise - and despite my disagreement regarding some of its teachings it still on balance does, at least in my fallible opinion, presence - as it has for centuries presenced - aspects of the numinous and which presencing has over centuries, again in my fallible opinion, had a beneficial affect on many human beings." ⁽⁷⁾

In his 2013 *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*:

"I have - fully knowing my past hubris, the suffering I have caused, and aware of my manifold errors and mistakes over four decades - a great respect for other religions and spiritual ways, and aware as I am how they each in their own manner, express, have expressed, or are intimations of, the numinous. For instance, I have come to appreciate, more and more over the past few years, the numinosity of the sacred music of the Christian Church (especially Catholicism), from before Gregorian chant to composers such as Byrd, Dowland, Lassus, to Palestrina, to Phillipe de Monte, and beyond." ⁽⁸⁾

In his 2017 *The Way Of Jesus of Nazareth* he provides his understanding of the Gospel of John:

"What emerges from my own translation - that is, from my particular 'interpretation of meaning' of the Gospel According To John - is rather reminiscent of what individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox, and William Penn wrote and said about Jesus and the spiritual way that the Gospels in particular revealed. This is the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from supra-personal moralistic interpretations." ⁽⁹⁾

Considering the failure of Myatt's accusers to comment on such writings, and their failure to produce any evidence whatsoever for their accusations about his post-2012 writings, it is logical to conclude that they not only consider such writings about Christianity and forgiveness as part of the deception they accuse him of, but also that they do not believe in the virtue of forgiveness, or if they do then they are ideologically, politically, and thus cunningly selective about those few they believe such forgiveness applies to.

Changing The Narrative

Given the influence of current Western Establishments, the power of the mass media with its concerns for profits and adherence to the zeitgeist of those Establishments, and given the proliferation of national and international government, corporate and commercially sponsored policy groups - vulgarly and misleadingly termed 'think-tanks' - there is little prospect of changing the popular perception of Myatt manufactured by his political opponents, propagated by governments, policy groups and the mass media and accepted by journalists and academics.

In a 2022 interview Myatt was asked about the problem:

[Y]our many vociferous politically motivated opponents have not accepted that you have rejected extremism with many still considering you a neo-nazi. Does that bother you?

DM: No. For judging by their deeds and words they live in a different world from the one I now inhabit or rather that I now perceive. My perceivation is a very local and personal one; of my locality, of Nature and its local emanations; of my relatives and friends and my interactions with and concern for them. That other world beyond - or should that be those other worlds beyond - this local personal world no longer concern me given my plenitude of past mistakes, my past hubriatic suffering-causing interference, and my recently discovered Uncertitude Of Knowing.

They, those opponents, in comparison seem to have that Certitude Of Knowing that I for many decades had, breeding as it did and does prejudice, intolerance, hatred, and discouraging as it did and does empathy, forgiveness, and a personal Uncertitude Of Knowing. ⁽¹⁰⁾

Yet human nature being what it is and has been for millennia, with decades sometimes centuries of strife, repression, intolerance and censorship followed by brief periods of enlightenment where honour and reason burst forth again, there is the possibility that Myatt will be rehabilitated even given that currently the majority of people support or are indifferent to a status quo where no evidence for accusations is required in the 'special cases' manufactured by

Establishments who have managed to convince most of the populace that 'falsehood is truth' and 'dishonour is honour' as occurs every time they designate a group, or some nation, or some person or some belief or cause, as evil and the enemy of the freedom they constantly announce their Establishments uphold. Relevant examples in recent times being the rendition and torture of suspects and their detention in Guantánamo; the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan; the killing without due process of law of individuals by military drones, and the current proxy war against Russia designated by Western Establishments as the new 'evil Empire' controlled by a new 'evil tyrant' and which Establishments have gone so far as to indite the new 'evil tyrant' for 'war crimes' while their own illegalities, such as invasions and extra-judicial killings, are ignored.

That it took centuries for the Salem, the Scottish and other witch-trials to be rationally perceived for what they were is a relevant historical example of how long such rehabilitation may take.

Conclusion

A suitable summation:

Is to not judge others without a personal knowing of them, to not commit fallacies such as *a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter*, and to allow for personal expiation, perhaps to presense the numinous in at least one small and quite individual way? Personally, I am inclined to believe it is.

Pietatis fons immense, ἐλέησον,
Noxas omnes nostras pelle, ἐλέησον.

Those words were written by David Myatt in 2018, ⁽⁷⁾ include an ancient doxology, and place certain accusations, and the individuals who make them, who believe them and propagate them, into the necessary perspective, human, divine, and otherwise.

JR Wright
2023

(1) Most of these writings are listed at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2018/03/09/david-myatt-opera-omnia/>

(2) The Ancient Greek term πάθει μάθος in this context means a personal "learning from adversity and experience". Of pathei-mathos, Myatt writes that an:

"intimation of wisdom - and perhaps one of the most significant - is pathei-mathos, with Aeschylus writing, in his Agamemnon, that the Immortal, Zeus, guiding mortals to reason, provided we mortals with a new law, which law replaces previous ones, and which new law - this new guidance laid down for mortals - is pathei-mathos. That is, that for we human beings, pathei-mathos possesses a numinous, a living, authority; that the wisdom, the understanding, that arises from one's own personal experience, from formative experiences that involve some hardship, some grief, some personal suffering, is often or could be more valuable to us (more alive, more meaningful) than any doctrine, than any religious faith, than any words one might hear from someone else or read in some book." <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

(3) The expression was used by a British antifascist - honoured in 2016 by the British Establishment with the award of an MBE - and repeated by him in an interview with Canadian journalist Justin Ling that was published in March 2022.

(4) One of the subjects of David Myatt's post-2012 writings is expiation; of finding some means by which the mistakes of his past, of his forty or so years of political and religious extremism, may be offset or recompensed. In his 2013 text *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos: Spirituality, Humility, and A Learning From Grief* - <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/religion-and-empathy.pdf> - he devotes a chapter to expiation and his concerns, from which chapter this is an extract:

"One of the many problems regarding my own past which troubles me - and has troubled me for a while - is how can a person make reparation for suffering caused, inflicted, and/or dishonourable deeds done. For, in the person of empathy, of compassion, of honour, a knowledge and understanding of dishonour done, of the suffering one has caused - perhaps before one became such a person of compassion, honour, and empathy - is almost invariably the genesis of strong personal feelings such as remorse, grief, and sorrow [...]

One of the many benefits of an organized theistic religion, such as Christianity or Islam or Judaism, is that mechanisms of personal expiation exist whereby such feelings can be placed in context and expiated by appeals to the supreme deity. In Judaism, there is Teshuvah culminating in Yom Kippur, the day of expiation/reconciliation. In Catholicism, there is the sacrament of confession and penance. In Islam, there is personal dua to, and reliance on, Allah Ar-Rahman, Ar-Raheem, As-Salaam.

Even pagan religions and ways had mechanisms of personal expiation for wrong deeds done, often in the form of propitiation; the offering of a sacrifice, perhaps, or compensation by the giving or the leaving of a valuable gift or votive offering at some numinous - some sacred and venerated - place or site [...]

All such religious mechanisms of expiation, whatever the theology and regardless of the motivation of the individual in seeking such expiation, are or can be cathartic; restorative, healing. But if there is no personal

belief in either a supreme deity or in deities, how then to numinously make reparation, propitiation, and thus to not only expiate such feelings as remorse, grief, and sorrow but also and importantly offset the damage one's wrong actions have caused, since by their very nature such suffering-causing actions are ὕβρις and not only result in harm, in people suffering, but also upset the natural balance. In truth, I do not know the answer to the question how to so numinously make reparation, propitiation. I can only conject, surmise."

His answer of how to make reparation was to write about his past, about his regrets, about his decades of extremism, and about how he came to reject such extremism, political and religious; with his philosophy of pathei-mathos part of the expiation required:

"In a very personal sense, my philosophy of pathei-mathos is expiatory, as are my writings concerning extremism, such as my *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*." Some Questions For DWM, March 2014, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/dwm-2014-questions.pdf> (5)

(5) References to and quotations from those and other classical authors occur in many of Myatt's philosophical works and autobiographical writings such as in his 2012 *Some Philosophical and Moral Problems of National-Socialism* - <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/moral-problems-of-national-socialism/> - and his *Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>. There is also his translation of and extensive commentary on tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

In regard to Christianity and Fathers Of the Church, there are, for example, (i) his translation of and extensive commentary on chapters from the Gospel of John - <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/gospel-john-chapters1-5.pdf> - (ii) his monograph *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* - <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/tua-es-diaboli-ianua.pdf> - (iii) essays such as *Persecution And War* - <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/about/persecution-and-war/> - where he references *De Civitate Dei contra Paganos* and *Contra Faustum Manichaeum*, and his commentary of tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum. Thus in his commentary on verses 14 and 15 of Tractate XI of the Corpus Hermeticum he writes:

14.
enos. ἔνωσις. A transliteration given that it is a mystical term with a particular meaning and describes something more than is denoted by the ordinary English word 'union'. It was, for example used by Plotinus, by Maximus of Constantinople, and was part of the mystic philosophy attributed to Pseudo-Dionysius, The Areopagite - qv. Migne, Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca. vol IV, 396A. 1857 - and denoted, for Plotinus, a desirable ascent (ἄνοδος) and a 'merging with The One', and for both the Areopagite and Maximus of Constantinople a self-less mystical experience of God.

15.
eikon. εἰκὼν. Another mystical term requiring contextual interpretation, cf. Poemandres 31, regarding which I wrote in my commentary: "I have transliterated εἰκὼν as here it does not only mean what the English words 'image' or 'likeness' suggest or imply, but rather it is similar to what Maximus of Constantinople in his *Mystagogia* [Patrologiae Graeca, 91, c.0658] explains.

Which is of we humans, and the cosmos, and Nature, and psyche, as eikons, although according to Maximus it is the Christian church itself (as manifest and embodied in Jesus of Nazareth and the Apostles and their successors and in scripture) which, being the eikon of God, enables we humans to recognize this, recognize God, be in communion with God, return to God, and thus find and fulfil the meaning of our being, our existence."

<https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

(6) *Fifty Years Of Diverse Peregrinations in Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*, 2013, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/religion-and-empathy.pdf>

(7) *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*, 2018, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/in-defence-rc-1.pdf>

(8) <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/david-myatt-rejecting-extremism.pdf>

(9) <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/09/30/the-way-of-jesus-of-nazareth/>

(10) *An Uncertainty Of Knowing, Four Interviews With David Myatt*, 2023, <https://archive.org/download/myatt-four-interviews/myatt-four-interviews.pdf>